

IN SIGHT for Oregon Lawyers and Judges

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF YOUR PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE

GIVE TO YOURSELF THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

The season of giving is upon us once again. Right after Halloween, it seems that stores begin to change over to their holiday season decor, and TV is filled with commercials providing gift ideas for your loved ones. So why is it that the “most wonderful time of the year” can cause so many people to burn out? Between shopping for the “perfect” gift and holiday parties and events, we seem to forget one important component: to give to ourselves. Giving to others receives a lot of emphasis during the holiday season. This charitable notion is part of what makes the holiday season special. However, if we are not taking care of ourselves, we can experience physical and emotional fatigue.

The idea of giving to ourselves can be difficult for some and even cause feelings of guilt. Consider the following example: When flying on a plane, you are instructed that, in the case of an emergency, you should place the air mask on yourself before assisting others. Similarly, if you don’t take care of yourself, you won’t have the emotional oxygen to care for your loved ones. This is especially important during the holiday season when our stress can be high. Here are four ways to give to yourself to enjoy this holiday season.

Set Boundaries

What does it mean to set boundaries? We set boundaries with ourselves and others by knowing our limits: what will cause us greater happiness and what will cause us more stress. By setting boundaries, we are doing more of what we want to do versus

what we feel we “have” to do. Yes, you may still have to file that brief or pick up your kids from daycare. But perhaps you might choose not to attend that extra holiday party you would have to squeeze into your schedule. Setting boundaries could mean not putting yourself into financial debt by buying that expensive gift. This holiday season, practice giving yourself permission to say no when something may cause you too much stress. Begin to take care of yourself by identifying your priorities and focusing on what’s important to you.

Plan Ahead

Nothing creates stress like last-minute to-dos. Each year it seems as though the holiday season arrived faster than the year before, often catching us off guard and leaving us stressed with an overwhelming amount of tasks to accomplish. Make this year different and plan ahead. Designate certain days and times when you will accomplish your holiday to-dos. If you can’t do all of your shopping online and have to face the crowds, prepare yourself mentally. Know that you do not have to be part of the madness and instead can embrace a positive, calm outlook toward the shopping experience. Plan to enjoy this holiday season, regardless of your environment.

Manage Expectations

The holidays can create a lot of pressure to have the perfect family gathering, host the best party, or give the most desirable gifts. All of this pressure can leave us feel-

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ing as though we are falling short. Many people experience stress and sometimes sadness during the holidays because they cannot live up to these expectations. This holiday, work to modify your expectations. Instead of thinking how things “should” be, find gratitude in what is. Our perspective of a situation largely affects how we feel. Take care of yourself by choosing a new point of view this season.

Gift Yourself

Giving to ourselves does not necessarily mean buying yourself gifts, but rather implementing daily strategies to help you cope. Finding ways to cope with our stress and emotions is important year-round, but it is particularly essential during the busiest time of the year. To adequately prepare ourselves for the hustle and bustle, we need to fuel our body with proper nutrition and exercise. Create a daily food log to help you eat healthfully and stay nourished. Give your mind and body a break by enjoying a relaxing bath, watching a funny movie, or going for an invigorating walk. Last but not least, prioritize your sleep – the more rested you are, the better able you are to handle all that the holiday season brings you.

This holiday season, remember to put on your own oxygen mask first so you will have a well of reserves to share the joys of the season with others.

This article was adapted and reprinted with permission from “Four Ways to Give to Yourself and Others to Enjoy This Holiday Season,” Shannon Cornell, www.artofwellnesscenter.com, December 15, 2015.