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The Four Work Stresses of Christmas

By Martin Avis

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It is December 14th, but the plants in my garden would hardly let you believe it. Geraniums are still in flower, roses are still blooming and my magnolia tree has yet to lose a single leaf. London may be basking in peculiarly unseasonal weather, but Christmas is nearly upon us.

'At Christmas I no more desire a rose
Than wish a snow in May's newfangled mirth;
But like of each thing that in season grows.'
> Shakespeare (1564 – 1616), Love's Labour Lost

Christmas – that time of over-indulgence, added anxiety and sheer stress. Bah, humbug!

Actually, I love Christmas. But the reality for so many people at work is that hidden beneath the surface of jollity and bonhomie is that it is potentially the most difficult time of year.

The four work stresses of Christmas.

1. Christmas has become a giant milestone in the year. This forces everyone into an artificial mindset that demands that everything be completed 'before the holiday.' As a result, the weeks before Christmas are an absolute nightmare for many people. People who are already overworked are forced to pull extra hours to get work completed. Yet often, a moments thought by

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those demanding the completion of jobs would show that nothing bad will happen if they are held over until early January.

If you are a 'holiday hurrier', spare a thought for what is truly urgent and what is simply being hurried because it is Christmas.

2. The social whirl. Just because it is Christmas, everybody has to get on. And on, and on. Festive parties seem to start as soon as the shops start displaying tinsel – and that can be as early as

September where I live! If you are prone to suffer from stress – as so many of us are these days – endless eating and drinking in smokey atmospheres (even if you don't smoke yourself) is just going to make things worse. Not only are you lowering your bodies resistance, but you are also severely limiting your ability to keep on top of the heightened workload.

Don't be a killjoy, but equally, don't party yourself into the floor.

3. 'What-haven't-I-done-itis'. When I worked for advertising agencies, every Christmas was blighted by worries of what I may have forgotten, what I may have rushed and done wrong, what other people may have messed up and so on. It was only in my last couple of years that I cracked the problem. I made lists. Big lists. I wrote down everything that needed to be thought about from December 1st onwards. If I had a newspaper campaign running I would call every paper to double check the ad positions. And I would write down the answers. I became obsessive about detail. And it worked. On Christmas Eve I would make two copies of all my notes, leave one on my desk and take the other home, locked in my briefcase. Then, when the demon thought sprang up during Christmas lunch that I had forgotten something vital, I knew I had it covered – and had the evidence to prove it to myself.

Funnily enough, just knowing that it was there made me forget about it completely and enjoy my holiday.

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The moral of the story is – don't plan for Christmas Eve, plan for the days you will be home worrying.

4. Photocopiers and backsides. It might sound like fun, especially after a few beers. Don't go there. That glass can splinter! And even if it doesn't, do you really want the evidence of a drunken moment to haunt your career for years? There is always someone who has had a few less drinks than you who thinks it's amusing to hang on to the evidence.

Have a laugh, but try not to lose all your inhibitions. A broken photocopier could be the least of your worries!

'Call a truce, then, to our labours
let us feast with friends and neighbours,

And be merry as the custom of our caste;
For if "faint and forced the laughter,"
and if sadness follow after,
We are richer by one mocking Christmas past.'

> Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936), author, poet.
Christmas in India.

Christmas is a lovely time if worries about work don't poison it for you. Try to plan ahead and have yourself a very merry Christmas this year.

Martin Avis is a management and training consultant. To get your unfair advantage (and 6 free gifts) in Internet marketing, business and personal success, subscribe free to his weekly newsletter, [BizE-zine.mailto:subscribe5@BizE-zine.com](mailto:subscribe5@BizE-zine.com) or visit his information-packed website at <http://www.BizE-zine.com>

When Your Spouse Stresses You Out

By Stan Popovich

What can you do when your spouse stresses you out? Instead of yelling at one another, there are ways to reduce conflicts and your stresses. Here are some suggestions on how to not let your spouse stress you out.

Talk with your spouse about your problem. If you can, ask your spouse if she is having any problems

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and if there is anything you can do about it. Talking with your spouse is very important and can prevent potential conflicts from turning into arguments.

Build on your common interests. When dealing with your spouse, focus on the things that you both agree on. Use that as your base and then start talking about some of the problems that you are experiencing. Learn to compromise with one another to help solve some of your problems.

Learn effective techniques to manage your stresses. There are many ways to deal with your stresses. Take a walk or do something you like to do to get a fresh perspective on things. Another good technique in managing your stresses is to create a list of positive statements. When you get depressed, read those positive statements. This will help you to relax.

Talk to a marriage counselor if you can. It can be valuable to get additional insights from a third party. A marriage counselor can provide much assistance to your current problems. Many couples get help from a counselor so do not feel ashamed that your getting help. There is nothing wrong with getting professional help.

Be persistent in solving your disagreements. Do not let them build up over time. When you see a red flag, do something about it at the present time. Confront potential conflicts early.

All couples go through arguments and disagreements in their marriages. You are no different. The key is to communicate with one another and learn to work together when something doesn't work out. Remember that you are a team and that you need to work like a team.

Stan Popovich is the author of "A Layman's Guide to Managing Fear" an easy to read book that presents a overview of techniques that are effective in managing persistent fears and anxieties. For additional information go to:



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