

## 5 Tips for Surviving the Holidays

By Mary Jo Kurtz

1. *A high quality life has a lot more to do with what you remove from your life than what you add to it.* -Cheryl Richardson

The same can be said for the holidays! We recently sat down as a family and watched *Christmas with the Cranks*, the story about a family who decides to skip Christmas. There are many lessons learned as they attempt this almost impossible feat. Contrary to my children's fears, I have not decided to skip Christmas. However, I have decided there are a few things that we *can* skip to make our holidays more manageable. I urge you to consider this as well. Make a list of the things that you typically do for the holidays. Are these things you "want to do" or that you feel you "have to do"? Whether it is sending out 100 handwritten cards or attending your 4<sup>th</sup> office holiday party, I encourage you to consider doing only the necessities: those things that you truly "want to do".

2. Have a plan and make sure you are in it! Disappointment comes when we expect someone else to make our holiday's special. We can't rely on others, only ourselves. So, what do you need to make you feel good this holiday season? How can you make that happen? Create a plan of action. If it includes others, ask them and make the plan. If it's something for yourself, put it on the calendar and make sure it happens. You may be surprised and create some fabulous new traditions at the same time.
3. What are your expectations for this season? Do you expect to feel stressed, sad, depressed or calm, happy, in control? What if I told you that your thoughts can actually create your experience? For example, if you wake in the morning and expect a horrible day, you will most likely have a horrible day. So, set an intention for each day. And mean it! Expect something great. Enjoy the best holiday season ever.
4. When faced with a difficult situation, and the holidays can be filled with them, ask yourself: "How would love act?" Especially during the holiday season we try to find ways to show kindness and love to others. Sometimes, however, it is easier to act in a loving way to a stranger. Perhaps this year, if a difficult situation presents itself, ask yourself: "How would love act?" and then take action.
5. Pushing the limits during the holidays is like a badge of honor. Whether it is decorating, writing cards, baking cookies, buying gifts, eating or drinking, we try to do the most we possibly can. We rationalize this behavior as a one time occurrence. This allows us to postpone our worries until the bills come in or we get on the scale. But, January always comes and then we spend more time and energy recovering from the insanity. Might you consider a simple gift to yourself: keep it simple and use moderation. Honor yourself now by considering your physical, emotional and financial health. Your holidays can still be magical and you will feel so much better in a few weeks.