

JoyFULL JUMPSTARTS

TO LOWER EXPECTATIONS IS TO RAISE OUR POTENTIAL LEVEL FOR JOY.

It helps immeasurably if we don't expect the holidays to be a Hallmark movie. We aren't a magazine cover or an Iron Chef, be realistic, aim for a tidy home and tasty food. Or just order in. Keep menu simple. People would rather have a joy-FULL hostess than a light-flashing door with highly polished knobs, spinning trees, and hand dipped chocolate ants rolled in coconut flakes. You get the idea.

Don't make things so complicated for yourself that you can't win. Simplify.

You will thank me later.

UPGRADE HABITS.

During the festivities we need to limit our sugar intake, which can, when consumed lead to sad cycles and self incrimination. Keep acceptable snacks on hand. Also don't overbook activities. Guard space for you and your immediate family to recover from holiday overload and take time to snuggle.

If you accidentally take on too much, be a big girl and cancel. Try not to make it the last minute or you may never be invited again. Just sayin'.

When folks get a case of holiday fizzle or we do (and at some point both of us will)

KEEP A SACK FULL OF JOY-FULL ALTERNATIVES, AS MOOD BOOSTERS, for when they leave or we go home. (funny movie, fa-la-la music, favorite snack, foaming bubble bath) Don't soak in sadness, try bubbles instead, with a cup of sleepy time tea, goodnight music, and an Audible book.

(Little Women, Heidi, Little House on the Prairie)

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ATTEND A HOLIDAY CONCERT—

corporate celebration is an anchor for our soul. It spreads goodwill in our hearts and to others. There's something about shoulder to shoulder sharing of joyful music that unites us with other believers.

SIMPLIFY SOME MORE..

Are you going to have guests in? Assign some of the food, this allows other people to be a part of the festivities. Pre order dessert from a great bakery.

I use disposable tear off placemats for dessert time, yes, there are darling ones.

Last year mine were sheep. Be inventive. Use your cutting board for an appetizer tray. Buy inexpensive red bandanas and use as table napkins.

Use colored tree bulbs in a bowl as a centerpiece. Buy ivy in small containers to decorate table and let guests take one home.

BEWARE OF LIT CANDLES.

A good investment are the battery operated ones. It will spare little ones a burn and it eliminates wax spills and soot. Not to mention a house fire. (No one thinks it could happen to them.) Keep a shovel and rock salt handy for slippery steps and walkways. Nothing dampens the holidays like an incident that could have been avoided by thoughtful preparation.

MAKE UP YOUR MIND TO ENJOY THE HOLIDAYS

without expecting that you or anyone else will arrive in fairy dust. Oh, and buy a couple gifts now that would suit anyone. Perhaps a book, drop it in a gift bag, add tissue and a ribbon, then when an unexpected guest arrives at your doorstep you are prepared to bless them. And for heaven's sake have a Merry Christmas.