

Holiday Tip Sheet

We are ready to roll into the holiday season! Now is the perfect time to do some advance planning, and get organized around how you want to make the holidays special and meaningful to you. We can get so caught up in the holiday hype, and forget the sacredness of this time- the beauty of connecting with friends, relatives, and our spirituality often gets lost in the craze of consumerism, greed, and obligation.

Take some time in the next few days, maybe with your partner and/or your kids, and make a short list of a few of your most favorite holiday traditions that you want to keep this year (maybe 3-5 items tops.) Then, add one or two new traditions- something related to service, like working at a soup kitchen or food drive, finding out how you can donate gifts to families in need, or committing to a new spiritual practice or retreat. Make these 5-7 items on your list a top priority now for your holiday season.

Set intentions around spending and gift giving. Decide in advance who you want to exchange gifts with, and make a pact with those who you aren't going to (so that you avoid feeling guilty if they give you a gift.) Make it known to the people you love that you'd prefer not to spend a lot of money on meaningless material items, but you'd rather give and receive the gift of spending time together enjoying an activity, taking a walk in nature, or learning something new. Then even if you choose to exchange/share gifts, they are meaningful to you and will be treasured memories for years to come.

Set intentions around parties and food and drink. Make your intentions realistic, so that you can stick to them. Instead of saying "I won't eat any sugar," make your intention be to reduce the amount of sugar you eat, or limit it to small tastes of homemade treats rather than mass-produced items. When attending a party, bring a delicious healthful dish that suits your dietary guidelines, and invite others

to enjoy what you have mindfully prepared. My secret weapon is to bring a vegan dessert... that way I'm less tempted by other sugary offerings. Know that there will be something at every party that tempts you, and allow yourself a small indulgence!

Keep it simple. Especially when you are home, keep activities quiet and low key when possible. Maintain your grounded energy at home. Use grounding essential oils in a diffuser, play soothing music, keep yourself warm, drink herbal tea. Pare away that which is unnecessary- perhaps the obligatory Christmas cards? If something is causing you undue stress, take some time to ask yourself why, and if it is something you can let go of, do so!

Take some time during the holidays to remind yourself of the significance of your particular tradition. We get so bombarded with the capitalist and media interpretation of holidays, that often we forget entirely what we are celebrating. Even if you're not particularly religious when it comes to holidays, take time to remind yourself why they are important to you.

Try to stick to your self-care routines throughout the rest of 2015. Aim to do at least one or two every day (it doesn't have to be the same ones each day.) These will go a long way in keeping you grounded and nourished.

And have fun! Approach the holidays from a perspective of delight, rather than dread. Enjoy this special time of year with friends and family, or just by yourself. You have the power to choose your perspective, you have the power to choose what you create this season, and you might even influence some others along the way to be more mindful this season.

Check out this Ayurvedic resource: <http://www.mapi.com/ayurvedic-knowledge/seasonal-health/ayurvedic-holiday-survival-guide.html#gsc.tab=0>