A Reflection: Stress over the Holidays

The holidays can be a source of joy, stress, or both! To support you in cultivating a more peaceful and joyful experience over the holidays, here is an invitation to reflect on what is important (and what is not).

First, take a moment to pause, allowing your attention to focus on the holiday season; what comes up for you? As you attend and reflect, allow your mind to observe; if possible, notice if you want or don’t want certain things from your holiday experience. Here are some things to consider:

1. **Consider what is important about the holidays** and write (on the line below); several possibilities might include being with family and people you love; spirituality; food, music, gift giving/receiving. The most important part of the holiday is:

   ____________________________________________

2. **Now consider the sources of holiday-related stress** and write down the most impactful; possibilities might include finances, family/relational conflict, unrealistic expectations, remembering loved ones not present. The most stressful part of the holiday is:

   ____________________________________________

3. **Acknowledge your thoughts and feelings honestly.**

   Today, as the holidays are approaching, I am thinking:____________________________________

   Today, as the holidays are approaching, I am feeling:____________________________________

4. **Unrealistic Expectations**

   One thing I want that is not realistic is:

   ____________________________________________

“How wonderful that no one need wait a single moment to improve the world.” Anne Frank
“Money often costs too much”.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

5. **Proactively plan social activities**

One friend or group I want to get together with is: ______________________________

6. **Traditions**

One tradition I want to give up is: ____________________________________________

One tradition I want to continue is: __________________________________________

One tradition I want to create is: ____________________________________________

7. **Family/Relationships**

One person I will spend time with is: _________________________________________

8. **Plan for less intensity/more quiet time**

One stressful activity I can abandon is: _________________________________________

One quiet-time activity I can enjoy is: _________________________________________

9. **Nurturance**

One way I will nurture others is: ____________________________________________

One way I will nurture myself is: ____________________________________________

You might consider pausing periodically and returning to this reflection during your holiday.

**Wishing you a peaceful holiday!**

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“We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give”. Winston Churchill