



Holiday Stress: Feeling "Grinch-y?"

12 Little Tips to Lift Winter Doldrums and Replenish a Weary Spirit

by award-winning author / stress-relief expert Susie Mantell

Most Decembers bustle with shopping expeditions, catalog-combing and web-surfing to find "just the right thing," then wrapping, baking, trimming and checking off lists. Oh, we whine and wonder how we will ever get it all done, but that, too is part of the tradition. Somehow it all does get done. Then, the delicious sigh of relief as the last ribbon is curled and the joy of actually giving and receiving all those presents begins. It's wonderful! But if this year finds you wishing the holidays were over and done, here are a few suggestions to lift winter doldrums and replenish a weary spirit.

1. List 3 things you would like or would like to accomplish in the coming year. Then for each, write three steps that will bring you closer to your goal.
2. Thank three people every day. If you're stuck for recipients of your good will, try the mailman, teachers, the produce guy, the crossing guard.
3. Let someone parallel park while you wait. Then wave hello. *(Come on. It takes less than a minute.)*
4. Give. It is widely agreed that the fastest way to get our minds off our own troubles, worries, or responsibilities is to ease someone else's load in some way. Try it. Feel better?
5. Let somebody else get on the escalator, off the elevator, or through the revolving door first. *(Some of you are scratching your heads thinking, "I do that every day!" Judging from my own adventures-in-shopping lately -- not everybody does.)*
6. It is never too early, nor too late, to teach a person to care enough to take action to help another. Plus, it's really fun! Let your kids see you performing these acts of kindness. I think we learn even more about how to Be from what our parents do, than from what they say.
7. Still grumpy? Maybe you need a little present. It is not a bad thing to care for oneself. It's only self-indulgence to excess, or with utter disregard for others, that has given a healthy degree of self-care a bad rap. Create pleasure.

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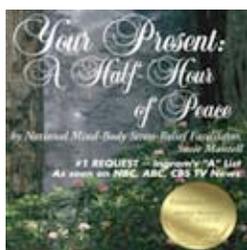
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8. Boost endorphins: Take a brisk walk or even better, walk with a friend.
9. Eat healthily. Slow down. Savor your food.
10. Re-read my tip: *"70 Ways to Feel Really Good Fast!"* on my website at <http://www.relaxintuit.com/tips.asp>
11. Find some carolers or holiday music to listen to, or go caroling yourself!
12. Close your eyes, and imagine you are smiling. Just a little non-committal half-smile is fine. Now, open your eyes and stay that way all day, kind of half-smiling. That way you don't have to reach quite so far down to start one if an opportunity to share a smile comes along!

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