



Thoughts and Strategies From Maryann

As each year passes the time seems to be quicker at each turn of event. The past event that came sooner than we expected; Christmas.

When we were younger we did not worry so much about what to purchase for gifts, the dinner for that day, or that party that we wanted to go to. When you are a child, Santa and Christmas seem to be a simpler time. I really love Christmas and I was that child that

woke up first and had to wake everyone else up because Santa paid his yearly visit. There was so much fun and excitement for the day.

As the years have passed, and I have gotten older, I still love Christmas. I believe it a time to show compassion and to take a moment to appreciate what we have and from where we have come from.

I am just like everyone else and easily get wrapped up in the activities of the season. The shopping, preparing for a wonderful Christmas meal keeping in mind the special items and our traditional family favourites.

The Christmas season is busy so how do you live with so much happening and still enjoy?

The "To do" list gets longer and longer. First thing I have to do is decorate the house because I like to see the festive colours of the season. There are a lot of extra tasks like going to the mall (which isn't my favourite thing to do), finding time to bake and try to remember to prepare everything so perfectly. All the while, continue with my daily life. Feeling overwhelmed happens so easily. Then anxiety wells up. Putting higher expectation on yourself will increase the feeling of anxiety, being overwhelmed and being stress out. Even though you know you have a brain injury and you know your limitations, I believe we still try to be like we use to be. Around this time of year we want things to go well so we strive to accomplish too much. There is a saying "Don't sweat the small stuff", it seems as it would come in handy during any holiday or event.



I believe we can plan and enjoy special events. We just need to remember a few key things: Make a "To Do" list, add the events and activities into your calendar, keep the basic structure of your schedule so that you can rely on it, choose the activities that you consider important to go to, if you are feeling stress don't feel bad to opt out of an activity (there will be others), go to your usual appointments, pre-plan some of the work that you need to do like baking (maybe there is a recipe that you could make and freeze at a time when you are not busy), if the day has been really busy and there still is a dinner to make, try take out for the family or yourself.

Pacing yourself is extremely important this time of year so that you don't feel burnt out. Try to stay on a good diet and exercise as much as you have time for. It is best to get a little exercise in your schedule as it will help you cope with the stress of the season. Remember we can only do what we can do. Take a little 'me' time for yourself as we do deserve this treat and it will help us rejuvenate.

I hope everyone enjoyed the season and I wish everyone a very Happy New Year!

