



THRIVING DURING THE HOLIDAYS
December, 2006 Issue Eight

Some people experience excessive stress and become emotional train wrecks during the holidays. Various reasons for stressing out emotionally and physically are:

- a) Self-imposed expectations for “performing” certain tasks during the season. For instance: “I have to buy the ‘perfect’ gift for every person on my shopping list.”
- b) Idealized or fantasy beliefs of what the holidays “should” be like. Stress and emotional distress can often be a result of working hard to make the holidays into something that is not realistic at this time in our life.
- c) Dealing with immediate and extended family members during the holidays can sometimes create stress and emotional pain. Unresolved conflict in relationships with family members may be accentuated during this time.
- d) Stress and emotional distress may be the result of financial limitations for spending during the holiday season; or perhaps due to disagreement with family members about how much money should be spent during the holiday season.

**Things You Can Do To Reduce Stress and Take Care of Yourself
Emotional Health This Time Of The Year**

- 1) Set realistic expectations for your gift buying and giving this year. Lighten up on your expectations to have to give the “perfect” gift.

2) Work on having a realistic view of your adult holiday experience based on present life situation and relationships, not the fantasy of your childhood holiday memories.

3) Examine your personal needs for interaction with family members during the holidays. Set realistic expectations for relational experiences with family members based on present relationships, not a fantasy of what you want the relationship experience to be like. Be open to learning from family members about their life experiences, beliefs, values, thoughts and feelings during the conversations you may have with them.

4) Set a budget for spending. If in a relationship, work together with spouse or partner to come to an agreement about spending during holiday season.

Reducing stress producing and emotionally distressing situations during the holiday season may actually help you move from just Surviving the Holidays to actually Thriving During the Holidays!

All the best to you during this Holiday Season...

Next Issue:

Pressure to Look Great and Keep Up

I'm feeling like I have to keep up with my friends as far as fashion, style, and kind of guys I am dating. I don't like the pressure. What can I do to deal with this?

Upcoming Issues:

Building Intimacy in Relationships

My boyfriend and I want to be closer but are struggling with fear about getting more emotionally close. How can we deal with this problem?