12 HEALTHY HOLIDAY HABITS INCENTIVE CAMPAIGN

12 Healthy Holiday Habits

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12 Healthy Holiday Habits

An Incentive Campaign To Prepare And Enjoy The Holidays

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Preface

For over a decade, the Wellness Councils of America (WELCOA) has been dedicated to building and sustaining world-class corporate wellness programs. Our staff, directors, medical advisors, and local councils have assisted hundreds of organizations in transforming their corporate cultures into health conscious, wellness-oriented environments. With over 3,000 member organizations throughout North America and 8 locally affiliated community "Wellness Councils," we are recognized as the premier resource for worksite wellness.

In our continuing efforts to promote wellness in the workplace, we are proud to introduce ***12 Healthy Holiday Habits***, a worksite wellness incentive campaign. This campaign has been designed to help your employees prepare for the holidays before they begin, in an effort to limit the stress of the season.

With ***12 Healthy Holiday Habits***, you'll discover that implementing a wellness campaign is easier than you think., We have provided an easy-to-follow guide that will help you through each step of this six week campaign. Also included are employee handout , materials, incentive ideas, and evaluation forms - all you need to implement the program.

Through this campaign, your employees will learn new skills to help them through one of the most challenging periods of their wellness journey. In this manner, it seeks to help your worksite health promotion program lower organizational healthcare costs, increase productivity, and improve employee morale.

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Coordinator's Guide

12 Healthy Holiday Habits
Leader's Guide

What is 12 Healthy Holiday Habits?
A six week incentive campaign designed to help participants prepare to enjoy the holidays, and not be left in a "holi-daze".

When Should I Start the Campaign?
The program should be implemented before the holidays begin. Suggested time frame for implementation is November 1st through mid-December.

Why Should I Use The 12 Healthy Holiday Habits?:
The holidays are meant to be a joyous time of celebration with family and friends. Often they arrive and are gone before we have the chance to enjoy them. The ***12 Healthy Holiday Habits*** campaign helps participants prepare for the holidays before they begin, in an effort to limit the stress of the season.

How does the Campaign Work?:
The six week campaign is designed to assist participants in practicing 12 habits worth adopting for healthier, less stressful holidays. Each week, participants will practice two healthy habits by performing 2 activities. When the activity is complete for a habit, the date completed and the habit should be written on the tracking sheet. At the end of the program, participants should have 2 habits completed on each week of the program.

Incentives: For a completion prize to award to all participants practicing the 12 habits during the six week campaign, door prize drawings could be held for mall gift certificates, holiday fruit baskets, hams, turkeys, time off, tickets to local ice rinks or ski areas.

Implementing 12 Healthy Holiday Habits

1. **Securing Management Support**
   Request support for the program from management in the form of participation, money, company time to participate in any campaign related activities or events, communication to employees and department supervisors.

2. **Promotion**
   Start promoting the program in October. Use the promotional ideas included in this packet. Place posters in the restrooms, break rooms, cafeteria or on employee bulletin boards. Consider copying the enclosed promotional flyers on pre-printed holiday paper. Check your local copy center or stationary store for supplies. Ask management to send a memo to employees encouraging their participation, place a short promotional article in the company newsletter or send a message via e-mail (samples enclosed).

3. **Registration**
   Provide options for registration by having a mail-back form attached to promotional materials, set up a holiday table outside a high-traffic employee area to register participants. Have each participant complete the pre-holiday survey. Provide the participant with the 12 Healthy Holidays Habits booklet, and the tracking sheet. Inform participants the deadline for returning calendars to be entered in the final door prize drawing.

4. **Registration Fee**
   In addition to using prizes as incentives, you may want to require a program registration fee at the time of registration. A registration fee adds credibility to the program in the eyes of the participant and increases their commitment to participating. Registration fees can be used to offset the cost of photocopies, prizes and other company sponsored activities. The registration fee can be paid in full by the individual employee, or shared equally by the employee and company. Suggested fee: $5 - $10 per participant.

5. **At The Conclusion**
   At the end of the 6 week campaign, ask participants to complete the post-holiday survey and program evaluation and return their calendars for entry into a door prize drawing or to receive a final incentive prize. Tally results of the pre and post holiday surveys and program evaluation. Communicate results to employees and management in a memo or via newsletter. Provide an "end of program activity" (a healthy lunch, or mocktail party, or skating party) to reward participants and draw for additional prizes.

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Ideas For Company Sponsored Activities

This section of your leader's guide provides suggestions for additional activities the company could sponsor to coincide with the habit of the week. Ideas for incentive prizes are also listed. The Resource Page, included in this guide lists organizations and resources you can use for further information.

Habit 1: Start with a Vision

Worksite Activities

- Coordinate a "Mission Statement Workshop" to help employees write their holiday mission statement as well as a personal mission statement.
- Create a bulletin board and post holiday mission statements. Another option is having employees send in a postcard completing the sentence, "This is what the holiday season means to me"…or "This is what the holiday season is all about"…or "One of my most treasured holiday memories is"… keep employee names anonymous. All entries could be eligible for a prize drawing.

Incentive Ideas

- Photo frames, notecards, mugs, year planners (Vision, Goals, Priorities, Integrity, Purpose)
- Subscription to Magazine on healthy living
- Personal day planners (Franklin Covey has personal leadership section and has inserts for exercise and nutrition)
- Book marks or planner inserts with inspirational graphic, message or listing of 12 habits as a reminder

Habit 2: Set Goals and Prioritize

Worksite Activities

- Offer a goal setting workshop or lunch-n-learn session
- Offer a time management course
- Declare a NO MEETING DAY, allowing employees the opportunity to catch up on projects and focus on priorities and productivity.

Incentive Ideas

- Goal setting books
- "GOAL" plaques, prints, cards, pins
- Pre-printed "to-do" lists

Habit 3: Get Organized and Simplify Your Life

Worksite Activities

- Lunch-n-learn on time management
- Sponsor a cookie or treat exchange
- Employee idea exchange on Simplifying Your Holiday Season
- Secret gift exchange (to avoid buying gifts for all your office pals)
- Sponsor a Clean Your Desk Day! Organization leads to efficiency.

Incentive Ideas

- Desk calendars/planners
- Books from the resource list
- Drawing for a free vacation hour

Habit 4: Self Care

Worksite Activities

- Schedule relaxation periods for 10-15 minutes with calm music and guided progressive relaxation. Either in a fitness center or in departments with participants at their desks.
- Provide music (holiday or classical) as a program for people to attend and enjoy.
- Offer meditation classes to help people understand it can be very beneficial as people try to focus inwardly.
- Offer journal-writing courses or distribute information on how to start to journal.
- Invite a priest, minister, rabbi, spiritual advisor to lunch-n-learns for participants to hear holiday religious readings, and about various traditions.
- Do something not related to the holidays. Make plans for the New Year. Offer a goal setting or New Year's resolution class.

- Place brochures from mental health associations, company EAP and other educational pieces on depression and holiday blues and coping with the loss of loved ones on a "grab and go" table in a high traffic area for employees to take.
- Start a gratitude bulletin board and post it in a high traffic area where employees can add items to it. See how long it gets!

Incentive Ideas

- Relaxation audio tapes (see resource list)
- Imprinted rocks with words that evoke a spiritual connection i.e., HOPE, PEACE, LOVE, GOD, BLESSINGS, GRATITUDE…
- Scented candles
- Hire a massage therapist to come in and do chair massages for employees

Habit 5: Safety

Worksite Activities

- Schedule lunch and learn on home safety. Have an expert come in and show how to put together an emergency kit for the home.
- Offer CPR and first aid course.
- Have a table of flyers from local agencies about home and personal safety.

Incentive Ideas

- First Aid kits.
- Roadside emergency kit with jumper cables, orange safety vest and fix-a-flat.
- Small fire extinguisher, weather radios, or carbon monoxide detectors.

Habit 6: Stay Financially Fit

Worksite Activities

- Lunch-n-learns on budgeting, using credit, inexpensive holiday gifts
- Provide a "grab-n-go" table with financial brochures and information for employees to grab during their break or lunch time. Set the table up in a high traffic area, next to the cafeteria, break room or rest room.
- Invite a financial planner to speak at a lunch-n-learn, or provide one on one assistance

Incentive Ideas

- Fanny pack or coin purse
- Small planner with "budget" pages
- Tote bag
- Drawing for cash

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Habit 7: Eat Well

Worksite Activities

- Provide healthy low-fat recipes in a company newsletter.
- Host a lunch-n-learn on modifying traditional holiday recipes.
- Have a healthy potluck, inviting employees to bring a dish and the modified recipe.
- Sponsor a "diversity day". Encourage employees of different backgrounds to bring traditional holiday foods from their culture.
- Provide information on holiday eating and recipes on a "grab-n-go" table.
- Display nutrition information about holiday goodies near the vending machines or break room.

Incentive Ideas

- Recipe cards
- Healthy holiday cookbooks
- Low fat holiday treats in gift bags or stockings

Habit 8: Stay Active

Worksite Activities

- Take the chill out of winter: Offer seminars on warm-ups, exercise, running, ski clinic, appropriate attire for winter exercise, healthy fitness gifts.
- Create a healthy holiday gift list complete with exercise products and vendors. Post on bulletin boards, or in a high traffic area.
- Walking in a Winter Wonderland, or an indoor wonderland. Have a challenge for participants to log the most miles walked while shopping, or provide mileage/distance of local malls or town squares.
- Do the snowflake shuffle. Sponsor a walk or run to celebrate the season, or this week's habit! Have participants "shuffle" the stairwells in search of special prizes during the Stay Active habit week.
- Instead of a company party at a hotel, how about at the ice rink? Food and beverage can still be served, but an opportunity for exercise is also available.
- Have daily stretch breaks for the entire company during this week.

Incentive Ideas

- One week pass to local fitness club or YMCA.
- Dynabands, hand weights or other exercise equipment that can be used at your desk or while traveling.
- Passes to local ice arena, sledding hill or ski area.
- Gift certificates to shop while you walk!

Habit 9: Get Connected

Worksite Activities

- Offer lunch-n-learns on traditions, building friendships, invite United Way agencies to speak on opportunities to get connected in the community
- Sponsor a "tradition" exchange or a bulletin board that lists family traditions employees have shared
- Sponsor a "healthy" cookie exchange - encouraging employees to bring samples of their traditional goodies
- Invite employees to submit their favorite family recipe. Compile and distribute at a "grab and go" table, complete with samples.
- Create a bulletin board and have participants submit their favorite quality time activity with family and friends during the holidays.

Incentive Ideas

- Books on developing traditions
- 52 Special Traditions for Family & Friends (deck of cards with ideas on each card)
- Tickets for the family to visit a museum, science center, or special holiday event (The Nutcracker)

Habit #10: Explore New Experiences

Worksite Activities

- Sponsor a book mobile visit with your local library. Encourage reading for pleasure and personal growth.
- Sponsor a diversity day. Allow employee groups representing specific cultures or religions to share a sampling of their culture's holiday celebration. Include food, music, readings and more. Each culture/religion could have one day, or a lunch period to share.

- Offer a journal-writing workshop.
- Declare a NO TV day on company property.
- Offer stress reduction/mental health breaks (chair massages, stretch breaks, company fitness walks, back and neck pain relief activities or exercises).

Incentive Ideas

- Work time to participate in company sponsored events listed above.
- Have employees and their families submit their activities and goals. Conduct a drawing or have a committee select a winner and provide a paid hotel stay at a local hotel or other getaway.

Habit #11: Give

Worksite Activities

- Select an agency or a family in need to support financially, donate items or a service/labor.
- Provide paid time for employees to volunteer at an agency/organization.
- Select a school to donate time or supplies.
- Sponsor a contest for employees to enter ideas/ suggestions to support a cause. Conduct a drawing or have a review committee select the cause of choice. An award can be provided to the employee that contributed the cause of choice.
- Select a city block or family homes that are in need of clean-up/repair and complete it as a company project.
- Allow employees to donate vacation time in dollars to a cause of choice.

Incentive Ideas

- For every number of hours of time donated per month, or quarter, give a flower or an hour of vacation time.
- Offer paid time to volunteer or a percentage of paid time.
- Award employees that contributed to the cause of choice with a vacation day.
- Collect spare change that has accumulated in employee desks. Award donating employees with a holiday cookie, candy cane, half price lunch, etc. if they donate change.

Habit #12: Have Fun

Worksite Activities

- 'Tis the season to be jolly - offer a lunch-n-learn on humor
- Have a humor day, providing comedy via videos or a stand up comedian; give everyone a clown nose, bubbles or play-doh to play with.
- Have an employee gift exchange. Draw names and buy a gift that the employee would have liked as a child. Donate all gifts to a toy drive or charity.
- Host a sledding or skating party.
- Host a mocktail party during the lunch hour.
- Invite Santa to the worksite to distribute healthy snacks and ask employees if they've been good this year.
- Take snapshots of employees at fun company events. Post in a high traffic area.
- Have participants bring favorite photos from holidays past to post on employee bulletin boards.

Incentive Ideas

- Holiday movie videos
- Toys
- Stockings filled with low fat treats
- Humor/Happiness books

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The Resource Page

Web Sites:

- Franklin Covey on-line mission statement builder
  www.franklincovey.com/whatshot/
- National Charities Information Bureau
  www.give.org
- American Consumer Credit Counseling
  www.consumercredit.com/resources.htm
- Kiplinger Online
  www.kiplinger.com/personalfinance/
- Center for Family Resources
  www.thecfr.org
- American Psychological Association Help Center
  helping.apa.org
- Stress Cure
  www.stresscure.com
- Mayo Clinic Healthy Oasis
  www.mayohealth.org

Books:

- *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Families,* Stephen R. Covey
- *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen R. Covey
- *First Things First*, Stephen R. Covey
- *201 Ways to Say No Gracefully and Effectively*, Alen Axelrod and Jim Holtje
- *Don't Sweat the Small Stuff*, Richard Carlson, Ph.D.
- *Don't Sweat the Small Stuff with Children*, Richard Carlson, Ph.D.
- *Inner Simplicity*, Elaine St. James
- *Living the Simple Life*, Elaine St. James
- *Kicking Your Holiday Stress Habits*, Nancy Loving Tubesing, EdD, and Donald A. Tubesing, MDiv, PhD
- *Eat to Win*, Robert Haas
- *Simple Abundance*, Sara Ban Breathnach
- *Unplug the Christmas Machine*, Jo Robinson and Jean Coppock Staeheli
- *Wherever You Go, There You Are*, Jon Kabat-Zinn

Whole Person Associates Tapes & Books

Phone: 800-247-6789
Website: ***www.wholeperson.com***

- *Calm Down* audio tape: relaxation and imagery skills for managing fear, anxiety and panic.
- *Worry Stoppers* audio tape: Breathing and imagery to calm the restless mind
- *Guided Imagery for Groups* book: 50 visualization that promote relaxation, problem solving, creativity and well-being.
- *Relax…Let Go…Relax* audio tape: mentally scan body for tension, breathing exercises and release the tension.
- *STRESSRELEASE* audio tape: Simple tension relieving exercises.

Specialty Decks Of Cards

(Available at Amazon.com)

- *52 Special Traditions for Family & Friends*, Lynn Gordon
- *52 Relaxing Rituals*, Lynn Gordon
- *52 Silly Things To Do When You Are Blue*, Lynn Gordon
- *52 Ways to Make a Difference*, Lynn Gordon
- *52 Ways to Balance Your Life*, Lynn Gordon

Other Resources In Your Area

- ✓ Churches, synagogues, mosques, etc.
- ✓ Massage Therapists
- ✓ Counselors/Psychologists
- ✓ United Way
- ✓ Food Pantry
- ✓ Local Schools
- ✓ Local YMCA
- ✓ Local Hospital
- ✓ Local Library
- ✓ Local Writers (for journal writing class)
- ✓ Employee Assistance Program
- ✓ DNR - outdoor activities/safety
- ✓ Consumer Credit Counseling Center of America, 800-493-2222

12 Healthy Holiday Habits Participant Roster

NAME	DEPARTMENT ADDRESS	PHONE	E MAIL

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Sample Newsletter/Promotion Article

'Twas a night in November
When I made it my mission
To bring dreams of holiday joy
to fruition…

The holidays are coming! This year do something different and avoid the "Holi-daze" by participating in the ***12 Healthy Holiday Habits*** campaign. The holidays are meant to be a joyous time of celebration with family and friends. Often they arrive and are gone before we have the chance to enjoy them. The ***12 Healthy Holiday Habits*** campaign will help you prepare for the holidays before they begin, in an effort to limit the season's stress.

The twelve habits will be practiced, two each week for six weeks. Each time you participate in an activity that practices the habit of the week, you will write it down on the program tracking sheet. At the end of the six week program you should have two habits on each week of your sheet, showing you practiced all 12 habits.

At registration, all participants will receive a ***12 Healthy Holiday Habits*** booklet. Door prize drawings will be held at the conclusion of the campaign for all employees that practiced all 12 habits.

To register, return the form below to your worksite wellness coordinator or committee member. For more information call _____. Here's to healthy holidays!!

- - - -

Participant Materials

Habit 1: Start With A Vision

Winter Solstice

In may seem as though winter is just about to begin, but, in fact, the darkest season is nearing its end -- at least astronomically! The Winter Solstice, which marks the shortest day of the year, will occur on December 21 -- and, at that point, the days will begin to grow longer again.

Today, we know that the Winter Solstice is an easily explained astronomical event. Earth, scientists tell us, is tilted slightly on its axis. As it revolves around the sun, that tilt angles Earth's Northern Hemisphere toward the sun for part of the orbit and away from the sun for another part of the orbit. When the tilt is toward the sun, the days are long and the Northern Hemisphere experiences summer. When the tilt is away from the sun, the days are short and we experience winter. When the sun reaches the southern-most point in relation to Earth, the shortest day of the year -- the Winter Solstice -- occurs.

The days following Winter Solstice grow longer with more daylight. The Winter Solstice served as the beginning of a new year for early civilizations and religions. Let us honor this day by creating a clear vision of how we want this holiday season to be.

Here are some tips:

- Select a family to provide a service or donate supplies.
- Volunteer at the Animal Rescue League; offer to house an animal when the shelter is full to avoid termination of the animal.
- Go to bed earlier each night so you can wake up refreshed.
- Plan in advance. You know tomorrow will be a full day so plan for it the night before. Lay out your clothes, make your lunch… the more you do the night before, the simpler tomorrow will be.
- Take your child to a nursing home to visit, sing, read.
- Invite someone to spend the holidays with you and your family.
- Provide a service for someone in need.

Habit 2: Set Goals And Prioritize

Advent

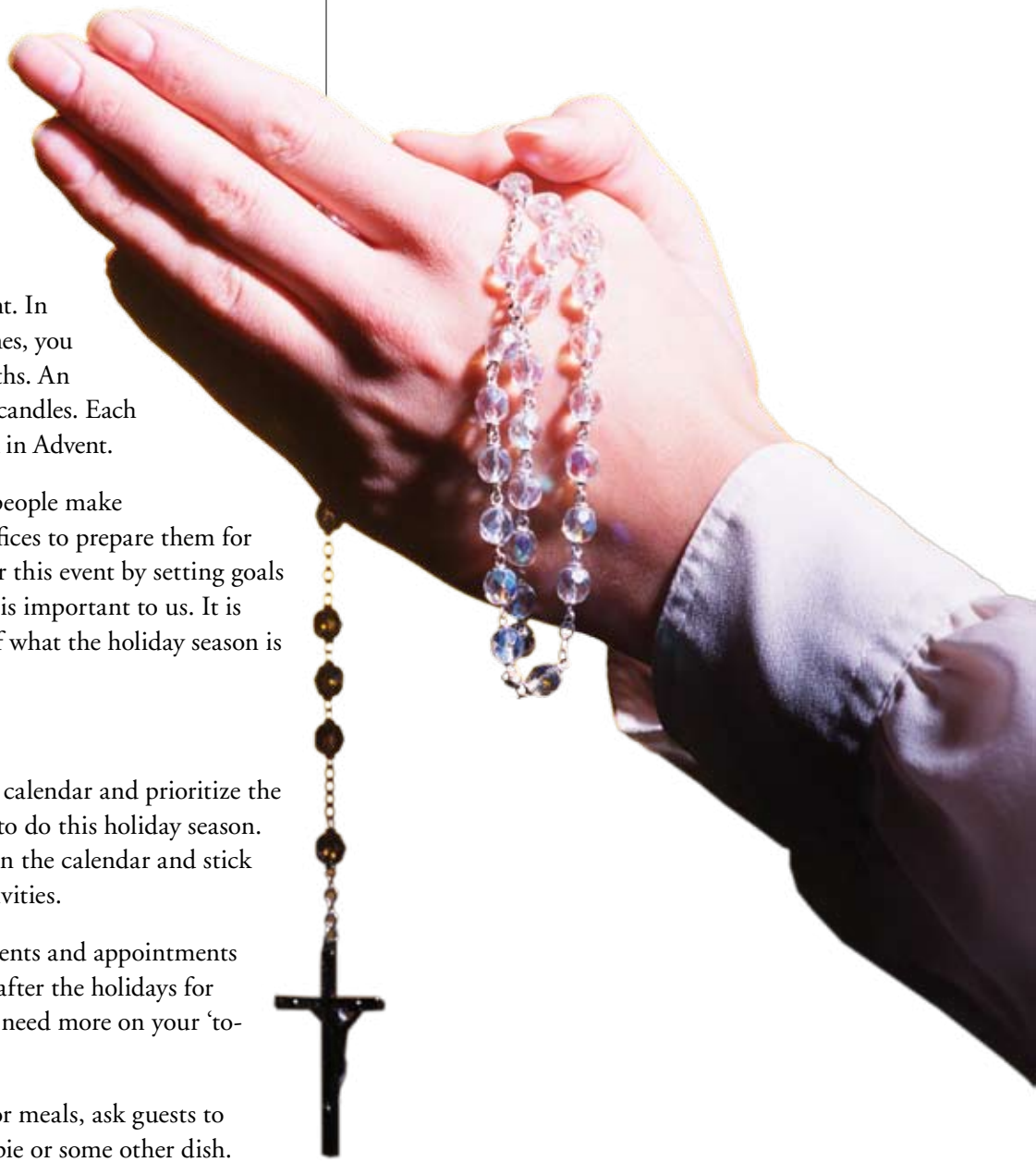
In Latin, the word Advent is defined as "to come to." Advent is the beginning of the Church Year for most churches in the Western tradition. The four-week period before Christmas is known as Advent. Advent lasts anywhere from twenty-one to twenty-eight days. It begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas. Catholics are encouraged to prepare themselves spiritually for the birth of Christ.

During Advent, people try to add a little more holiness into their lives. They pray, read the Bible, meditate, and attend Mass more frequently. Catholics are also encouraged to go to confession during Advent. In many homes and churches, you might find Advent wreaths. An Advent wreath has four candles. Each candle represents a week in Advent.

Advent is a time when people make commitments and sacrifices to prepare them for Christmas. Let us honor this event by setting goals and remembering what is important to us. It is very easy to lose sight of what the holiday season is all about.

Here are some tips:

- Sit down with your calendar and prioritize the activities you want to do this holiday season. Write them down on the calendar and stick with that list of activities.
- Schedule commitments and appointments that can wait until after the holidays for January. You don't need more on your 'to-do' list.
- If inviting people for meals, ask guests to contribute a salad, pie or some other dish.
- Buy a holiday planner and ask family members to write down all social engagements.
- Bake your goodies a month before the holiday begins and freeze them. This way, you have them done before the busy holiday season begins.



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Habit 3: Get Organized And Simplify Your Life

Hanukkah

This holiday starts on the eve of the 25th day of the Hebrew month of Kislev (approximately December) and lasts eight days. It is a Jewish Feast of Lights or Feast of Dedication. Gifts are exchanged and contributions are made to the poor. One candle is lit per night to make a total of eight lit candles at the end of the celebration.

The holiday is based on the event of 165 B.C. when the Jews in Judea defeated the Syrian tyrant Antiochus IV. When the Jews cleaned the temple of Syrian idols, they found only one small cruse of oil with which to light their holy lamps. Miraculously, the cruse provided them with the oil that they needed to keep their lamps lit for eight days.

Wow, that one cruse of oil lasted them eight days! That is amazing. How chaotic and complex are our everyday lives? Some of us lose thought of what is really important to us, but more than likely we can all work on going back to the basics and simplify our daily routine. Let's honor this holiday by organizing our lives and taking the time to realize what is important to us. This will be our gift to ourselves as well as our children and grandchildren.

Here are some ideas:

- Arrange ride-sharing for getting kids to and from school.
- Start or expand a home recycling program.
- Carpool to work or your next shopping trip.
- Plant a tree.
- Investigate solar energy alternatives.
- Call to have your name removed from junk mailing lists (call 888-5-OPT-OUT to get off pre-approved credit card lists).
- Purchase products with biodegradable packaging.
- Reuse glass and plastic packaging instead of discarding.
- Learn about the conservation area that attracts you most, then volunteer at this site.
- Purchase environmentally friendly holiday gifts.
- Replace old bulbs with energy-efficient lighting.

Habit 4: Self Care

Ramadan

Ramadan is an Islamic holiday that is celebrated in the ninth month of the Islamic year. The Islamic calendar is lunar, so it falls at different times each year. Ramadan is celebrated because the prophet Muhammad received the first of the revelations that make up the Quran, the holy book of Islam.

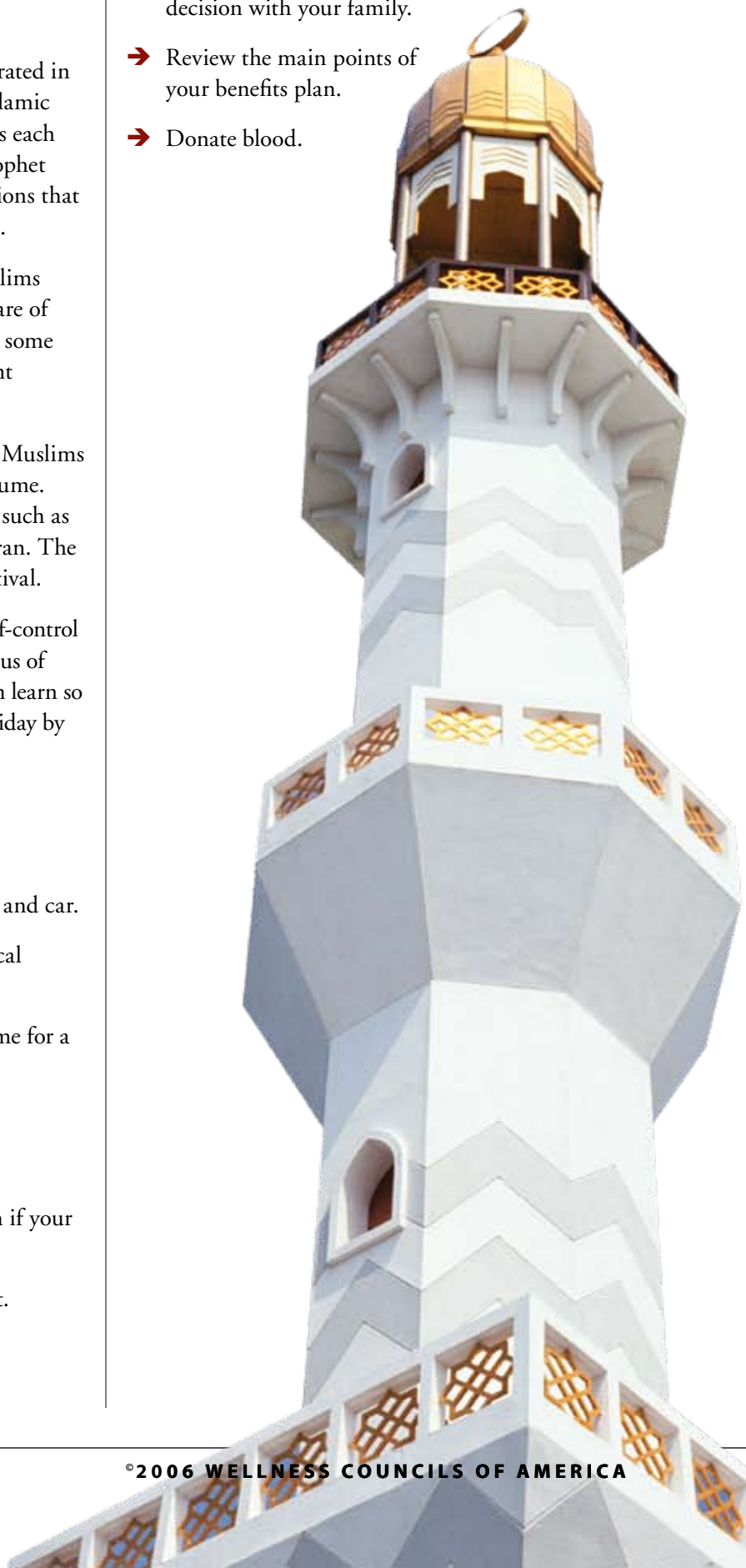
The holiday is based on fasting and all Muslims must fast if they have reached puberty and are of sound mind. There are exceptions made for some groups, such as the sick, the elderly, pregnant women, and travelers.

Fasting lasts from sunrise to sunset and the Muslims cannot drink, inhale tobacco smoke or perfume. They also focus on other religious activities such as special prayers and recitations from the Quran. The end of Ramadan is celebrated by a great festival.

The Muslims are disciplined and practice self-control during this time. They are extremely conscious of what they allow to enter their bodies. We can learn so much from the Muslims and honor their holiday by focusing on self-care.

Here are some ideas:

- Throw away outdated medicine.
- Restock your first-aid kits for the home and car.
- Update or start a personal/family medical journal.
- Check with your doctor to see if it is time for a physical.
- Have your teeth cleaned.
- Pick out a new toothbrush.
- Select a personal physician – or confirm if your current doctor is the right one for you.
- Be sure your immunizations are current.
- Schedule a vision exam.
- Take a first-aid class.
- Sign an organ donor card and discuss the decision with your family.
- Review the main points of your benefits plan.
- Donate blood.



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Habit 5: Safety

Guy Fawkes Day

This holiday is celebrated on November 5 in England. It is based on a man, Guy Fawkes, who tried to kill King James I and the king's leaders because he felt that the government was treating Roman Catholics unfairly. This happened nearly four hundred years ago in 1605.

Guy Fawkes and his men placed barrels of gunpowder in the cellar of a building where the King and his men were supposed to meet. The plot was discovered before Guy Fawkes had a chance to light the fuse; the King was saved and Fawkes was hanged.

Fireworks are lit in celebration of the fact that Guy Fawkes did not kill the King.

Luckily for the King and his men, they were not killed by Guy Fawkes. Unfortunately, many people are killed or injured by fireworks every year. Even though we practice firework safety in the summer in the U.S., we can still learn from this holiday and pay special attention to holiday safety.

Here are some tips:

- Wear a seatbelt and insist that your passengers do, too.
- Plan fire escape routes and practice them with your family.
- Purchase eye and ear protection for home workshop projects.
- Check the batteries in your smoke detector.
- Register for a CPR course.
- Post emergency numbers by each of your phones.
- Volunteer to be the designated driver.
- Have your furnace, fireplace, and gas appliances inspected.
- Purchase a fire extinguisher for each floor of the house and keep one in the kitchen.

Habit 6: Stay Financially Fit

Boxing Day

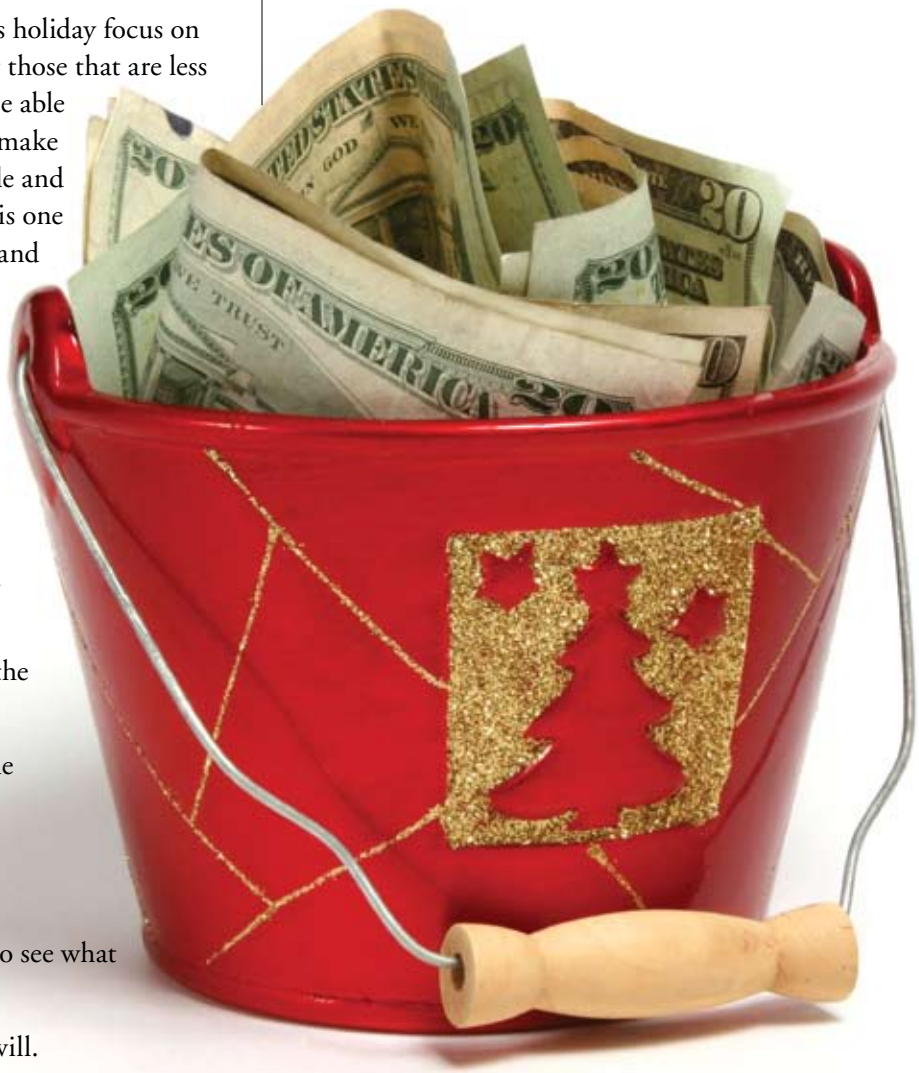
This holiday falls on December 26 and is celebrated in Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and South Africa. On this day people give money and other gifts to charitable institutions, needy individuals, and people in service jobs. Left over food from Christmas is also boxed up and given to the poor.

The exact origin date of this holiday is unknown, but it may date back to the Middle Ages (A.D. 400-1500). It may have begun with the lords and ladies in England who presented Christmas gifts to their servants in boxes on December 26, or it may have begun with priests who opened up the church alms (charity boxes) the day after Christmas and distributed the contents to the poor.

The countries that celebrate this holiday focus on others and what they can do for those that are less fortunate than themselves. To be able to donate to others, we need to make sure that we are financially stable and responsible. Worry over money is one of the primary sources of stress and we do not need this stress over the holiday period. Let's take some steps to get our finances in better shape.

Here are some tips:

- Balance your checkbook.
- Cancel any credit cards you don't use.
- Start a savings account for the next year's season.
- Set a monthly budget for the coming year.
- Review financial plans for retirement.
- Examine current expenses to see what is unnecessary.
- Learn more about a living will.
- Write or update your will.
- Make a file for tax documents and receipts.
- Start an education fund for your children.
- Set a plan to pay off your current debt.



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Habit 7: Eat Well

Kwanzaa

Kwanzaa is celebrated by African Americans on December 26 and it lasts for seven days. It is based on the harvest of the first crops. The word Kwanzaa, sometimes spelled Kwanza, comes from a phrase which means first fruits in Swahili, an East African language.

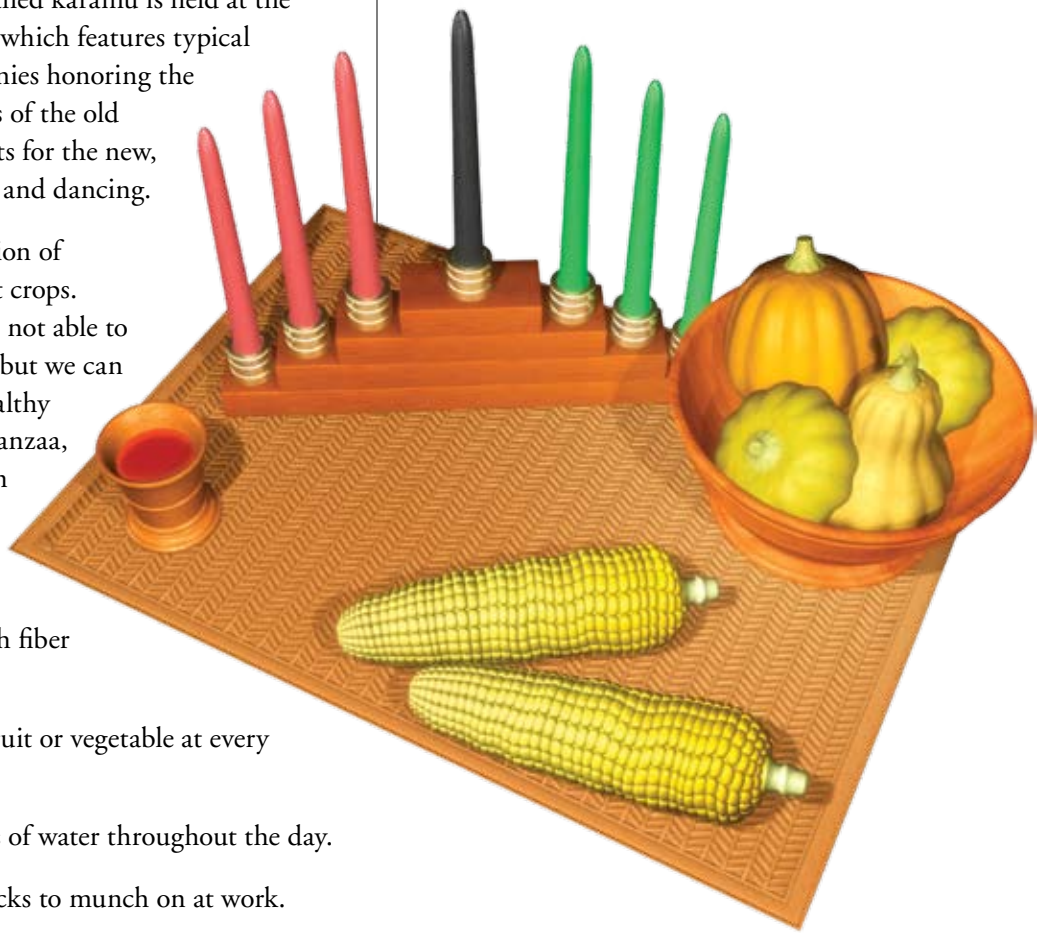
This holiday was developed in the United States in 1966 by Maulana Karenga, a professor of Pan-African studies and a black cultural leader. The seven days are based on seven principles called Nguzo Saba. These principles are Umoja (unity), Kujichagulia (self-determination), Ujima (collective work and responsibility), Ujamaa (cooperative economics), Nia (purpose), Kuumba (creativity), and Imani (faith).

In the evenings, the family will light one of the seven candles and discuss the principle for the day and exchange gifts, which are often homemade. A feast called karamu is held at the end of the seven days which features typical African food, ceremonies honoring the ancestors, assessments of the old year and commitments for the new, performances, music, and dancing.

Kwanzaa is a celebration of the harvest of the first crops. Unfortunately, we are not able to celebrate the harvest, but we can certainly celebrate healthy food! In honor of Kwanzaa, let's focus on nutrition today!

Here are some ideas:

- Eat a low-fat, high fiber breakfast.
- Have a piece of fruit or vegetable at every meal.
- Drink 6-8 glasses of water throughout the day.
- Bring low-fat snacks to munch on at work.
- Use the Food Guide Pyramid to direct your daily food choices.
- Substitute juice spritzers for alcohol at parties.
- Bake some low-fat holiday sweets to share at work or package as gifts.



Habit 8: Stay Active

St. Lucia Day

This day is celebrated in Sweden on December 13. Children form processions and walk around their towns dressed in white. The girls carry candles and the boys wear tall hats. At the head of the group walks a pretty girl in a long, white dress. Upon her head she wears a crown of green leaves and seven glowing candles. In her hands she carries a tray of little cakes. The girls and boys bring cakes and coffee to homes, hospitals, factories, and offices.

The girl with the crown represents Saint Lucia, a young Christian girl. She was killed by Roman soldiers about fifteen hundred years ago for refusing to give up her religion.

The Swedish children certainly get enough physical activity in their processions around their towns, so in honor of this Swedish holiday, let's focus on staying active!

Here are some ideas:

- Walk around the neighborhood and enjoy the holiday celebrations.
- Try a physical activity that's new for you…whether it is cross-country skiing or swimming (in an indoor pool!).
- Participate in a winter-time activity like skiing, skating, or sledding.
- Go bowling.
- Rent or buy a new exercise video.
- Start a neighborhood walking club.
- Work out to holiday music.
- Join a recreation league.
- Walk at the mall – before you shop.

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Habit 9: Get Connected

Shichi-Go-San

This holiday is celebrated in Japan on November 15. Children who are three, five, or seven take part in this ancient festival because children of these ages are considered lucky in the Japanese culture. "Shichi-Go-San" when translated means "Seven-Five-Three" in Japanese.

The children will dress in their finest clothes, whether they are Western-style clothes or traditional kimonos. Kimonos are beautiful, brightly colored robes made of cotton or silk. Every child carries a long, narrow paper bag which is colorfully decorated with pictures of pine trees, a tortoise, and a crane. These are symbols of youth and long life.

The families then go to a shrine or a place of worship and give thanks for the good health of their children and also ask for the blessing and future health and happiness of their children. Afterwards, the parents buy candy and toys and give these to their children. When they get home the children give the candy to their relatives and they are given presents in return.

Shichi-Go-San reminds us how important our family is, especially our children. The Japanese really take the time and energy to focus on their children and there is no reason why we should not do the same thing. Whether we have children of our own or not, let's focus today on connecting with our family and the children that we have or know.

Here are some ideas:

- Organize a family outing.
- Take a walking tour of the neighborhood holiday decorations with your children.
- Start or renew a family tradition.
- Have a family picture taken this holiday season.
- Watch old home movies together.
- Bake holiday goodies or sweets together.
- Decorate the house as a family.
- Have everyone responsible for a different dish at a family meal.
- Share favorite holiday memories at mealtimes.
- Plan a weekly family fitness excursion.

Habit 10: Explore New Experiences

Christmas

Christmas is celebrated on the 25th of December and is a Christian holiday that celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ. The first mention of this date as the celebration of Christmas occurred in A.D. 336 in an early Roman calendar. The celebration of this date was probably influenced by Pagan (unchristian) festivals held at that time. Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire by the late 300's, and by early 1100, Christmas had become the most important religious festival in Europe.

There are many customs related to Christmas as it has evolved over the years. It is celebrated by Christians and non-Christians alike and many families have their own customs that they practice. The custom of gift-giving probably began in Rome and Northern Europe because in these regions, people give each other small presents as part of their year-end celebrations. Decorating Christmas trees and sending cards became popular in the 1800's and many well-known Christmas carols such as "Silent Night" were composed at this time. In the United States, Santa Claus replaced Saint Nicholas as the symbol of gift giving.

Almost all of us that live in the United States know all about Christmas and what it means to us. How about other cultural holidays and events? Do we know much about other ethnicities and cultures? Let's honor this holiday by exploring customs, history, art, and folklore of the world.

Here are some ideas:

- Visit an art gallery.
- Learn more about holiday traditions of other countries by visiting your local library.
- Take an international cooking/baking course.
- Ask friends or neighbors of different spiritual beliefs about their holiday rituals and what they mean.
- Visit a museum.
- Check out books about the history and culture of your state or region at a local library.
- Eat at a new ethnic restaurant.

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Habit 11: Give

Diwali

Of all the festivals celebrated in India, Diwali is by far the most glamorous and important. Enthusiastically enjoyed by people of every religion, its magical and radiant touch creates an atmosphere of joy and festivity.

As a family festival, it is celebrated 20 days after Dussehra, on the 13th day of the dark fortnight of the month of Ashwin (October / November).

It is a festival of lights symbolizing the victory of righteousness and the lifting of spiritual darkness. It celebrates the victory of good over evil - and the glory of light. This festival commemorates Lord Rama's return to his kingdom Ayodhya after completing his 14-year exile.

Diwali reminds us that giving is always better than receiving. Whether it is gifts, or just a smile and hello, you may be surprised at how you feel when you have made someone's day by just doing a simple act of kindness.

Here are some tips:

- Donate clothes, shoes, and other items to the Salvation Army, or another good cause in your area.
- Invite friends you haven't seen in awhile over for dinner.
- Volunteer your time. There are many organizations that are always looking for help. You will benefit from this in more ways than none.
- Make someone's day. Compliment friends, family, and co-workers when ever you get a chance.
- Smile every chance you get.
- If you have not met your neighbors, introduce yourself and your family.
- Say thank you, even for the simplest things.
- Provide a service for someone in need. Remove snow, trim trees, pick up groceries, clean their yard, house, car, etc.
- Visit a nursing home to visit, sing, and read to residents.
- Share a laugh or give a hug to friends and family.
- Be "there" when someone needs to talk.

HABIT 11: GIVE

Habit 12: Have Fun

New Year

New Year is celebrated around the world on January 1st. It is a social occasion marked by boisterous celebrations to welcome the New Year. Many people go to parties and at midnight bells ring, sirens sound, firecrackers explode, and everyone shouts "Happy New Year". People also drink a toast to the New Year and sing "Auld Lang Syne".

New Year usually means one thing…having a great time! Enjoying yourself is a vital part of overall wellness and good times contribute to well-being and enrich our lives. Let's focus today on renewing old friendships and creating new ones.

Because you've been practicing habits 1-11 you can embrace habit 12 with stress-free abandon. Take a moment and think back to your childhood and what the holidays were like for you. If those aren't pleasant memories choose a holiday when you had the time of your life. What do you remember was the most fun? Recreate it this year. Having fun can vary from baking holiday cookies to buying all the holiday cookies. You are unique and so is your style of fun.

Here are some tips:

- Host a dinner party.
- Call a friend you haven't talked to in the last year.
- Update your address book.
- Send holiday cards and include a personal note in each.
- Join a recreational league or community group.
- Volunteer for a community activity.
- Play a board game with a family member.
- Visit a long-term care facility.
- Attend a holiday event.
- Start a new social family tradition.

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Tracking Your 12 Healthy Holiday Habits

Select one activity from each of the Habits to practice. Practice two habits each week for six weeks. For each habit completed fill in the date and the habit. For example:

Week 1

1. *Invited friend from work to holiday meal.*
2. *Bought a holiday planner for family to use.*

At the end of the program you should have 12 different healthy habits.

Healthy Holiday Habits Date Accomplished

Week 1

1. _____

2. _____

Week 2

1. _____

2. _____

Week 3

1. _____

2. _____

Week 4

1. _____

2. _____

Week 5

1. _____

2. _____

Week 6

1. _____

2. _____

TRACKING YOUR 12 HEALTHY HOLIDAY HABITS

12 HABITS FOR HEALTHY HOLIDAYS

1. **Start With a Vision**—Start your holiday season with a clear vision of how you want each holiday to go. Communicate your vision and values with family or friends and encourage them to contribute to a shared mission for the season.
2. **Set Goals and Prioritize**—Allow yourself to say "no" to activities/ responsibilities that aren't aligned with your mission and goals.
3. **Get Organized/Simplify**—Find ways to become more organized during the holidays. Identify ways to simplify. Assign tasks for everyone instead of taking it all on yourself.
4. **Self Care** —Find time to take care of yourself – physically, mentally and spiritually. Go for a walk, pray, don't skimp on sleep, read inspiring literature, listen to music, go outdoors, spend some quiet time, meditate, go to religious services.
5. **Safety**—Think about making a home safety plan, take a CPR/First Aid Course, make sure you have emergency supplies in your vehicle.
6. **Stay Financially Fit**—We are responsible for our own happiness and health during the holidays. Whether or not we have a good holiday is a function of our decisions not our conditions. Decide to make financial and time commitments that you can keep this holiday season.
7. **Eat Well**—Establish a healthy eating and drinking strategy during the holiday season and beyond. "Yule feel better when the New Year rolls around and you don't."
8. **Stay Active**—Find opportunities to stay active to help you feel better, more energized, focused and fit for the demands of the season.
9. **Get Connected**—Teamwork. Work with those you love to create meaningful traditions and routines that can be a part of future holidays. Get in touch with old friends.
10. **Explore New Experiences**—Set limits. Read, write in a journal, visit a library, study, watch less TV, or attend a holiday celebration different than yours.
11. **Give**—Commit random acts of kindness, volunteer, visit the elderly, donate money, clothes, toys, food.
12. **Have Fun**—Play, sing, laugh, enjoy. Experience the joy, excitement and wonder of the holiday season. Remember what the holiday season was like when you were a kid or look at it through your children's eyes.

NOVEMBER 2006

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

12 HABITS FOR HEALTHY HOLIDAYS

12 Habits: A Healthy Poem
By Anthony Weeks

Twas a night in November, When I made it my mission
To bring dreams of holiday joy, To fruition.

Make out a list, (and check it twice)
Of all your goals, Toward making the holiday nice.

The demands of the holidays, Can be too much to handle
Have a simpler holiday, And don't burn both ends of the candle.

Prayer, meditaiton, Or silent reflection
Find peace in the season, With a spiritual connection.

Make a holiday budget, And don't lose your head
Keep track of the green, So you don't end up in the red.

Resolutions aren't necessary, If you practice moderation
In the enjoyment of, Holiday food and libations.

The holiday season, Is often frenetic
Being active and fit, Helps you stay energetic.

Reach out to old friends and loved ones, Both near and far
Send holiday greetings, And let them know how you are.

Take time for yourself, And get enough rest
You'll enjoy the holiday more, If you're feeling your best.

Bring tidings of joy, And spread holiday cheer
But remember not everyone, Is jolly this time of year.

You can max out the credit cards, Buying gifts big and small
But to give of yourself, Is the best gift of all.

Believe in magic and miracles, And you'll understand why
The holidays look so much brighter, Through children's eyes.

DECEMBER 2006

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24 / 31	25	26	27	28	29	30

Pre-Holiday Survey

		Agree Yes		Maybe		Disagree No
1	I know how to have realistic expectations for the holidays.	1	2	3	4	5
2	I can prioritize my activities and responsibilities during the holidays.	1	2	3	4	5
3	I am familiar with effective ways to simplify.	1	2	3	4	5
4	I keep focused on the true meaning of the season.	1	2	3	4	5
5	I have a budget for holiday shopping that I can stick to.	1	2	3	4	5
6	I take time to do things I enjoy and to relax during the holidays.	1	2	3	4	5
7	I set realistic goals for the holidays.	1	2	3	4	5
8	I understand the benefits of exercise during the holidays.	1	2	3	4	5
9	I have holiday traditions that are meaningful and enjoyable.	1	2	3	4	5
10	I make an effort to give of my time and self during the holidays.	1	2	3	4	5

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Post-Holiday Survey

		Agree Yes		Maybe		Disagree No
1	I know how to have realistic expectations for the holidays.	1	2	3	4	5
2	I can prioritize my activities and responsibilities during the holidays.	1	2	3	4	5
3	I am familiar with effective ways to simplify.	1	2	3	4	5
4	I keep focused on the true meaning of the season.	1	2	3	4	5
5	I have a budget for holiday shopping that I can stick to.	1	2	3	4	5
6	I take time to do things I enjoy and to relax during the holidays.	1	2	3	4	5
7	I set realistic goals for the holidays.	1	2	3	4	5
8	I understand the benefits of exercise during the holidays.	1	2	3	4	5
9	I have holiday traditions that are meaningful and enjoyable.	1	2	3	4	5
10	I make an effort to give of my time and self during the holidays.	1	2	3	4	5

12 Healthy Holiday Habits Evaluation

Please rate the program on a scale of 1-5 by answering the following questions (1 being highest and 5 being lowest). **Please make additional comments as needed.**

1	The 12 Healthy Holiday Habits campaign was motivating.	1	2	3	4	5
2	The program brought about positive changes in my holidays.	1	2	3	4	5
3	The program was self explanatory and easy to understand.	1	2	3	4	5
4	The topics addressed were appropriate.	1	2	3	4	5
5	The 12 Habits for Healthy Holidays campaign helped me adopt habits for a more enjoyable holiday season.	1	2	3	4	5

What did you like about the program?

What did you dislike about the program?

Additional comments:

Please return to _____ ***by January 1st.***

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