

**Identifying Your Real Holiday Values
To Assist in Your Stress Management
By Peggy L. Ferguson, Ph.D.**

During the course of trying to change behavior, people often discover that what they say they value and what their behavior indicates that they value are not the same thing. We may believe that we most value our family members, our home, or relationship with a Higher Power, when in fact, we spend our time, money, attention, on an entirely different list of things and activities. Our behavior does not match our values. This one mismatch can set us up for internal and relationship conflicts that creates or increases stress.

To change up old behaviors, you have to decide what you want to do differently and to identify goals for change. To help you identify the direction that you want to move into, use this exercise to identify your true values regarding the holidays.

What are my true values regarding the holidays? Rank the following items from most important (#1) to least important (#15). Read the whole list before you start assigning rank.

- ___ Finding just the right present for the most important people in my life.
- ___ Spending enough money on gifts that my loved ones know that I love them.
- ___ Taking the opportunity with time off from work and other obligations to spend it with my loved ones.
- ___ Making sure that time with loved ones is action packed so that everyone is entertained and no one gets bored.
- ___ Spending the kind of time with loved ones where we can talk and catch up on the important things that are happening in each other's lives.
- ___ Maintaining the holiday traditions that I was raised with.
- ___ Developing holiday traditions that have meaning for the important people in my life.
- ___ Having an especially clean house so that I will feel good about having company.
- ___ Taking the time to connect with friends and family members that I haven't seen a lot of, even if its over the phone.

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- ___ Being charitable to less fortunate people, either with my time or my money.
- ___ Attending church and/or keeping the spiritual/religious significance of the season in the foreground.
- ___ Using the holidays as an opportunity for spiritual growth.
- ___ Using the holidays as a reminder for all the things I have to feel grateful for, and to exhibit a thankfulness for God's grace.
- ___ Making sure that I tell the people that I love, that I do love, in deed and in words.
- ___ Making sure that I present myself and my family well.
- ___ Making the food memorable.



This helpful guide for managing holiday stress covers reasons why we experience extra stress during the holidays, how stress can

impact addiction recovery, and makes suggestions not only on how to survive holiday stress, but how to move from anxiety and stress into effective problem solving. It Includes worksheets.

Although written with the recovering person in mind, it provides helpful information to anyone experiencing "holiday stress".

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