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Newsletter

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Make a List and Check it Twice

Ask any mom or dad how they're doing and they'll probably at some point mention the word "busy". We all have so much to do and there never seems to be enough time in the day. Well, we have to figure that if Santa needed a list then maybe it might help us, too. Here are just a few lists you might want to consider making and checking twice.

To Do List

Probably one of the most common but useful lists is the "To Do" list. Take some time to create a list of the 5 most important things for you to accomplish this month. They can be based on family time and the holidays or they can be preparation items for the new year.

Some things to consider putting on your "To Do" list:

Christmas Cards – every year more than a billion Christmas Cards are sent to loved ones and this is no accident. It's an opportunity once a year to make sure that people know you are thinking of them. It's also a tradition that can be hit and miss. This year, add it to your list, and make it a hit.

Gift Shopping – make a list of items you've seen throughout your various shopping excursions that you may want to purchase for next year. This includes Christmas items such as front door mats, decorations, wrapping paper, stocking stuffers, arts and crafts, etc. which are substantially marked down by retailers either the two or three days prior to Christmas and definitely the day after.

Wrap Party – prepping presents for Christmas morning can be a drag but it doesn't have to be. Consider asking some friends to join you for a “girl's night out” where you actually accomplish a lot. Everyone should bring an appetizer or finger food to share then, with a Christmas movie playing in the background, you each have a glass of wine or cup of cocoa and enjoy light conversation while working together to wrap presents.

Prep and Purge – in preparation for new incoming Christmas gifts, place three organizational bins or storage boxes in each child's room and encourage them to sort their items by those to keep and store, those to donate to charity and those to keep in their room. A good principle to teach children is that for every one item that comes in, one should go out.

Speaking of “purging,” take time this month to clean out the pantry and cupboards donating the unused products to a local food bank or shelter. While you're at it, take this opportunity to clean out the fridge discarding food items that are outdated or no longer used.

Balance out the holiday eating – typically through-out the holiday season parties or other Christmas gatherings happen Friday through Sunday. This is when the unhealthy eating occurs. So, Monday through Thursday will be the time to make sure that you're eating the healthier dinners, soups, stews, etc. from home. Commit to eating healthier at home during the week to counter-balance the poor eating on the weekends.

Acknowledgements

The holidays are the perfect time to make sure that those who matter to you know you care. Create a list of the 5 people you want to acknowledge this time of year and then write a thank-you note or other note of encouragement and recognition. These people can be family, friends or other loved ones, but you can really touch a life by considering those you wouldn't normally. For instance, a volunteer at a local museum, library, zoo or other community establishment. On a local level you might acknowledge your council person or mayor, perhaps a local police department or fire department or your local church or synagogue. Anywhere that has men and women who serve your community and are typically unrecognized.

Beyond the thank-you note, a handcrafted item or something made by your child during arts and crafts time at school can be really thoughtful. The heart behind the acknowledgement will typically mean more than the actual item.

NOT To Do List

What is supposed to be the most joyous time of year can sometimes be a nightmare, created not by the things we do but, by the things we don't do. To help return the "happy" to the holidays, create a list of the 5 things you're not going to do this month.

Giving up on Sleep – science has proven that sleep is an important part of our health and wellness. Be sure not to schedule events that will clash with your needed sleep. If you have a morning meeting, don't stay out until midnight or later the night before.

Getting Stressed – remember to not sweat the small stuff. Typically our biggest source of stress during the holidays is our own personal expectations. Remember that nobody is perfect and you're only one person. Cut yourself some slack, take a deep breath and put one foot in front of the other. Getting stressed never helped anyone accomplish anything.

Over-eat – probably the most difficult challenge about the holiday season is the parties. Whether with family, friends or co-workers, the food is abundant this time of year. If you can't control the type of foods then definitely control the portions.

Over-work – we all have responsibilities but we also all have family and loved ones who want to spend time with us. Be sure to keep your priorities straight and don't spend so much time at work that you forget how to play.

Over-schedule – it seems incongruent with the time of year but don't forget that it's okay to say, "No!" You and your family can't be in two places at once and quiet time together is important for peace. Do not schedule your family for more than one event or gathering in a day and be careful not to plan too many functions too close together.

Fun With Family

What is supposed to be the most joyous time of year can sometimes be a nightmare, created not by the things we do but, by the things we don't do. To help return the "happy" to the holidays, create a list of the 5 things you're not going to do this month.

If your family lives in the same zip code it's practically required that you get together at least once during the holidays. Even if your family is spread out and has to travel, it's assumed. So, the question is, how do you have one of these events without imposing on a family member to open their home to an onslaught of relatives? Create a list of the 5 things you can do with your extended family this month.

Restaurant – reserve a banquet or buffet room for an evening. This is a great way to allow everyone to visit and enjoy a meal of their choice.

Movie Night – meet up at the local movie theater for a fun family film that will be age appropriate for the youngest but entertaining for the adults.

Rent a Room – depending upon the size of your family consider getting a hotel room where everyone can get together, hang out, converse and when the gathering's over someone else will do the cleaning. Also, some hotels have heated swimming pools open to the guests, a swim party would be a unique, holiday family gathering.

Bowling, Skating, etc. – the focus is family togetherness, having something fun to do while visiting just makes it that much more rewarding.

Do a Good Deed – this one will definitely meet everyone's approval. Look into different "good deeds" that you and your family can do together. For instance, serve at a soup kitchen, read stories to children in a local shelter, help handout toys to tots or deliver presents for local churches.

In Summary

It's that time of year again and it can either be family-friendly and fun or stress-filled and insane. Make your lists and check them twice, because the holiday season should be joyous and nice.