



Holiday Stress: Preventing Holiday Burnout by award-winning author / stress-relief expert Susie Mantell

Q: Dear Susie, My husband and I are running on empty. My dad's long illness has sapped our time, energy, and our savings. How can we replenish our own spirits and create joyous holidays for our 3 young children?

A: Understandably, you're exhausted by the responsibility, expense, and emotion inherent in care-giving. I'm glad you understand that your own renewal will bring light to the holidays for your children, and one another.

First, Some Basics

1. Get outdoors for even a few minutes each day. Begin to think of daylight as an essential daily nutrient.
2. Stay hydrated, and reduce sugar, caffeine and alcohol. All three can exacerbate stress.
3. Make time for recreation. (*Look again at that word and re-create.*)
4. Moderate exercise and restorative sleep both support healing and wellness, especially as we face challenges for which we need clear heads and rested bodies.
5. Soothing music, relaxation CDs, and meditation provide effortless comfort. (See www.relaxintuit.com)
6. Indulge in warm, comforting "non-working" baths.

It's Family Conference Time

One December, a member of our family was suffering from depression. One evening we noticed that for no discernible reason, the grey cloud lifted and she seemed more like herself. We knew if we waited for our traditional gift-giving time we might "lose the light." So we spontaneously reinvented tradition and opened gifts early that year so everyone could enjoy that time. A warm, upbeat family talk can ease pressure to make this year just like before. This year can have a magic all its own. Your kids know this is a difficult time. Ask them to help re-prioritize some of the more labor-intensive traditions. Create new ones! (*e.g.: Maybe skating and a sleep-over could replace baking 4 kinds of cookies from scratch.*) Shared decision-making will allow you and your children to give to one another in ways that embody the true spirit and values of this holiday season. [See more Holiday Tips at www.relaxintuit.com/tips.asp]

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