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Enjoy the Holidays! 5 Practices for Less Stress & More Joy by Helaine Iris

It bothers me that most conversations I have at this time of year contain some level of stress and anxiety about the upcoming holiday season. I'm not immune myself – every year I swing on a pendulum between being caught up in a frenzy of materialism or feeling the urge to back away and becoming cynical about the entire season. What is up with that? Shouldn't this time of year be about peace, joy and celebration?

It's understandably complex; the holiday season taps into all of our personal and collective beliefs and values, from our deepest feelings about creation to how our families function to how we live in community. Throw a substantial dose of shameless consumerism into the mix and it's no wonder people both love and dread December.

For better or worse, it's the way it is – but there's an option. You can consciously change your relationship to this time of year. Rather than just go for the ride year after year, (and hope you don't put on too many extra pounds) you can make a declaration to yourself to make this a different year.

Here are 5 practices to seriously consider. If you do, I guarantee, you will feel surprisingly different by the end of the year.

1. **Get clear about what's most important to you.** Redefine the spirit of the season for yourself. What is this holiday really about, is it spiritual? Family? Is it even about giving? There are no right answers, except yours.
2. **Are your basic needs met before giving to others?** Are you in integrity with your finances? Often we equate love and generosity with the value of a gift. Gift giving can take many forms. Make sure you are in alignment with your true values first, and then decide what to give.
3. **When you find yourself imagining stressful scenarios about family interactions or social situations ask yourself, "is this the only possibility?"** Remind yourself that worrying about the future or regretting the past isn't going to change what has or is going to happen. Search for what else could be true, rather than what you fear.
4. **Create your own traditions.** Once you're clear about what makes this season meaningful for you, have fun and play with it. Invite your loved ones to participate in something new. Take a risk, defy convention.
5. **Remember, your time and energy is precious.** Are your boundaries intact? Most of the stress around the holidays surrounds an increase time demands and frankly, increased food intake. Be clear about what works for you and what doesn't. Making and sticking to healthy choices isn't deprivation, it's self love. Enjoy yourself as well as honoring yourself at the deepest level.

For me the holidays are about remembering the light, celebrating goodness and deeply feeling gratitude for life itself. I'm looking forward to December...are you?

I wish you ALL, all the goodness, light and love possible now and through this holiday season.
It's YOUR life...imagine the possibilities!

Helaine Iris helps overwhelmed small business owners take control of their time and finances so they can double their revenues with less stress. Featured in numerous publications, including "O" The Oprah Magazine Helaine's dynamic, personal coaching style helps entrepreneurs accelerate their businesses with tools that empower, build financial success and create personal transformation. For more information, go to: <http://www.solostream.com/author/helaine-iris/>

