

PSYCHOLOGICAL STRATEGIES FOR KEEPING THE



MERRY IN
CHRISTMAS

You know how it is....

The vortex of The Holiday Season draws you into the eye of the storm. By mid-December, you are as busy as one of Santa's elves! You're making lists, checking them twice, shopping on your lunch breaks, praying for a quick, close parking spot, battling the crowds and lines, spending and worrying about money you don't have. Meanwhile, you are preparing for and attending social events every weekend, possibly weeknights and often lunch events too! You find yourself "should-ing" and "must-ing" yourself through every obligation, silently (or not so silently) begrudging and complaining. Let's just get it out there right now...Ba Humbug!

What you may *not* know is that if you could consciously choose to join in OR sit out from your regular Christmas activities...guess what? Research shows that most of us would likely *still do it* all the same!

Yes, it's true! We would choose to do all the things we do. Keep traditions. Buy gifts. Wrap gifts. Get a tree. Hang the lights. Play the music. Attend the events and gatherings. Eat and act merry.

What's wrong with that? Nothing. It's actually all very, very good JUST THE WAY IT IS! So what *is* the problem? Our own inner battle! It has become commonplace to complain about Christmas! We are allowing ourselves to be swallowed by a wave of negativity instead of focusing on the magic, splendor, and delight that we could experience.

If *you* find yourself begrudging, fighting Christmas and *should-ing* yourself through the whole thing – follow these psychological sugar twists to bring some true joy back into your holiday.

Psychological Coping Strategies to Keep the **Merry** in Christmas!

Lower Your Standards

This is a key to the natural happiness that we all deserve. You can't do everything and be everywhere. Accept it! Do what you can and let the rest go. Forgive yourself and others. Offer GRACE.



Make a Choice

Choose to enjoy as much as you can of what this short holiday really offers. *Choose* to see the good not the bad. Ride the wave, no matter what comes your way. Attitude makes all the difference in how Christmas feels!

Drop your inner mantra of "Should"

Should and *Must* are words that increase cortisol levels - a natural stress hormone that contributes to weight gain and immune suppression! Not exactly your friend during this time of year! Instead, change your inner language to "I prefer to" vs. "I should or I must". Practice this inner mantra: "I have done enough. I am enough."

Learn to Receive.

Giving is easy for most people. But feeling worthy of a gift or a kind word can be very difficult. Yet receiving IS a gift to those who are giving you a present or compliment. A genuine thank you is all it takes. Simply breathe in the nice compliment, accept that you deserve it, and allow yourself to receive the gift.

Ultimately, the joy of Christmas is inside you. No matter what you cook, wrap, decorate, or who you socialize with, the true merriment of Christmas can be cultivated by your inner attitude rather than what happens around you. Be mindful of your own behaviour and employ these strategies when you find yourself feeling frazzled and frayed as the big day draws near.

Christmas Classic Health Tips

from Dr. Heidi McGill, ND

The most popular (loved) Holiday Health Tips:

Breathe! Centre yourself in each moment and be as fully present as possible.

Hydrate: Did you know that thirst can cause people to become irritable? Don't be a Scrooge! Try and drink at least 8-10 glasses of water or enjoy a nice warming, seasonal herbal tea!

Indulge without Guilt: If you're going to eat it, enjoy it! Remind yourself that health is a long-term goal, and a few splurges won't sabotage your over-all progress.

Take your natural supplements: This will help even things out while you enjoy those holiday treats!

For more fun and helpful holiday tips go to:

www.healingfoundations.ca

**GIVE YOURSELF THE GIFT OF A GOOD ATTITUDE
THIS YEAR AND CHRISTMAS WILL FEEL JOYFUL,
PEACEFUL AND MERRY.**



Heidi McGill is a registered doctor of naturopathic medicine. She has owned and operated Healing Foundations since November 2006. She has helped dozens of families discover their best balance for overall wellness in body and mind, using the principles and practices of naturopathic medicine. Dr. Heidi regularly appears as "Guelph's Naturopathic Expert" on Inside Guelph a local Roger's T.V. program. She also writes articles on topics that matter to you. Dr. Heidi is focused on educating you about how your body functions in combination with the natural and cultural environment. She is genuinely passionate about guiding you towards optimal health, vitality and more joy in your life.

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