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## Joy to Your World: How to Make Holidays Meaningful

By Gay Norton Edelman

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### Avoid Holiday Burnout

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Give yourself the gift of managing the extra workload with more grace than grouchiness.

1. In addition to your to-do list, write a not-to-do list, suggests Ann Daly, PhD, author of *Clarity: How to Accomplish What Matters Most* (Wollemi Pine Press). Note those tasks that don't mean a lot—say, the neighbors' open house. (No need to explain. If pressed, tell them, "We've got something else on the calendar.") Also include basics: Don't overspend, overschedule, or do things solely out of obligation.
2. Watch for warning signs that you're in overdrive, says Carson. "If your heart rate increases, or you feel irritable or impatient, have trouble sleeping, or are indulging in stress eating," she says, "you've got to find ways to slow down." Meaning, delete things on your to-do list that aren't essential to what you truly value.
3. Stop every so often—try on the hour or each time you're alone—to go within and connect with your spirit, whether by meditation, prayer, or thinking about what's good in your life.
4. Be aware of anxious thoughts ("This is too much! I'll never get it all done!") and replace them with positive ones ("I can do this. I'm good at this."). Stress comes from the negative messages your mind churns out. You don't have to let yourself go there.
5. Make rest, good nutrition, and exercise priorities. Think of your energy level as a bank account you don't want to overdraw.

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