



LESS STRESS, MORE JOY

What are some things on your 'to-do' during the holiday season? (i.e. decorating, shopping, baking, scheduling, wrapping)

To-Do List	Rating	3 Ss

Go back to your list and reread each item. Rate each item from 1-10. 10 being "I freakin love it! It fills me with great joy! I wish I could spend my free time doing this!" 1 being "Ewww. This makes me drag my feet. I wish I never had to do this again!"

THINK 3 S's.

THINK STOP, SWAP, OR SMILE.

STOP: Think to yourself ... Is there any way I can get out of this? Do I have to do it? Can I not go?

SWAP: Think to yourself... Can I delegate it to someone in exchange for a service for them? Could I do it a different way?

SMILE: Think to yourself... How can I change this so that it will make make it more enjoyable?

Holiday
CHEER

1. Decorating

STOP: Do I have to decorate every room? Do I need a Christmas tree in every room? Could I keep it simple and decorate just one room? Choose the room where your family will spend most of their time. Do I need to put lights up outside on every inch of the house? Can I go without lights and just have a wreath on the door?

SWAP: Can I ask a creative friend to come over and decorate if I make appetizers for their Christmas dinner? Could I hire someone to decorate my tree? (Jane) Could I hire a company to put lights on my house? Can I ask my husband to do it in exchange for some “alone time”?

SMILE: I can turn on the fire? Ask the family to help? Play Christmas music? Can I buy new clips that will make it easier to attach the lights to the house?

2. Shopping

Start with a budget. Nothing is worse than overspending and feeling it in the new year when you are trying your best to save money and now are in debt. Make a list of people that you need to buy presents for this year and next to their name, list the item you plan to purchase for them.

STOP: Do I need to buy presents for all these people? Read their name and ask yourself “Why are they on my list?” Is there anyone I can cross off my list? Look again.

SWAP: Instead of making all the loaves of bread or plates of cookies, can I just purchase them from the local bakery? Instead of going out to the stores, can I avoid the crowds and order online? Hello. Amazon. Instead of making one big trip that leaves me exhausted, can I pick things up little by little when I’m already out and about?

SMILE: I could ask a friend to go shopping with me and we have lunch together. I could have everything I order gift wrapped.

3. Baking

STOP: Do I have to make cookies this year? Instead, call a local bakery and have them ready for p/u. Do I have to make the whole Christmas dinner?

SWAP: Instead of making the dough, can I order already made sugar cookies and just decorate them with the kids? *Walkers Shortbread \$12.99* Instead of making detailed sugar cookies, could I just make a yummy drop cookies recipe? Instead of making the whole Christmas dinner, can I make the roast and have everyone else bring a side or dessert? Instead of making the meal, could I just pick up premade sides? My absolute favorite place to premake meals is Time for Dinner on Manchester Road.

SMILE: I can invite friends over to make cookies with me. I can make cookies with my mom and kids.

4. Scheduling

STOP: Don't over-schedule yourself or your family. It's okay not to attend every little thing. Pick and choose the activities that matter most to you and your family. And don't forget to schedule in time to just stay at home in your warm, flannel jammies, drink hot chocolate and chill. Practice saying "No." No is a complete sentence. Or say, "It doesn't fit into my schedule." There is no need to give lengthy explanations or to make up excuses. Just. Say. No. You will feel honest and empowered. Saying "no" to the things you don't want to do is saying "yes" to more of the things you want to do and love.

SWAP: Instead of meeting my girlfriends out for dinner, could I invite them over to hang out? We could all wear our jammies and everyone could bring an appetizer to share.

The Holiday Concert/Holiday Office Party... I need to go to, but do I need to stay for the cookies and punch after it? Can I just have a drink or apps and then leave? You don't have to stay for the whole thing.

SMILE: What would make me feel relaxed and rejuvenated? Schedule time for just YOU! Put your hair down and go get a mani or pedi or both. Schedule a massage. Ginger Bay is my favorite place to go. Or just schedule time in your day to be alone. Find a quiet place (a park, a coffee shop out of town) and just *be*. Take a walk. Read a

book. Unplug and get away from social media. This is going to be difficult but you have to do it! Find the time. It's there.

5. Wrapping

STOP: Does the company I bought the gift from offer gift wrapping? Can I have presents sent straight to the recipient instead of going to the dreadful Post Office and sending it myself? Can I buy already made gift tags? Script and Scribble is my go-to for cute and personalized tags and gifts.

SWAP: Is there a local organization that will wrap my presents in exchange for a donation that goes toward their cause? *Delta Kappa Gamma*

SMILE: To make it more enjoyable, I could pour myself a glass of wine and turn on my favorite Christmas movie while I wrap. I could simplify it and choosing one wrapping paper for each child or family member. And if gift tags should fall off, I will know what wrapping paper belongs to which child.

The beauty of STOP, SWAP, OR SMILE is that if you do it consistently, you will start to have time to do the things you LOVE. Train your brain to stop doing the things that drain your energy and start doing the things that fill you with joy!