

Surviving the Holiday

WITHOUT LOSING YOUR SPIRIT
OR YOUR MIND

Workbook Included!



INTRODUCTION

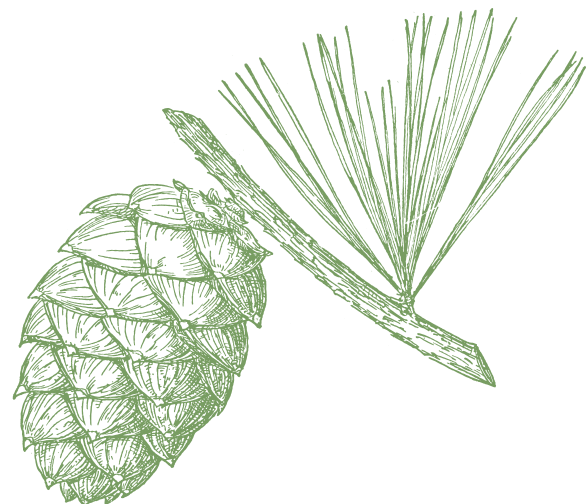
The holidays...that span of time between October and January filled with special dates that have the potential to be a fairytale or a nightmare. The time of year that should be filled with fun and wonder is often times wrought with stress and anxiety. Time that's supposed to be about family being together and making memories becomes about dysfunction and trying to survive until the new year where things begin again, and all things are possible.

Remember when you were a child and the holidays felt wondrous? The sights, sounds, and merriment felt magical. Being filled with the spirit of the holidays was easy when you were blissfully unaware of what was happening behind the scenes. You may have been sitting at the kid's table during Thanksgiving with no clue that members of your family could barely tolerate one another. You may have woken up on Christmas morning completely oblivious to the fact your parents had been stressed out over providing the illusion of a perfect experience each year. Or worse, you may very well have known the holidays were stressful and looked very different than what you saw your friends experiencing.

As you grew, you likely became aware of the fact that the holidays are a busy, hectic, and sometimes overwhelming time. Trying to juggle the expectations of everyday life with the added elements of the holidays can be stressful.

Wouldn't it be great to enjoy the holiday's without stress and strife? Wouldn't it be amazing to experience stress-free family time and make the holidays everything you've dreamed of? Can you imagine a holiday season where there's plenty of money, plenty of family, and plenty of fun? Does it feel like that's impossible? Does the idea of taking charge of your holiday season and making it your own seem like a pipe dream? Take a deep breath and get ready because it is entirely possible to survive the holiday season without losing your spirit or your mind.

Despite the pressure you feel during the holiday's it is entirely possible for you to morph them from stressful to stressless. Reigning in your emotions and making a solid plan can ensure your holidays are pleasant, fun, and whatever version of perfect looks like for you. The fact is, one person's storybook holiday season may look nothing like yours. What you find delightful and memorable might be unappealing to someone else. It doesn't matter. There's no cookie cutter way to celebrate during the holidays. All that matters is making sure you don't end the year feeling beat up, broke, and ready to pull your hair out.



This eBook and built-in workbook are designed to help you stop feeling lost and out of control during the holidays and create the most unique and perfect season you've ever had. By peeling back the curtain on the holidays and the traps people fall into trying to make them special, you'll be able to stop feeling overwhelmed and disappointed and start feeling merry and bright.

This eBook and workbook are interactive and will help you sort through your feelings and make a plan to manage the holiday with ease. Be sure to give yourself ample time to read through the sections and work in the workbook. Find a space free of distractions and noise. Enjoy your favorite beverage and get down to the business of surviving the holiday without losing your spirit or your mind.



THE ORIGINS OF THE HOLIDAY SEASON

The holiday season originated in the mid- 20th century with a blending of religious holidays, cultural traditions and commercialism creating a series of events, activities, experiences, and expenses known as the holidays. From Thanksgiving dinners, to Christmas pageants, department store Santa's...and much more... expressing the holiday spirit and participating in a myriad of events became common.

Commercializing the holiday's helped the economy but also put pressure on families to do more, spend more, and experience more. Influences like Norman Rockwell, and later- Hallmark, influenced what it meant to experience the holidays to the fullest. Once television and commercials were introduced, people were influenced more than ever to buy and engage in holiday activities like never before.

Every decade a new, bigger, and better way to celebrate the holidays created more and more influence and more and more stress. Décor became essential, certain toys and other gifts became hot-ticket items. Before long, finding the must-have toys became part of the allure of an ideal Christmas and a form of status.



DID YOU KNOW ?

Did you know that the department store Macy's is credited for creating what is now known as Black Friday shopping? In 1924, Macy's held the first ever Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade in New York city. They were influenced by the popular Canadian department store, Eaton's who sponsored a similar type of parade.

The Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade became the unofficial launch of the holiday shopping season. Over time, people began to call in sick the day after Thanksgiving to allow themselves a four-day weekend and access to some of the biggest deals in retail. In 1966 the term Black Friday was used to represent the profits made by retailers on what has become the biggest shopping day of the year.

As the economy grew, so did consumer buying habits. It became more and more common to go all out for the holidays which added to the ever-growing list of expectations required to celebrate a "successful" holiday season.

EVERYONE CELEBRATES THE HOLIDAYS DIFFERENTLY

Most holidays are celebrated world-wide. Though Thanksgiving is uniquely an American holiday, other countries celebrate their own version of thanksgiving. Christmas is a Christian holiday celebrated world-wide as are holidays like Hannukah. Though some holidays are universal at their core, everyone celebrates the holidays differently.

For example, Christmas for Christians is rooted in the celebration of Jesus' birth and the story surrounding how He came into the world. For others, Christmas is a celebration centered on Santa Claus, Papa Noël, Babbo Natale, or Father Christmas. Depending on where you live Christmas could come in winter or summer. This means some people celebrate a true winter wonderland while others celebrate with cactus or beaches.

Some families celebrate holidays in large groups centered around meals, games, and traditions like football. Other families might get takeout and go to the movies. There are as many ways to celebrate as there are holidays. No one way is the right way and whatever makes sense for your family is perfect. If you travel during the holidays or stay in and never leave the house, either way it's the perfect holiday.



The comparison game causes problems

Families fall into traps when it comes to the holidays. The comparison games causes problems and families measure their holidays against someone else's which can leave them feeling inadequate or pressured into making their holidays something that makes no sense for their situation.

The comparison game causes problems because it doesn't take into account the wide variety of factors every family needs to consider when it comes to having stress free holidays. Some of those factors might include-

FINANCES

Not every family has the financial resources needed to celebrate the holidays in extravagant ways. Depending on your preferences, expectations, and lifestyle there are unlimited ways to celebrate. Looking at how your neighbor or extended family member makes their financial decisions may or may not be a good influence on your spending. Ultimately, spending should be responsible and in line with your priorities rather than based on what you see others doing.

FAMILY

One of the loudest messages coming from the holiday season industry is the importance of family time. While this is noble and important, it isn't always realistic. Families getting together for the sake of a holiday doesn't guarantee a good time. Some families gel and thoroughly enjoy coming together and celebrating while other families can barely connect outside of the pressure of a Hallmark holiday scenario. Forcing families to connect because it's the holidays can oftentimes be a recipe for disaster.

FRIENDSHIPS

The holidays can feel warm and fuzzy or burdensome. Expectations to give...time, money, and gifts can cause friction. Trying to keep up with friends can zap your energy—even when you truly love them. The holiday season is relatively short and sometimes there simply isn't enough time or money to go around. Comparing yourself to someone else's list of priorities or ability to bake, give gifts, host parties, and attend every function may not be healthy.

Your past experiences influence your expectations

How you spent holidays in the past influences your expectations now. Whether you had idyllic experiences or felt like you missed out, it influences how you perceive the holidays.

In some cases, people who thoroughly enjoyed their holiday experiences try to hold onto their traditions to help keep the magic alive. Others who felt let down or underwhelmed might try to create their perfect version of the holidays to make up for what they missed.

Having one spectacular holiday can leave an imprint and an expectation in your mind long after the holidays have ended. Each year, the desire to recreate the special feelings surface and it can motivate you to create a specific vibe. This can be positive or negative depending on your circumstances now and how easily you can achieve your goals.

Since the holidays are short and commercialism delights all the senses, expectations can be very high. It's important to stay grounded and make sure nostalgia doesn't cause havoc when you're trying to enjoy the season. In many ways, the holidays create an artificial expectation for families and it's important to stay grounded and rooted in the fact that every day can be magical if you keep your priorities straight.

Sometimes expectations clash

One of the hardest parts of the holidays can be combining expectations with someone else. Here you are living your life with your unique experiences and suddenly they get combined with your spouse or significant other. If you had radically different experiences, it can influence how each of you embraces the holiday season.

Differing expectations can make it harder to experience the holiday season in the manner you are used to. It might feel threatening when someone wants to add a tradition or modify the way you've experienced the season. Learning to adapt and adopt a hybrid version of what you're used to can help.



YOUR HOLIDAYS CAN BECOME EVERYTHING YOU'VE EVER WANTED

As we've seen there are a lot of influences on the holiday season. Some are delightful and others aren't. No matter how your holidays have been- both great and not so much... your holidays can become everything you've ever wanted them to be.

The bottom line is, you are not stuck in a bucket of hardened holiday cement. You can choose to change anything you want about your holiday experience to make it fit your family's needs. Even if you feel like you can't break free from traditions that are wearing you out, the truth is you can safely make changes that will have you loving the season with less stress and more wonder. As we move forward in the eBook we will take a look at three typical holidays and break them down. We will look at what struggles and stressors are making the holidays a burden and what can be done to change things up.

Breaking free from the typical anchors that weigh people down helps free them to experience the holidays in a brand-new way and develop the traditions...or spontaneity, they've always wanted.

Take a moment to work on exercise #1 and review your past holiday experience and begin to look at what changes you'd like to see to make your holidays worry free.



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Workbook Exercise 1

In the first section of the *Surviving the Holiday* eBook, we took a look at the origins of the holiday season and how our past determines our thoughts about the holidays. Let's take a few moments to reflect on your personal experience with holidays past and how they might differ from your current vision of what the holiday season could look like.

Remember, there are no right or wrong answers here and whether you loved your past holiday experiences or have longed to experience the holidays in a different way, you can make the holiday season exactly what you've always wanted while reducing stress and keeping the spirit of the season alive.

Thinking back on the holidays you experienced as a child, what memories come to mind? Spend some time answering these questions which you can reflect on in upcoming exercises.



BEING THANKFUL AND STRESS-FREE DURING THANKSGIVING

Thanksgiving is an American and Canadian holiday designed to celebrate the bounty of a good harvest. Thanksgiving is a reminder of the importance to share abundantly and give thanks for the wonderful things that make life special.

Though each country celebrates at different times- Canadians celebrate Canadian Thanksgiving the second Monday in October and Americans celebrate the fourth Thursday in November, both holidays are centered on counting blessings and celebrating a good harvest. As both countries have developed, a harvest can represent much more than good crops. Celebrating a harvest or bountiful life can include the people in your life as well as all good fortune you're experiencing each season.

Being thankful is a wonderful state of mind. The more thankful we are for the bounty in our lives the more positive we tend to be. People who take the time to contemplate what's right in their world and what they have to be thankful for tend to minimize hardships and magnify what's going well.

While having an attitude of gratitude is a year-round benefit, hyper focusing on thankfulness once per year is a wonderful tradition. Speaking of tradition, Thanksgiving is steeped in traditions rooted in family and fun! Some typical traditions are:

- Turkey dinners
- Football
- Pumpkin Pie
- Anything pumpkin spice

Those are all great things and Thanksgiving tends to rank high on people's list of favorite holidays. If you live in the right climate, Thanksgiving can come during an exceptionally beautiful time of year. Fall leaves turning vibrant colors and crisp air perfect for steaming cups of coffee.

Sadly, Thanksgiving can be a stressful time for people. Since Thanksgiving usually centers on large meals with family there are a lot of reasons why people aren't always thankful this time of year.



Here are some top reasons why Thanksgiving can be stressful:

DYSFUNCTION

Some families simply aren't healthy. Putting high expectations on family to get together and have magical togetherness can be unrealistic. If one or more family members are dysfunctional it can ruin the experience for everyone. Add significant issues like substance abuse or emotional abuse and things go from bad to worse.

GENERALIZED STRESS

Stressed out people tend to stress out more during the holidays. The effort it takes...and the financial commitment... to host a large meal can add to the regular stress of everyday life. People who are uptight already tend to feel worse instead of better when the holidays roll around.

SITUATIONAL STRESS

Some stresses in life aren't permanent but they come at the wrong time. Illnesses, injuries, and other setbacks don't take the holidays off. Sometimes the holidays are interrupted by situations that aren't permanent but are throwing a monkey wrench into the situation. Trying to manage a life-moment while stuffing the turkey isn't always easy.

DISORDER

Unorganized people tend to stress out more during the holidays. Thanksgiving can be overwhelming when your house isn't in order and there are too many things pulling at your attention. Being disorganized makes it harder to do the extra shopping, cooking, and cleaning that tends to come with a traditional Thanksgiving feast.

LONELINESS AND DEPRESSION

Sometimes the lack of family contributes to a stressful Thanksgiving. When the traditional norm is to be with family in large groups, it can feel painful to know you don't have any to connect to. Whether you are far from home, without relatives or they are too toxic to gather with, being alone during the holidays can lead to depression and make you feel less thankful.

There are a lot of reasons why people can't feel as thankful during the Thanksgiving holiday as they'd like. If any of these descriptions feel true for you, there are things you can do to overcome them and create the right Thanksgiving for your needs this and every year that comes.


Begin with Gratitude

Thanksgiving is rooted in gratitude. Being grateful is the reason for the season. No matter if you have chronic dysfunction or situational depression, finding gratitude will make a difference. It might be that you're so used to being negative that it's too far of a reach to be filled with joy but finding something to be grateful for can help.

Thanksgiving is a wonderful time to begin the habit of a gratitude journal or reading a daily devotional that gets you thinking about gratitude. Taking steps to see the things you have to be grateful for can help turn your mood around and make it easier for you to enjoy the holiday.

Solve Some Problems

If you're stressed out during Thanksgiving because you're disorganized or overwhelmed, solving some problems can help. There are plenty of ways to solve problems and make the season stress-less.



Consider these options:

DELEGATE

If you are overwhelmed at home or at work- delegate. Enlist the help of others to solve some problems so you can feel less stressed and more excited about the holidays. From doing chores, shopping, cooking, cleaning, or helping with work related needs asking for help makes a difference. Letting go of things other people can do frees you up to focus on making Thanksgiving fun. Creating time to do the extra activities that come during the holidays will make it less stressful and give you the wherewithal to be grateful, even when it's a busy time of the year.

PLAN AHEAD

Many of the tasks associated with Thanksgiving Day can be handled ahead of time. Spend time planning what can be done in advance and delegate or knock tasks out. A lot of the cooking, cleaning, and other associated activities can be done ahead of time. Don't procrastinate and wait until the last minute to do things that can relieve stress and make the special day easier.

GET TAKEOUT

Many restaurants and grocers offer premade Thanksgiving Day meals that can be pre-ordered and served on Thanksgiving Day. This can take the stress out of preparing a large meal. You can also switch things up and do something different. Try ordering pizza delivery or another family favorite. Consider hosting a potluck and have guests bring their favorite dishes. There are plenty of ways to make mealtime easier that reduce stress and promote being thankful.

Get Honest About Family

One of the biggest reasons Thanksgiving feels stressful is family dynamics. Families that suffer from dysfunctional circumstances struggle on special occasions. Sometimes the intimacy of a special day is too much and any number of bad things starts to happen. From substance abuse to fighting, families struggle when there are one or more dysfunctional people in the mix. Being honest about the family dynamics and making important decisions surrounding them will determine the success or failure the day has. Here are some helpful tips to deal with dysfunctional family.

SET UP EXPECTATIONS

Leaving things open to interpretation isn't safe when it comes to strained family dynamics. Setting expectations, no matter how difficult it might feel, is the surest way to alert family of the expectations and the goals for the day. Setting specific times for activities, clarifying menu's, beverages, and the general overview of the day can help. Doing anything you can to be transparent about the day can help reduce stress.

SET UP HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

Adulting can be hard. One of the chief characteristics of adulting is having difficult conversations. Avoiding a subject because it's painful or awkward only sets you up for bigger problems. Failing to plan and set healthy boundaries can almost certainly guarantee someone is going to run right over your holiday. Setting boundaries ahead of time can help people keep things positive, avoid alcohol or drug use, or leave certain topics like politics or religion at the door.


Create Your Own Thanksgiving Traditions

Not everyone has an extended family. It's wonderful to have the freedom to create a holiday that's just right for you.

If you are far away from family or don't have any to connect with find a unique and fun way to celebrate. Many people use this time to give back to others and volunteer or travel and have new experiences. Sitting at home feeling sorry for yourself isn't a healthy tradition. Find something fun to do on Thanksgiving Day that includes the things you love most.

If Thanksgiving has a history of being difficult, now's the time to get intentional about the holiday and set things up for success. Take some time to work in the workbook section of the eBook to sort through your unique Thanksgiving Day challenges and begin to craft some solutions so your Thanksgiving is truly something to be thankful for.



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Workbook Exercise 2

In this section of the Surviving the Holiday eBook, we spent time reviewing Thanksgiving Day and some of the typical challenges that come up. From disorganization and overwhelm to dysfunctional family and some of the patterns that come up during get togethers. Let's take some time to reflect on the Thanksgiving holiday and how you typically experience stress during this season. Consider the following questions.

Remember, these are thought provoking questions to get you thinking about what you love...and don't about Thanksgiving and what steps you'd like to take to make the day as special as possible. There are no right or wrong answers.

WHAT MEMORIES DO YOU HAVE ABOUT THANKSGIVING
IN THE PAST? DO YOU ENJOY THIS HOLIDAY?

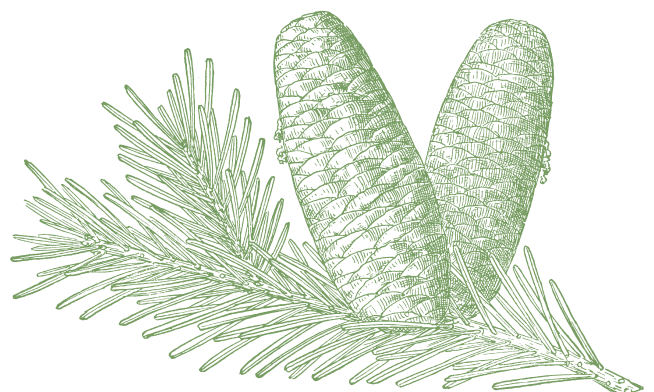
IS THERE A SPECIFIC MEMORY THAT STICKS OUT IN YOUR
MIND THAT MADE THANKSGIVING MEMORABLE?



KEEPING CHRISTMAS MERRY AND BRIGHT!

In many ways, Christmas is a lot like Thanksgiving and other holidays where family gathers. The dynamics between family members can directly impact the joyousness of the day. Christmas has its own unique challenges that are important to address so plans can be made to make the day as special as it deserves to be.

Christmas comes off the heels of Thanksgiving and culminates in a frenzy of activities including decorating, community events, gift-giving, and lots of parties. The span of time between Thanksgiving and Christmas can feel like a blur when there is so much to do. Many times, all of the activities are happening right alongside a long list of regular duties required for work and home. When Christmas seems far off, it feels like a potentially magical time, but when it's just around the corner it can feel like walking through a blizzard.



Reduced to its simplistic basics, Christmas stress generally centers around three things:

- Money
- Time
- Family

When any of these are out of whack, the whole season can feel overwhelming. Let's take a look.

MONEY CHALLENGES CAUSE HOLIDAY STRESS

Christmas can be an expensive time of year. Depending on your family's structure and traditions, you may be spending a lot more money in December than you typically spend in other months. This can add stress to what should be a joyous time. Worries about money can cause unnecessary stress between couples and can put pressure on families to purchase gifts they may not readily be able to afford.

According to a survey from MagnifyMoney, specializing in personal finance, families incurred over \$1000.00 of extra debt in December of last year. This is up 5% from previous years. Many times this is credit card debt which can cost even more over time because of accrued interest.

Additionally, life doesn't stop just because it's the holiday season. Unexpected costs for home repairs, medical services, and other expenses can make an even bigger dent in your wallet. In many ways the financial stress during Christmas can create problems that detract from the holiday spirit.

TIME CHALLENGES CAUSE HOLIDAY STRESS

There's only so much time in a day. Outside of the holiday season, there often isn't enough time to get everything on your list completed. That time feels more precious when it's Christmas. Feeling spread too thin is a common issue during the holidays and it's easy for people to run themselves ragged if they aren't careful. Many times, family dynamics add to the time constraints. If families are blended there may be multiple expectations about who goes where on what day and where and when celebrations occur. In some ways, having a big family can mean bigger expectations for travel and attendance at multiple functions.

Though there is more to do during Christmas, work is often times in full swing. Finding the balance between work expectations and the merriment of the holiday can be challenging. If you're fortunate enough to take time off it can help relieve stress, but many times there's very little extra time during the holidays.

FAMILY CHALLENGES CAUSE HOLIDAY STRESS

In the same way dysfunction can affect Thanksgiving, many families are just coming off those challenges when Christmas rolls around. If the first holiday wasn't a success, there's a great likelihood Christmas will have a similar outcome. This can cause people to worry about family dynamics well before they actually come together and interact. What should be a fun and carefree time becomes anxiety producing.

The holidays can magnify the family issues in your life. It's not as easy to avoid troublesome personality's or politely excuse yourself from someone's company. Additionally, families are always changing and growing. As children grow, they start to have their own lives and their needs and expectations come into play which can add stress to your planning. Making adjustments to an ever-changing family life can impact how you feel during Christmas time.

Many people LOVE Christmas time. They get lost in the magic and want the holiday to be filled with wonder. When life's realities come into play it really puts a damper on their plans for the season. Luckily there's hope! If you frequently find yourself stressed and disappointed during the holiday it's time to take back your power and get the holiday spirit you deserve.

Take Control of Your Money

There's for too much pressure to go big or go home during Christmas. Falling for the commercialism attached to Christmas is a big mistake. There's nothing wrong with simplifying Christmas and taking control of your money. Some years are lean, and some are abundant. Make sure your Christmas plans reflect the current economics of your household. Here are some simple ways to keep spending under control.

START A CHRISTMAS FUND

It might be too late this year, but starting January 1, begin putting a twenty-dollar bill into an envelope each week. By December you will have nearly \$960.00 based on 48 weeks of saving. What's more, by July you will already have saved nearly \$560.00 which means you can start your holiday shopping in the summertime and give yourself more free time when the holidays start.

MAKE A PLAN

All good outcomes start with a plan. In the fall, sit down with your family and make a plan for this year's holidays. Keep your conversations age appropriate and discuss what the holidays will look like for your family based on the current year's fiscal situation. Decide what matters most to your family and stick to a budget that makes sense for your status.



STOP GIVING GIFTS AT CHRISTMAS

This may seem like blasphemy but hear me out. There is so much pressure to give, give, give each season. From casual friends, work family, the mail carrier, and every member of your extended family. Families have no business going into debt to prove how much they care about others. There are many ways to show you care without spending extra money at Christmas.

CONSIDER ONE OF THESE OPTIONS:

- Only buy for children under 13
- Give gifts on other holidays like Valentines or Halloween
- Do gift exchanges by drawing numbers

It's important to be responsible with your budget when it comes to holiday spending. Being honest with yourself about your current finances and building your Christmas budget accordingly is something to be proud of.

Communication is key. Make firm decisions about your spending and be unapologetic about sticking to your plan.

Take Control of Your Time

You can't add hours to your day. Sure, you can sleep less but that won't keep you healthy...or happy for very long. Managing your time during the holidays is the only way to streamline your life and leave room for the holiday spirit. Consider these time savers that will give you more time during the busy holiday season.

GET OUT YOUR CALENDAR

Taking a look at the calendar can help you see first-hand how much time you have to give away. Looking at your Christmas calendar can help you prioritize your commitments and pre-plan what needs to be done on what days to be ready for Christmas. Scheduling shopping, prep, and other details can help you spread out the work, so you aren't scrambling with last minute tasks.

PICK YOUR TOP THREE

Choosing your top three favorite experiences can help you gently decline the never-ending invitations for holiday fun. Create and rehearse a polite reason why you can't attend or commit to an invitation, so you aren't caught off guard. Don't allow guilt or obligation to keep you from sticking to your plan.

PLAN FOR TIME OFF

No matter what you do for a living, there's always a way to make more time during the holidays. Whether you schedule paid vacation time off or create time by planning ahead and delegating you can create more free time. Being intentional about the holidays and planning ahead can ensure you have more time for the things you love during the Christmas holiday.

Be Intentional with Your Family

Everyone's Christmas should be uniquely their own. No two families are alike and the dynamics and expectations for the season are highly individualized. If your Christmas time hasn't felt like a true reflection of your heart's desire, it's time to set some boundaries and/or make changes.

GETTING ON BOARD WITH CHANGE

If your family dynamics are changing, it's important to get on board rather than falling apart. There are plenty of reasons why things change. Divorce, children getting married, retirement, etc... can all create changes in family structure or expectations. Being intentional about the season your family is in and building a holiday plan that supports it will help make Christmas feel very special for the time of life you're in.

SAY YES OR NO WITH EASE


A lot of people go with the flow in order to avoid disrupting the apple cart. That's great if you are a go with the flow sort of person who truly doesn't have strong opinions. If; however, you tend to say yes or no when you don't want to, that's a different story. It's time to stop disallowing your heart's desire and assert yourself. Make the firm decision about how you want your holiday to look and stick to your guns. It might be hard at first, but the freedom will help you create the stress-free holiday you desire. If you want to take a cruise for Christmas but everyone expects you to host a huge dinner, let them know you're going away and be sure to refuse to feel guilty about it!

COMMUNICATE

Many people fail to get what they want because they refuse to communicate. People can't read minds and they don't know what you want unless you tell them. If you want to structure your holiday differently, speak up. In the same way, if you sense someone isn't speaking up for themselves, be sure to encourage them to share their thoughts as well. Communication is key to everyone enjoying Christmas and reducing stress.

If you're reading this eBook, chances are you've had some stressful holidays. Those days are over because you're starting to see the value in creating the holidays you've always wanted. Take a moment to work on exercise #3 and dive deeper into Christmases past and review how personalized they've been. Assess if you want to change things up or keep them the same. There's no right or wrong way to experience the holiday as long as it's the way you want to celebrate it.



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Workbook Exercise **3**

In this section of the *Surviving the Holiday* eBook we discussed how Christmas can be merry and bright or downright stressful. We learned that finances, time, and family dynamics tend to be the influences that make or break the holiday. Luckily there are solutions that help make each easier to manage.

Take some time to answer these questions and look for ways you may want to change or modify your Christmas plans that will take the pressure off and leave more time for the things you love most.



NEW YEAR, NEW YOU--STARTING THE YEAR OFF RIGHT

There's something about the promise of a new year that gets everyone excited! If the holidays have been stressful, the new year may look like a light at the end of the tunnel. If you've had a magical holiday season, the new year feels full of promise for more good things. Either way, people thoroughly enjoy celebrating the new year.

New Year is all about fresh beginnings and making goals. It's no surprise that gym memberships go up exponentially during the new year and more storage containers are sold in January than any other time of the year. People are anxious to get fit and get organized and the new year is the perfect time to start.

What Do you Resolve for the New Year?

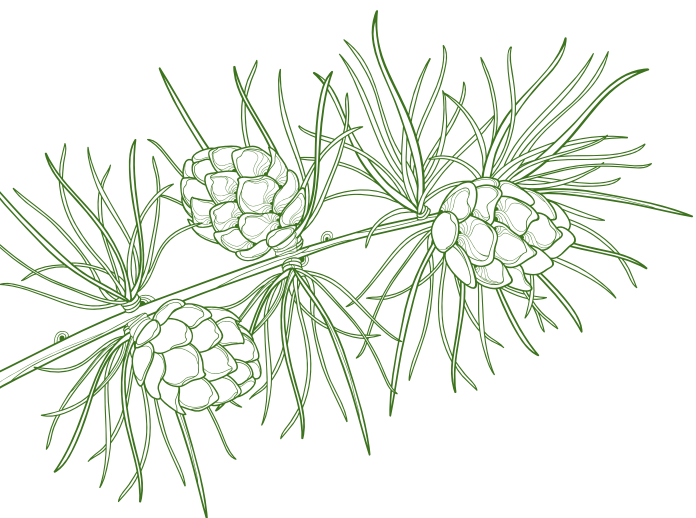
A resolution is a firm decision to do or not to do something. Resolving to start a new habit or end a bad one is common during the new year. Sadly, many people don't follow through on their resolution which causes stress right about February. Thankfully, there are things you can do to protect against falling short of your resolution.

BREAK THE GOAL DOWN INTO MANAGEABLE PIECES

Most people set a resolution without thinking through what it takes to accomplish it. Setting a plan to lose 50lbs is fine but resolving to do what it takes to get there can be a challenge. When creating a resolution, consider mini goals to take to reach the much larger goal. In this case, cutting out soda and walking a mile every day are much easier goals to achieve than losing 50lbs. Break your goals down into manageable pieces so you are more likely to stick with it.

PUSH THROUGH WHEN IT GETS TOUGH

Resolving to do or not to do something takes more than a decision. It takes effort and determination. Things are going to get tough but doing the work will make you tougher. As the saying goes, it's not the destination that matters so much as the journey to get there. When you face obstacles, know that you can overcome. Consider it a challenge when you run into a roadblock and then put your emphasis on overcoming the challenges. You'll learn new skills and become more mature along the way.



Prepping for Another Round of Holiday

The new year creates an opportunity for you to grow and change and achieve important goals. During this time, you can develop the mindset you need to make better decisions and take charge of your life. Accomplishing your goals will teach you important skill sets like:

- Perseverance
- Determination
- Drive
- Problem Solving
- AND more!

As you grow and change, so will your communication skills and how you manage life. As the year winds down and the next season of holidays approach, you'll discover you have a new and better ability to manage your:

- Finances
- Time
- Family

What started off as roadblocks to a stress-free holiday season actually become a clear path. It becomes easier to set healthy boundaries, ask for what you want, and communicate effectively with all sorts of people. No more Holiday!

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Workbook Exercise 4

In this short section of the eBook, we've discovered that the new year inspires people to resolve to make change. Let's take a look at how you can use the new year as a catalyst for changes that ultimately help you have even better holidays next year!

Answer the following questions and take yourself on a journey into the new year...

Pay close attention to what roadblocks could stand in the way of your success and focus on tackling them. This will help you stay focused and motivated when things get tough, which they will...but tackling them will make you tougher!

Remember what this section of the eBook taught you, learning the life skills you need to accomplish your new year's resolution will also give you the skills you need to make next year's holidays even better!





CONCLUSION

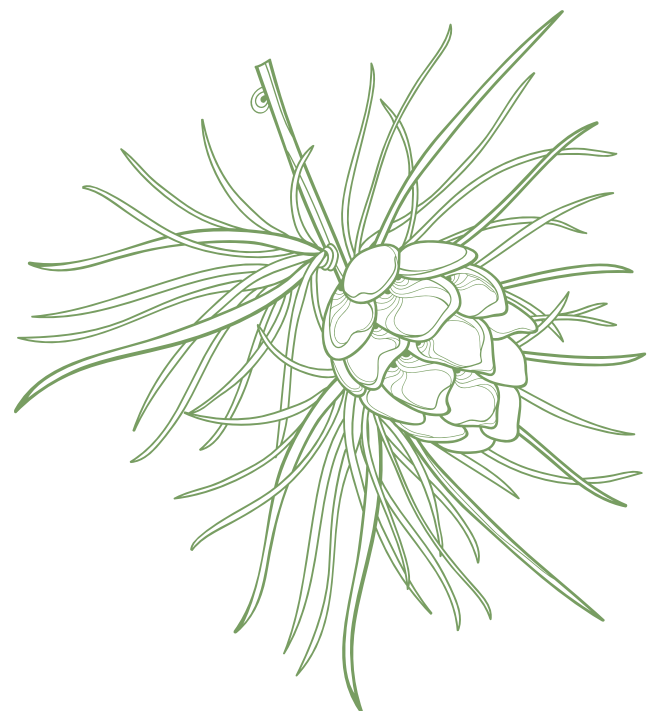
Thank you for taking the time to read the Surviving the Holiday eBook and completing the workbook. I am confident you are well on your way to a stress-free holiday season filled with family, friends, and the traditions you love most.

I know how hard it can be to take control of your holidays and set the important limits that bring true freedom, but I am confident you will fully enjoy the results when you do. Remember, you deserve to have a wonderful and happy holiday season that creates lasting memories for years to come. You don't have to leave that to chance. You can be intentional about your holidays and see how freeing they can be.

Make sure to go back and re-read your answers in the workbook and remind yourself of the goals you have for the holidays. Think about the roadblocks that make it harder than it should be to enjoy healthy, happy, Thanksgivings and Christmases. Make the commitment to make a plan and stick to it so you can be stress-free on the big days.

I love connecting with my readers. Be sure to send me an email and share how this eBook and workbook have helped you feel more confident about preparing for the holidays. If you have suggestions or tips, I'd love to hear them. I am always looking for new ways to help people experience the holidays in positive ways.

Until then, I wish you the happiest of holidays and know you are well on your way to some of the happiest and healthiest you've ever had.





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