



10 Reminders for Working Parents this Holiday Season

with Deborah Porter, The Ultimate Mom Coach

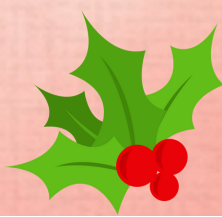
This holiday season, weather forecasters are predicting a warmer winter across the country. It's also being predicted to be the hottest holiday shopping season we've seen in 3 years.

The holidays are wrought with tradition, memories and telling the same stories that we love to hear year after year. With all that cooking, baking, planning, shopping and storytelling, many of us go overboard in more than one area. We all love a big, beautiful celebration and this season will be no different.

Keep in mind, that the holidays can still be amazing even if you choose to say no to a few of the things you may be presented with. That neighborhood cookie contest, the holiday cards that should've been sent out last week and that ugly Christmas sweater party? It's ok to pass on all of those things.

So, with that in mind, here are 10 things to keep in mind as you put the final touches on your family's holiday celebration:

1. **Embrace Doing Nothing**-Remember, this is time off for you too. Resist the urge to fill the days off with an unending to-do list of house stuff. With all of the party invites, midnight marathon cookie baking (or not), remember to take sometime while the kids are out of school to do absolutely nothing. Watch movies, snuggle under blankets, make indoor tents. Just be. It's ok for your home to look lived in.
2. **Don't Add Financial Stress**-Yes, we want to see the eyes of our kids twinkle as they open gift after gift on Christmas Day, but not if your eyes will be wide with shock in January when the credit card bill becomes due. What's the plan for gifts this year? And remember, everyone doesn't have to have the same number of gifts to open. Let go of that idea now. If not, you'll be running around the house on Christmas Eve looking for one more gift for Joey. Jesus himself only received 3 gifts.





3. **Be Mindful of Your “Yes”**-Has anyone ever told you that your yes is expensive? If so, let me serve as a reminder. If not let me be the first. Every yes you offer will need either time, capacity or resources. So before answering, ask yourself, "Do I want to go? Do I have the capacity for this event?" Be prepared and give yourself time to think it through.

4. **Make Time for You**-These days off will go by quickly so try not to over-schedule yourself or your kids. Be deliberate and intentional about making time for you. This has to be a non-negotiable. And notice the language here. I did not say *find* time because time is not waiting around to be found. Make the time. You'll be glad you did.

5. **Say “No” Even if there’s Guilt**-Guilt may pop up when the word no exits your mouth. Allow it, honor it and then move on to the thing that you need (or don't need) to do in that moment. Maybe you need a mani/pedi, maybe you need a session with your therapist or perhaps a couple of days away alone. For many of us, being needed by someone at every turn is challenging. Being needed by your team at work, needed at home by spouse and children. And yes, you may love your job and definitely love your family but the pull can be alot.

6. **Don’t Make Comparisons**-Often times we're comparing our worst moment with what seems to be someone else's best. Kind of like comparing apples to convertibles. It will never balance out. What serves you and your family well is what matters. Some maybe able to take off for a full 2 weeks or more, you may not have that much time left at the end of the year. Make the time off, however much it is, count.





7. **Embrace JOMO over FOMO**-Joy of Missing Out vs Fear of Missing Out. Sometimes the joy is in not getting invited to the party at all. That way you don't have to turn down the invitation. Learn to find joy in the moment, wherever that moment finds you. I've learned over the years that unplanned moments can be as rewarding (maybe more so) than the ones planned months in advance.

8. **Welcome the Imperfect**-Striving for perfection, robs us of our peace. But accepting the imperfect moments that life is made up of can create its own beautiful mosaic that creates long-lasting, beautiful memories for years to come. The family Christmas photo where my son's expression was that of a superhero who had sulfuric acid thrown on half his face (don't ask). Or the time I forgot to get batteries for most of the new toys. It's all pretty funny now, so don't sweat it. The imperfect moments make for great stories and future laughs.

9. **Set Limits**-Setting healthy boundaries is a strong form of self care that I recommend often because it's not done enough. For example, you have plans to go to the office Christmas party but it's been a long week and you're ready to get into your pajamas and snuggle with your kids to watch "How the Grinch Stole Christmas". Set a limit; I'll stay for 20 mins. Set a reminder if need be. This can also work well with visiting family and friends throughout the holidays.

10. **Sleep In**-Enough said. The kids can figure it out, your spouse can step in, breakfast during vacations and holidays doesn't have to be hot and served on plates. In fact, did you even have a memorable childhood if you weren't eating dry cereal and watching cartoons while your parents slept in?

