

# **HOLIDAY MEMORIES**

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THE STRESS-FREE WAY

WORKSHEET

**A**s the holiday season approaches, you may find yourself putting off tasks you could be doing early, waiting until the last minute to complete all your holiday projects, or simply avoiding thinking about the whole thing.

***This can be the year you take action, plan ahead, simplify, stay within the confines of your budget, and enjoy restful, loving holiday get-togethers.***

This worksheet will help you take proactive steps to create the most memorable, low-stress holidays you'll ever experience.

**1. Family of origin holiday traditions.** Using the lines below on the left side, list the holiday family traditions you experienced in your mother and father's home growing up. In the lines on the right, jot down your feelings about those traditions. Did you enjoy them? Were they just "ho-hum?" Write if you no longer wish to take part in a tradition.

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**2. Your current family traditions.** What holiday traditions has your own family established each year?

List them on the left. Do you still want to follow through with these traditions? State “yes” or “no” on the right.

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**3. New traditions you want to create.** Ask your spouse and children what they would like to do to celebrate the holidays this year. Also, find out from your friends what kinds of things they do. Then, list here the traditions and festivities you'd like to carry out this year. It's okay to leave some traditions out if you don't prefer to have them this year.

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**4. Feelings about the holidays.** What are your most prominent feelings during the holidays? Some examples are happiness, joy, sadness, nostalgia, stressed out, rushed, hectic, and uninvolved. Write down your feelings and then write why you think you feel that way.

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**5. Simplify.** If you believe it's time for you to simplify your holiday planning and celebrations, check off what you could do. Also, write down any other ideas you come up with to help you simplify.

- ☐ Stop trying to be perfect
- ☐ Plan ahead
- ☐ Set time limits for gatherings
- ☐ Purchase pre-made meals at deli
- ☐ Ask for help from family
- ☐ Call a caterer
- ☐ Use shortcuts to ease party prep
- ☐ Hire housecleaners
- ☐ Reduce number of dishes served

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**6. Gift-giving.** What could you do to make gift-giving a more pleasant experience? Record all your ideas here.

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**7. Your holiday budget.** Do you make a reasonable budget for the holidays that you can stick to? If not, why not?

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**8. Decreasing stress about money.** What will you do this holiday season to reduce financial burdens?

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**9. Cut your gift list and/or money you'll spend.** Thoughtfully consider how you can reduce your gift list and/or the amount of money you spend per person. Note those things here.

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**10. Lessening family tensions.** Are there obvious tensions among some of your family members? If so, what can you do to make an effort to reduce tension-filled incidents?

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**11. Your holiday travel.** Do you have to travel during the holidays? Is your holiday trip by car, bus, air, or train? How do you feel about the trip? For example, do you find things about the travel to enjoy or do you view it as a giant hassle? What specific things could you do to ease your stress during the trip?

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***This year, vow to make some much-needed changes to how you celebrate the holidays.***

You'll enjoy the season more and so will your family and friends. Create cherished memories this holiday season by taking steps to reduce your stress.

**Merry Christmas & Happy Holidays!**