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WELLNESS

5 Ways To Avoid Stress On Thanksgiving To Make The Most Out Of The Holiday

Definitely don't forget to do #4.

DR. DEBORAH SANDELLA NOV 17, 2016



It's here — Thanksgiving — a time for creating beautiful, delicious feasts fit for the kings and queens in your life. You start with multiple checklists for food shopping, matching plates, festive decorations and invited guests. Did I mention cleaning the house and making sure everything has a place? Before long, this celebration of gratitude becomes a nerve-racking list of "to do's," closer to resembling a breakdown than a cover of *Good Housekeeping*. These five pointers will help you prioritize what's important, so you bring more gratitude and less anxiety to the table.

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1. Pace yourself.



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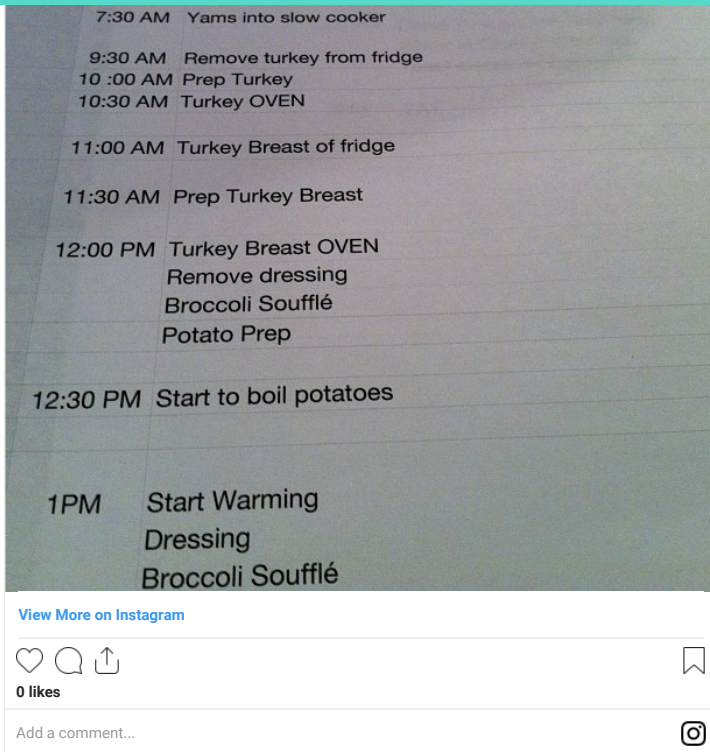
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Have you noticed how our expectations roar out of control at the holidays? We wish for everything perfect ... Everything beautiful ... everything on our long, long list to be DONE! This year, instead of sprinting like a marathon runner "Doing it all, all by yourself," choose differently. Just for fun, as best as you can, slow down, pace yourself, and let the season become a meditation on "play."

2. Share presence rather than perfection.

Regardless of undone tasks, take a deep breath, relax and allow yourself to be fully present in your body. It's easy to get so busy that our minds are preoccupied with shopping, cleaning, cooking and doing — we're "absent-minded" so to speak. This Thanksgiving season give the gift of yourself by being fully attentive in each interaction. By the end of the day, you'll notice ordinary moments transform into whole-hearted connections. [And social connection is proven to produce "positive, restorative effects that can help keep us going longer and stronger."](#)



3. Pause to receive.

When we are preoccupied with giving, there's no time for receiving. There's beauty all around to be received during this time of the year — bright autumn days, soft flickering candlelight, sweet yummy pies, the sounds of laughing children and the warmth of holiday hugs. All free for the receiving.

This time of year, sometimes stirs up sadness over not having our expectations met. Memories from unhappy holidays of the past may be remembered, or thinking about unfulfilled dreams can stimulate a sense of holiday blues. Again, the best thing to do is to pause and receive these feelings — they are merely transient emotions passing through, they are not you. Treat them as guests who stop in for a visit, share some news and move on. Sometimes they stay for a minute, sometimes an hour, maybe even days, but always they eventually leave, and your heart is once again yours that place where you're at home with yourself. A great technique that allows them to leave more quickly is to take 5 minutes to write the feelings on paper releasing any need to edit or hold back. It's like dumping unpleasant feelings onto the blank page, so you no longer hold them in your head. It works great!

Squeeze in some personal time everyday — you'll feel energized, and focused. Your brain and your body will be centered and you'll get more done more easily. You'll avoid unnecessary mistakes that waste your precious time. Learn from Gandhi who said, "I have so much to do today, I must meditate two hours instead of one."

5. Permission to ask for Help

Give yourself permission to ask for help, whether it's asking your partner to run some errands, your children to pick up the house, or your friends to look beyond your messy kitchen.

Turn your Thanksgiving into a love fest and enjoy all the deliciousness!

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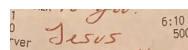
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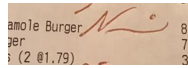




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