

Holiday Toolkit | *Article*

Tell Yourself a Different Holiday Story

The holiday season is a time for high expectations of ourselves and others. Trouble is, real life rarely measures up to the movie scenes and magazines. We know this on some level, yet every year, we put undue pressure on ourselves.

Pay Attention to Stress Triggers

A recent survey found sixty-two percent of respondents reported feeling very or somewhat elevated stress during the holiday season, with only 10% reporting no stress at all. When you are feeling the pressure, stop and ask yourself: what do I need right now? What am I telling myself that is causing me stress? Find a different story to remind yourself of what is really important.

Trade Perfection for Contentment

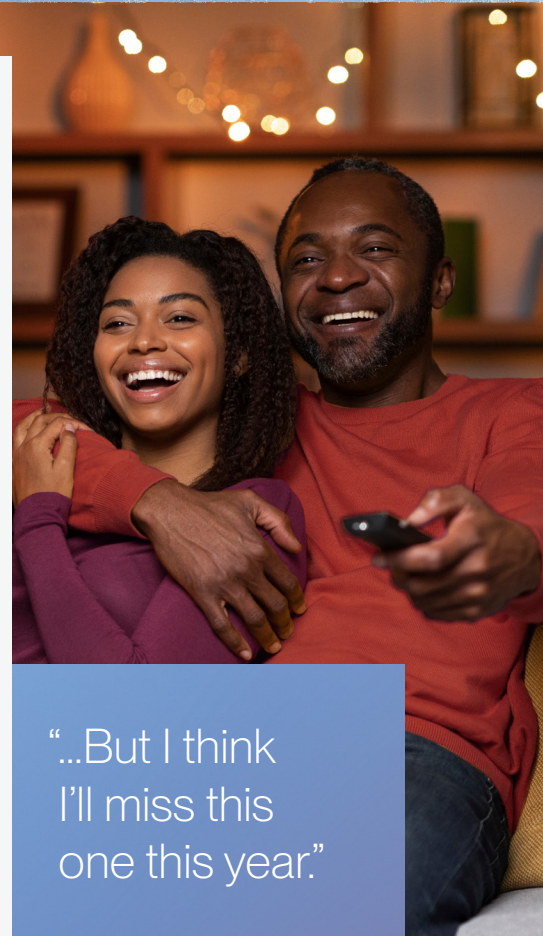
If we aim for the perfect Norman Rockwell holiday we will likely fail and end up exhausted. Every year we are bombarded with messages of “buy more, cook more, wrap more.” As many as 45% of Americans have reported the desire to “skip” the holidays due to the increased financial pressures. But how we decide to celebrate, how much we spend and who we see is entirely up to us. Talk to your loved ones about scaling back the holiday, or finding low-pressure alternatives to gift exchanges or big holiday gatherings. Pause and identify what really makes them special. Stay focused on those things. Let go of the others.

Take a Break

Put down the to-do list and make a cup of your favorite hot beverage. Relax with a good book. Put on a comedy show and laugh. Call a friend to chat. You get the idea. Ask yourself what you'd rather be doing right now, and give yourself permission to do just that.

[#HopeForTheHolidays](#)

Mental Health America 24/7 Crisis Text Line — Text MHA to 741-741



“...But I think I’ll miss this one this year.”

— The Waitresses, “Christmas Wrapping”