



Parenting - 5 Things You Can Do This Christmas to Keep Your Sanity

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Christmas can be a busy and stressful time for individuals. Children become extremely excited as their expectations increase and their parents often become more and more tired as the demands of the season increase.

There are five specific things you can do to enjoy this Christmas even more than you might have in the past:

1. Get enough sleep - I tell my clients that I am just like a baby. If I don't eat or sleep - I cry. Sleep is important for children and their parents. Maintaining a regular schedule that includes appropriate bedtimes will help everyone to enjoy the season with a good perspective and a relaxed attitude.
2. Don't overdo the "food" thing - Having everyone complain about how much they overate is not necessarily a sign of "success". There isn't any point in spending hours and hours in preparation time only to see that the meal is over in a matter of minutes. Rather than being the only one to prepare the food, ask family members to contribute by bringing a salad or desert. Involve your children in the preparation so they will learn to cook and appreciate the effort involved.
3. Purchase appropriate gifts - It is better to buy a board game that will be played over and over again through the year than a toy that requires a great deal of room, several batteries or an adult for supervision. Think about the gifts that you enjoyed in your youth. Books, hockey sticks or brightly coloured scarves and mitts are always safe choices for any age. (And remember, overdoing it doesn't help your credit card or your reputation).
4. Honour traditions - Try to do at least one thing every single Christmas that your family will remember as a tradition. Attend a candlelight church service, tell a story from your childhood, snap firecrackers before the meal, go skating together, sing carols or visit a hospital ward. My sister always insisted that we watch "Lampoons Christmas Vacation" together on Christmas Day. It got to the point that we knew the show so well that we could actually say the words with the actors.
5. Enjoy yourself - Christmas should be a time of peace and fellowship. Visit with relatives, enjoy a nap in the afternoon, go for a walk, call a friend who lives in another area, read a good book. And don't forget to give to others. Give your time, your personality and your love.

May this be the best Christmas ever! One that you and your children will remember for years to come.