Success Tip – 3 Ways to find Peace During the Holidays
By Jim Luger

‘Tis the season to celebrate, give to others, and reunite with family: which means a time to gorge, splurge, and be re-reminded of your problematic birth order. Welcome to the most stressful season of the year.

But there are proven ways to find peace and joy during the holiday season. The following anti-stressor ideas can help you toward that quest:

Anti-stressor #1: Slow down and simplify.
Frenzied schedules produce anxiety. Most people in the United States try to carry on their normal professional and business schedules, plus blend in all the commitments, obligations, and expectations of this holiday season. Don’t be a holiday hero: delegate (potluck Christmas dinner?), eliminate (Sorry, I can’t attend your party), and simplify (how about 1/10th of the lights this year?).

By the way, many cultures celebrate ethnic or religious traditions this time of year to coincide with Winter solstice. Unlike Americans, however, most countries take more than one day off from work to refresh themselves for the coming year. Mexican business people, for example, ramp business activities way down in December.

Anti-stressor #2: Take care of yourself.
You’ve heard that sunlight deprivation can depress people in northern climates because the days are shorter and the sun is closer to the horizon. Before expensive sunlight-like light bulbs were available, people took a daily dose of cod liver oil (yuck) to feel better. I asked my mother-in-law (who is 96 years old as of this writing) why she made her kids take cod liver oil, and said “because everyone did that during the winter.” There you have it. It is rich in vitamin D, which is actually a hormone that your body normally produces with exposure to sunlight. Less sunlight could mean a vitamin D deficiency, with depression as one of the possible maladies. Studies have shown, however, that vitamin D supplements can decrease depression. It is available in tablet form these days, and is cheaper than a trip to Florida. (For more information, visit WebMD, http://www.webmd.com/depression/news/20040803/vitamin-d-ease-depression, and ask your doctor before taking vitamins or food supplements.)

Another way to feel happier and more energetic is to exercise at least 30 minutes, most days of the week. You already know that, but is it part of your routine? You don’t need to join a posh health club; just power-walk in a shopping mall before work (you’ll meet other nice people in sneakers doing the same thing), or do aerobics in your living room. If you are intent on joining a fitness club, ask your health insurance provider if they will pay for part of it (some do).

Anti-stressor #3: Adjust your attitude.
Stop, and ask yourself what is really important right now: health, happiness, loved ones—shopping? If “getting as much done as possible before the end of the year” creeps onto your list, question it severely. Most of those tasks probably aren’t that important anyway, given the overall scheme of things. And you’ve got next year to resume your harried existence. For now, relax, think peace, and have a Happy Holiday!

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The course was written by Jack Hungelmann, who is the author of the book, *Insurance for Dummies*. Mr. Hungelmann has been an insurance advisor for over 30 years, and has received high survey reviews for his other online course that we offer. Students tell us he has made learning about insurance interesting, engaging, and entertaining.