

PEACE OF MIND

*You live most of your life inside your head
Make sure it is a nice place to be*

How do you start your day?

Do you walk around with feelings of guilt, an inner state of dread or anticipation, as hard as you try, you just never get everything done. Feelings of doubt, or “not enough” or perhaps defeated before you finish, because you make mistakes, or it doesn’t always go the way you thought it would. Or do you have feelings of anger and resentment, basically overwhelmed with all you have to do?

The holidays may intensify these feelings, attempting to make the world a perfect place, where everyone’s needs are met, and therefore pleased. Pleasers can find the holidays exhausting! And pleasing others originates in guilt!

This is a trap, because we can’t make the world perfect, nor is it always possible to make everyone happy, so we suffer, and feel **GUILTY!**

Guilt is defined as, “A feeling of responsibility or remorse for some offense, crime, wrong, etc., whether real or imagined.”

Interesting... committed an offence, or done something wrong!! The real crime is how this feeling of guilt affects us and others. Notice in the definition, “real or imagined”!

It is possible we are not always experiencing emotions that are equal or relevant to the moment. We carry emotions from the past, any guilt we are feeling may not be ours to carry, and it is important to take the time to reflect upon your reactions, a personal check-in and inquiry of what is happening! Reactions can be a fight or flight attempt to protect against these guilty feelings, and whether you “act out” or “act-in”, you could be harming yourself or others!

If you did something wrong, own it and repair. If you experience anger, or resentment, own it and confront the situation. Distinguish between real or imagined! Did I do something wrong?

Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you react to it.”, a quote by Charles Swindoll, which makes us realize we are authors of our own stories, and the narratives in our minds! Also according to Charles Swindoll, “The remarkable thing is, we have a choice everyday regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day.” But, there is always a “but”, do we remember to check in and ask what is this attitude, and what attitude would I chose? A contributing factor to stress and energy during the holidays is **attitude!** Sounds easy, not that easy.

I challenge you to pay attention and concentrate on your attitude, as I believe the difficulty of this challenge has far greater benefits for the individual, physically, mentally, and emotionally. This is not intended to increase your guilt! It is my intention to empower you and take responsibility for your attitude!

Since we are energy in motion, and information is processed as energy in motion, our attitudes greatly affect how information is processed and ultimately our energy. If you are processing information from the external world through an internal world of guilt, this will affect your energy. Guilt resonates at a low vibration, followed by, fear, anxiety, craving, anger and hate.

Conversely, trust, optimism, acceptance, understanding, and love, strengthen you! Which do you chose?

Reactions of guilt and anxiety may be automatic, relating to the situation based on expectations, or perhaps emotions you are carrying around from the past or future desires.

PERSONAL SELF CARE

Self care does not mean you get less done, self-care affects the way you get things done with your personal well-being in mind. HOW, you chose to get things done, not WHAT you need to get done! There is a difference, so be clear with yourself! Attitude is an intention!

SUGGESTIONS: Gifts that keep on giving!

1. **Setting intentions for the day! Daily morning rituals!** Write it out, and start your day.
2. **Slow down** enough to pay attention to your reactivity, a personal check-in and inquiry as to “how you want to respond” vs. your reactions, this one practice can lower your stress.
3. **Set yourself up for success!** Making lists which are realistic expectations for the day, based on priority.
4. **Notice your inner dialogue**, you only have your own stories to work with, notice any thoughts of guilt, or negative self-talk, feeling victimized ect. Take “should” out of your conversations with yourself, and replace it with, positive intentions, without attachment to the outcome.
5. **Welcome guilt**, saying “no” or “good enough” allows for imperfection! Congratulations!!

COUPLES AND FAMILIES

1. **Share the joy!** Sit down and create a list of the things that need to be done before the big day and during the big day. After constructing this list, make three columns: **Yours, Mine, Ours**. Anyone in relationship understands the challenges during the holidays of “too many tasks and not enough time,” and possible feelings of resentment or disappointment in your partner! “Partner” has a built in dynamic of “you can count on them and they can count on you”! Children, of any age can be also put on the list! Their own columns of tasks before and on the day! However with heightened stress, and unless there is clarity of responsibilities, how do others know what you need if you don’t ask! This simple task will alleviate any confusion of who does what and creating a visible list will ensure the tasks are shared!
2. **The 3 “R’S”** Take **responsibility** for how the holidays are for YOU! Ask for what you need, be **realistic** and **reasonable**!. Confusion and chaos result from unrealistic expectations of yourself and others! Imagined stories in our minds about the way things should be and not relating to things as they are, in reality, sets you up for disappointment!

*Happy people build their inner world.
Unhappy people blame their outer world.*

My holiday wish for you, take responsibility for your attitude and reactions, empower yourself with kindness and a generous attitude towards yourself! See what happens!

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

JANE NEWLANDS
INDIVIDUAL AND COUPLES PSYCHOTHERAPIST

