

Baystate Coaching for Success: Newsletter

December 2006 Issue

Just on the heels of my last newsletter, *"Thanks" and "Giving"*, Oprah had a show on the gift of giving which I could not help but share with you all. Instead of her annual holiday giving show in which the audience receives loads of presents, she gave each \$1000 to spend on a stranger of their choice. Two weeks later the audience returned to share their experience with the gift of giving. One woman chose a father of nine with a terminal brain disease. Her gift giving received media attention and the community of 14,000 rallied behind her and came up with \$75,000 for this family. There were many such stories in which the giving became contagious. Audience members described how much unexpected receiving occurred in their giving. Their gift of giving came in the form of new relationships, witnessing generosity, new found gratitude and so much more.

I would love to hear your gift of giving stories.

This month's newsletter is revisiting last year's as I find each year the need to pause and reflect on how to best create a truly happy holiday season.

Create Your Ideal Holiday Season

Holidays are for many a time of stress, a season of overindulgence with food, drink and spending. Not enough sleep, exercise and even fun. Dateline NBC and Prevention Magazine conducted a scientific poll to find out how stressed we get during the holiday season. They found 41% report Christmas and Hanukkah as stressful, to women more than men. If you are one of the 41%, you are probably reading this during your own holiday madness. If not, I hope this newsletter will still offer you ways to enhance your holiday experience.

Design your vision of an ideal holiday season

To discover your vision ask yourself the following questions. What does it look like now and what do you want it to look like? What do you want to change? What is missing? Describe what you feel good about, what concerns you have. As you have read in my previous newsletters, your vision often originates from your values. Look at various holiday card writings or holiday songs/poems and see what rings true for you.

Reducing stress

First, write a list of what causes stress for you. Beside each item, consider a solution and write that down. Engage someone in some brainstorming to assist you with creative ideas. Ask yourself what have you done before that reduced your stress in other situations. You may not choose to make all changes in one year so keep this list and return back to it next year.

New traditions

Create new memories, defy tradition and start your own. Try experimenting this year with new rituals. Enlist others who can share ideas. To prevent overwhelm with changes, choose one area i.e. cooking, gift giving, decorating, family time, etc. What area if changed would make the most difference in how you experience your holidays?

Making changes

Keepers: what you most enjoy, what matters to you. Minimize what is less enjoyable, unnecessary and time consuming. Give up the idea of the perfect holiday and focus on what really matters. When making changes; be open and considerate of others involved. Let them know why you are making the changes and find out what their vision is. If someone truly wants to maintain a tradition which you want to let go of, consider what most matters. It may be the relationship and you can make a change elsewhere OR reconsider at a later time when others have had a chance to get used to the idea. That may be your gift to them.

New budget

Money is the #1 cause of stress as polled by Dateline and Prevention Magazine. Some Financial Advisors recommend you determine how much you want to spend and stick to it *without guilt*. Fight commercialism and define the holiday for other than the gifts. Purchase your own values, rather than let it be dictated by commercialism. It can be a generous time of year in more than one way.

Time changes

Write a concrete goal and action plan and stick to it. Consider what is realistic. Say "no" to time wasters. Simplify, maybe decorate one room, not the whole house. Access help, involve others and delegate tasks. Maintaining a normal routine is important. It is easy to get away from exercise, eating healthy and tell yourself you will get back to it when the holidays are done. But does that happen from past experience? Instead of letting go of a healthy normal routine, add some pampering and additional self-care. To make time for that, consider what can actually wait until January such as New Year's cards instead of Xmas/Hanukkah.

Involving the children

What do you want to teach your children? Take time to discuss what the holidays are about. To some children, they experience the holidays like their birthday with little awareness of the meaning or the giving. Children who are focused on just the presents are often disappointed. It is difficult for them to view advertisements and not want for more. Learning about advertising can help put products in perspective. Having children involved in choosing gifts or better yet making them will give them a chance to feel they have contributed. There are plenty of opportunities to give to those less fortunate. Children can even choose to give a gift they received to someone in need.

I want to wish you and yours Happy Holidays! Have fun and be jolly.

Copyright 2005, Lisa Martelli

If you would like to consider giving yourself the **gift of coaching**, you can contact me to schedule a free consultation at (978)686-5693 or lisa@baystatecoaching.com.

I welcome new subscribers! Please forward this newsletter to others who may be interested in my newsletter, coaching services, or programs. If you wish to subscribe/unsubscribe to this free monthly newsletter, please do so on the Newsletter page of my website, www.baystatecoaching.com.
