



THE SECRET TO OVERCOMING HOLIDAY STRESS

With all of the hosting, travel, gift-buying, budgeting, and year-end deadlines at work, the holiday season can bring more stress than joy. So before over-committing, over-spending and over-working yourself into a holiday meltdown, take a moment to step back and create a simple holiday plan based on what really matters most. Ask yourself these 6 questions to get started:

1. WHAT IS MY ULTIMATE VISION FOR THIS HOLIDAY SEASON?

Everyone celebrates the holidays differently and there is no right or wrong way to do so. Think about how you want your holiday season to be, what will really bring the most joy, and what you can do to make that happen. Getting clear about what's most important is the first step in not stressing about the small things.

2. WHAT OBLIGATIONS CAN I LET GO OF?

Whether it's the pressure to give the perfect gift, or squeeze in family bonding time with the entire extended family, think about all the obligations, expectations and pressure you may be putting on yourself or others during the holidays. Ask yourself, "Am I doing this out of guilt" or "Is this tradition really important?" Try to let go of the less meaningful things so you can feel more fulfilled and less frazzled.

3. HOW CAN I MAKE REST AND RELAXATION A PRIORITY?

Over-committing is a major cause of holiday stress. Before getting swept up in the holiday spirit and agreeing to an ambitious holiday social calendar, menu plan, gift list and workload – think about what can be outsourced, postponed, scaled back, or changed. How can you start the New Year more refreshed and rejuvenated?

4. WHAT IS MY 'REAL' BUDGET?

Get real about how much gift-buying, hosting, and travel will cost. Then make a holiday spending plan and try to stick to it. Creative homemade gifts, affordable meal planning, and gift exchanges can help ease the over-spending trap without affecting the real joy of the season.

5. HOW CAN I MAKE TECHNOLOGY GO TO WORK FOR ME?

Save time, money, and hassle by using technology for online shopping, travel tools, and staying organized. Card-making apps are great for holiday cards.

6. WHAT AM I MOST GRATEFUL FOR?

If it's your health and family well-being, then remember to get rest, eat well, and stress less. If it's quality time with loved ones, then be present and available to enjoy that time. Gratitude is a great antidote to stress, so if feelings of holiday frenzy start to rush in, take a breath, be grateful for the moment, and keep things in perspective.