



Holiday Stress Survival Tips by Patti Hathaway, Business Advisor & Author

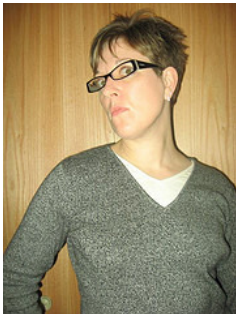
For those of you who tend to get stressed out during the holidays, I have some suggestions on how to lessen the stress that often comes with the holidays.

Financial Strains

A recent survey found that finances are the most common cause of holiday stress. Buying gifts and paying for travel expenses can create a significant financial burden. Here's a quick tip that my extended family (my parents, siblings and spouses, nieces and nephews) are doing this Christmas. We are bringing a \$10 gift for each member of our family. None of us really "need" anything. This inexpensive alternative doesn't put strain on those families without a lot of money but it still offers the fun of opening gifts. My Dutch (meaning really thrifty) family will certainly pride themselves on who got the most expensive gift for \$10.



Free Yourself from Taking Offense



Consider cutting people slack by not taking offense at what they say (or don't say). It is so easy to be easily offended by family members because of our history with them. For example, when they make a sarcastic remark, choose to ignore it and not allow it to "tear flesh." Then, immediately forgive them. Years ago, my husband and I would spend our 6 hour drive home from my parents psychoanalyzing all the comments and what they "really" meant. It was a lot of wasted emotional energy. Keep in mind that when we don't forgive others we become bitter...and bitterness is a lot like a match in that it only burns the person holding on to it.

Forty Winks

Sometimes during the holidays we burn our candle at both ends. We need seven nights of good restful sleep. Some people need more sleep than others, but most sleep experts believe that adults need eight hours of sleep per night. Ongoing research is showing that when people don't get enough sleep, they build up "sleep debt." The debt accumulates night after night. If you get one hour of sleep less per night, after eight nights you have built up a sleep debt equivalent to one night's sleep. Sleep debt takes a toll on our motor and intellectual functions. William Dement, author of *The Promise of Sleep* says, "In the simplest of terms, a large sleep debt makes you stupid." It takes a toll on us in terms of

work errors and can make us emotionally distant from our co-workers, friends, and family.



Another interesting point about sleep is that our body needs a regular sleep-wake routine. For those of us with daytime working hours, most of us go to bed at a certain time and we get up at a certain time. During the holidays, however, we tend to go to bed later and sleep in. Here's the problem - if we sleep an extra hour beyond our normal waking time, we will be tired. It then takes our body forty-eight hours to recover from sleeping late. Let's say you normally wake up at 6:30 a.m. However, on Saturday, you get up after 7:45 a.m. Because you slept in that extra hour plus, it will take your body literally two days or 48 hours to recover. You will feel tired. We often refer to Mondays as "Blue Monday." Perhaps that is in part due to the fact that we are still recovering from "sleeping in."

Sleep experts suggest you should get up within an hour of your normal waking period even if you go to bed later than usual. To make up for those later nights, consider taking a twenty-minute nap in the afternoon. To make up your sleep debt, it is best to go to bed earlier than to sleep later. Aside from the physical benefits from your sleep routine, imagine how much you can enjoy the quiet time in your house with no one awake. Forty winks can make a big difference.

Patti Hathaway, CSP, The CHANGE AGENT, is one of fewer than 7% women worldwide to have earned the Certified Speaking Professional designation from the National Speakers Association for her proven presentation skills. She is a Business Advisor and the author of 6 books that have been translated into 5 languages and have sold over 100,000 copies. Patti solves your people challenges by providing highly customized solutions to meet your needs. Contact Patti at 1-800-339-0973 or at her web site: www.thechangeagent.com for information on her speaking and consulting services or to receive her free e-mail newsletter/blog.