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5 Ways To Reduce Holiday Stress

By JoAnna Carey

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Are those bells ringing in your ears a sign of holiday cheer or a sign of too much stress? Don't let this Holiday Season slip by in a blur of over scheduling. Commit to making changes -- one step at a time and you'll discover the gift of a more enjoyable year-end celebration. As you juggle the complexities of work, home and family, here are 5 simple steps that may help you become as jolly as ol' St. Nick.

5. Develop an list of everything you would like to do THIS Holiday Season, then prioritize in order to get the most amount of joy from the limited amount of time you have to spend with family, friends and coworkers. Remember, this year's priorities may look different than those of holidays past!

4. Express gratitude. What a great time of year to thank all of those people who make your life worth living! Don't let the hustle and bustle of the season steal away your opportunity to be thankful for the people, experiences and events (both good and bad) that made this year unique and memorable. If you're sending greeting cards, why not add a personalized message about why you are thankful for having the recipient in your life.

3. Learn to say NO -- put YOU first sometimes. It's ok to say no! I repeat: it is ok to say NO! Schedule some "alone time" during the holidays so you can reduce the temptation to take on too many responsibilities that may

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cause a meltdown at the worst possible moment.

2. Choose your battles wisely. As the end of the year quickly approaches, you may be pulled in too many directions and it may be impossible for you to attend every get together. Holidays are often full of over taxed emotions so, rather than succumbing to a confrontation, try to approach each situation as an opportunity to accommodate the most important needs of those involved. Express your opinion about the little things that are causing extra stress instead of hiding those emotions that may cause your temper to reach the boiling point.

1. Life really is about the journey. Savor the moments! That is a difficult concept for those of us who are always striving toward a particular goal. Savoring the moment means allowing yourself enough time to celebrate each activity before rushing on to the next event.

BONUS Stress Reducer: Buy copies of the Rat Race Relaxer Book — 52 stress busting tips, one for every week of 2005 — a gift that will challenge you and your friends to get what you want in return for running the rat race!

While the keys may appear simple, they are guaranteed to help you tackle the rat race head-on, and turn it into a race than can be run —and won— by charting your own course rather than navigating someone else's.

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JoAnna, "The Rat Race Relaxer," is available for radio, TV and print interviews. She's an energetic, young entrepreneur who merges her life experience and business success to perform enjoyable, influential presentations. She is the producer and host of her own weekly television program and the author of Rat Race Relaxer: Your Potential & The Maze of Life. Contact Carey'D Away Enterprises, LLC at <http://www.RatRaceRelaxer.com>.

Plan To Manage Holiday Stress

By ADD Coach Jennifer Koretsky

Everyone finds themselves stressed out during the holiday season. But for adults with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), November through January can feel like a whirlwind of tasks and responsibilities. Lack of time management will result in undue pressure and overwhelm for the ADD adult.

One way to take the stress out of the holidays is to plan for them. These simple steps can help the ADD adult manage their time and tasks during the holiday season, thereby relieving unnecessary stress.

Create one hour this week to plan your holiday preparation schedule, and follow these steps:

Step 1 – Make a List of all the Things You Need to Do to Prepare for the Holiday

This probably includes gift shopping, writing and mailing holiday cards, decorating your home, planning your travel, etc. After you have made this list, put a star next to each of the items that you don't like to do. (Maybe you get bored writing out the holiday cards, or maybe you detest shopping.)

Step 2 – Use a Calendar or Planner

Use something that gives you ample space to write for each day. This could be a wall calendar, a daily planner, or planning software. Begin by writing in all your holiday appointments, such as parties and scheduled shopping trips. Next, write in all the other activities that you have going on during the month, like meetings and appointments. When you're done, you should have a good idea of where your free time is.

Now, take a look at the items on your holiday to-do list that are not marked with a star, and schedule them in. Do you have a free evening next week in which you can write out your cards? Schedule it on your calendar! Do you have a free Saturday to get your shopping done? Schedule it on your calendar!

Step 3 – Make the Dreaded Tasks Easier

Take a look at all those tasks you marked with a star. These are the tasks that you hate to do for one reason or another. Take a moment to look at each one, and figure out how to make that task a little easier or more bearable. If you hate writing cards because it's a tedious and boring task, you can make it easier on yourself by inviting a friend over to chat, catch up, and write out cards with you. Hate decorating? Perhaps you can buy a new CD you've been wanting and allow yourself to crank it up while you put up the holiday decorations.

Investing just a small amount of time in planning can save you from undue stress and overwhelm during this holiday season.

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Jennifer Koretsky is an ADD Management Coach who helps adults learn how to manage their ADD and move forward in life. She offers individual and group coaching, workshops, and skill-building programs. Her work has been featured in various media, including The New York Times Magazine. Subscribe to Jennifer's free email newsletter, The ADD Management Guide, by visiting

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Relieving Stress with Exercise... and Losing Body Fat in the Process!

Reduce the Volume of Your Ringing in the Ears by Reducing Your Stress

Three Steps to Reduce Holiday Stress for Your Kitty

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