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# Work / Life

## How To Brighten the Winter Blahs

### NAVIGATOR

By Debbie Mandel

In the Northeast we have had some significant snowstorms in early December forcing us to shovel and stay home. Our initial reaction was, "How beautiful and pure." Then the next day when driving and walking became difficult, we began complaining, "Who needs snow?" By the time Christmas rolled around, no one longed for or dreamed of a white Christmas as we all had our fill. It seems that we get bored quickly with the terrain and need to change things. We are tired of the short days and cold temperatures. When we feel bored, mildly depressed, or burned out, we always look for external stimulation.

Strange, we never look within ourselves where the cold emptiness begins.

Ironically, the solution exists inside where we can find greater control and empowerment through positive perception. Seeing every day as a good day with its special distinguishing moments creates peacefulness and clarity. And for those of us who demand immediate gratification, we can change our perception immediately whether at work or at home.

It can be as simple as rearranging a few knick-knacks, where we usually sit at the kitchen table, or moving a chair or lamp from here to over there. If I change my seat at the kitchen table, I really see things from a different perspective. I might notice something

new in my field of vision. If I rearrange paintings or furniture, I see them with a fresh eye and appreciate them differently. When we are beset by winter doldrums and long nights, clearly we need to let the pendulum swing the other way to restore the balance.

Here are 10 tips to help you change your perception of winter and bring warmth and light into a chilly life.

- Raise the blinds and let the light shine in. Sit by the window, look out and gaze, or read. Feel the warmth.
- Try eating more hot soups, and stews. Add beans and lentils to your diet. These hearty meals are both comforting and nourishing. (If you use canned soups, pay attention to the amount of sodium as many ready-made soups are high in sodium.)
- Go outside to reset your biological clock. Let natural sunlight counteract Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). Appreciate the winter landscape: the "tree architecture" that we never notice when the leaves are flourishing, or the feathery ornamental grasses swaying in the wind.
- Exercise to stimulate and bring warmth to your body. Many of us are bored with treadmills and stair masters that go nowhere. Change your routine. Dress warmly and go for a brisk fitness walk. If you can get to the shore, a walk on the beach is peaceful and inspiring. Try some

new classes in Pilates, Yoga, belly dancing, Salsa, and/or weight training. Join a league to participate in fun team sports. Get a buddy to exercise with or make friends in fitness centers.

- Connect with sunny people. Do volunteer work. We tend to get isolated in the winter and keep to our igloos. Get out and see positive people who appreciate you, and, if you can't get out, use the phone or e-mail.
- Bring tropical plants into the house. Their gracious leaves and greenery will lift your spirits and give you a taste of eternal summer.
- Look at the color orange, which is cheering. No need to repaint your home—just put something orange on the desk or your coffee table.
- Try a warm glowing candlelight meditation. Light a candle in the evening and stare at the flame for about 30 seconds to a minute. Then close your eyes and breathe to your own natural rhythm and see what comes up for you in meditation.
- Give yourself an auto-massage. Warm some inexpensive olive oil in the microwave and massage your body from head to toe. Long strokes for the limbs, circular strokes for the torso. Make sure to massage the temples and, using your thumbs, do windshield wiper movements under and over your eyes. Feel the warmth pervade your body.

- Simplify your home, room by room. Clean out the clutter and donate what you have not used in years. In winter we tend to contract and go inward.

Use this indoors time to organize your home. Sharing with the needy will give you an inner glow.

(Source: Debbie Eisenstadt Mandel, MA, author of *Turn On Your Inner Light: Fitness for Body, Mind and Soul*, stress-reduction specialist, motivational speaker, personal trainer, and mind/body lecturer. [www.turnonyourinnerlight.com](http://www.turnonyourinnerlight.com))

## WEB SITE PICKS

<http://www.textileaffairs.com/c-common.htm>

Need help with deciphering those care symbols on clothing-care labels? Go to the above site for a helpful clothing care symbol chart.

When one find's oneself in a hole of one's own making, it is a good time to examine the quality of the workmanship.

—John Renmerde

## HEALTHY FOOD TIP

### The Health Benefits of Cinnamon, Nutmeg, and Other Favorite Holiday Spices

Nothing signals the start of the holiday season better than the scent of holiday spices filling your home. But popular holiday spices have much more to offer than pleasing scents; they each have unique health benefits that will add not only great taste to your holiday dishes, but also a healthy boost.

#### Cinnamon

The sweet and spicy flavor of cinnamon has been used by many different cultures for its medicinal properties for hundreds, even thousands, of years.

One of the most talked-about benefits of cinnamon relates to type 2 diabetes. A study published in the journal *Diabetes Care* found that half a teaspoon of cinnamon a day significantly reduces blood sugar levels in people with type 2 diabetes. It also reduces triglyceride, LDL cholesterol, and total cholesterol levels among this group.

Cinnamon's other benefits include the following:

- Supports digestive function

- Constricts and tones tissues
- Relieves congestion
- Relieves pain and stiffness of muscles and joints
- Relieves menstrual discomfort
- Contains blood-thinning compounds that stimulate circulation
- Contains anti-inflammatory compounds that may relieve arthritis
- Helps prevent urinary tract infections, tooth decay, and gum disease
- Can kill E. coli and other bacteria

#### Nutmeg

Nutmeg is another spice that has a variety of healing properties and can be used in a wide range of dishes during the holidays and all year long. It is useful for the following:

- Insomnia (nutmeg can produce drowsiness, so it should be taken when you have a chance to relax or sleep)
- Anxiety
- Calming muscle spasms
- Nausea and vomiting
- Indigestion
- Diarrhea
- Joint pain and gout
- Lowering blood pressure
- Male infertility and impotence
- Improving concentration
- Increasing circulation
- Lowering cholesterol
- Toothaches (nutmeg oil)

\*\* Please note that taking too much nutmeg (one to three NUTS or less) can cause side-effects such as nausea, hallucinations, swelling, and shock.

#### Clove

Cloves have a potent, sweet and spicy, aromatic flavor that makes a great complement to many foods. They have been consumed in some areas, such as Asia, for more than 2,000 years. Among the clove's most well-known healing properties is its ability to relieve tooth and gum pain, but it has many benefits beyond that. These include the following:

- Anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, and antioxidant properties

- Relief from respiratory ailments such as asthma and bronchitis
- Relief from muscle pains from injuries or arthritis and rheumatism
- Eliminates intestinal parasites, fungi, and bacteria
- May encourage creativity and mental focus

#### Ginger

Ginger is another spice with a potent flavor that is great for warming your body and adding kick to foods. Its medicinal properties include the following:

- Soothes nausea, motion sickness, and other stomach upset
- Relieves morning sickness
- Anti-inflammatory properties
- Eliminates intestinal gas
- Relaxes and soothes the intestinal tract
- Antioxidant properties
- Relieves dizziness
- Boosts the immune system
- Protects against bacteria and fungi
- Encourages bile flow
- Promotes cardiovascular health

#### Peppermint

The therapeutic effects of fresh peppermint leaves have been known since ancient times. The aromatic aroma has come to symbolize hospitality in many cultures. Its healing properties include the following:

- Soothes the digestive tract
- Relieves symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome
- May protect against cancer
- Inhibits the growth of bacteria and fungus
- Relieves the symptoms of allergies and asthma

While there are many benefits to be had by adding spices to your diet, don't forget that these foods should not be taken every day, or you run the risk of developing an allergy to them. Before you purchase a spice, be sure to check the label to ensure that it has not been irradiated; organic varieties are your best bet.

(Source: Dr. Joseph Mercola with Rachael Droege. [www.mercola.com](http://www.mercola.com))

## HUMOR

### Top 10 Caddy Replies

- 10) *Golfer* "Think I'm going to drown myself in the lake."  
*Caddy* "Think you can keep your head down that long?"
- 9) *Golfer* "I'd move heaven and earth to break 100 on this course."  
*Caddy* "Try heaven, you've already moved most of the earth."
- 8) *Golfer* "Do you think my game is improving?"  
*Caddy* "Yes sir, you miss the ball much closer now."
- 7) *Golfer* "Do you think I can get there with a 5 iron?"  
*Caddy* "Eventually."
- 6) *Golfer* "You've got to be the worst caddy in the world."  
*Caddy* "I don't think so sir. That would be too much of a coincidence."
- 5) *Golfer* "Please stop checking your watch all the time. It's too much of a distraction."  
*Caddy* "It's not a watch; it's a compass."
- 4) *Golfer* "How do you like my game?"  
*Caddy* "Very good sir, but personally, I prefer golf."
- 3) *Golfer* "Do you think it's a sin to play on Sunday?"  
*Caddy* "The way you play, sir, it's a sin on any day."
- 2) *Golfer* "This is the worst course I've ever played on."  
*Caddy* "This isn't the golf course. We left that an hour ago."
- 1) *Golfer* "That can't be my ball, it's too old."  
*Caddy* "It's been a long time since we teed off, sir."

The rung of a ladder was never meant to rest upon, but only to hold a man's foot long enough to enable him to put the other somewhat higher.

—Thomas Henry Huxley

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

### All I Needed To Know About Life I Learned from Santa

Encourage people to believe in you.

Always remember who's naughty and who's nice.

Don't pout.

It's as much fun to give as it is to receive.

Some days it's ok to feel a little chubby.

Make your presents known.

Always ask for a little bit more than what you really want.

Bright red can make anyone look good.

Wear a wide belt and no one will notice how many pounds you've gained.

If you only show up once a year, everyone will think you're very important.

Whenever you're at a loss for words, say: "HO, HO, HO!"

## STRESS MANAGEMENT

### Getting Input, Not Frustration

By Joe Wynne

Are you frustrated with being required to get results without having the authority over all the players? A workgroup is made up of individuals, all of whom must agree to extend their effort. When tasks or decisions have reached a snag, a neutral facilitator can be the best intervention to obtain a breakthrough. Here's how to obtain input from the individual players:

- Reduce the impact of "openly opinionated." At any particular situation or meeting, there are going to be those individuals who will be comfortable doing most of the talking. This tends to overshadow the opinions and input of the more shy participants. You know all too well that there is no correlation between the quantity of talking and quality of ideas, so don't let the participant who drank the latte grande skew the dialogue into deadlock.
- Look for snags that are caused by individuals who are not participating to complete the task or finalize the decision. Their individual views may have been expressed but not incorporated into solutions. Also, decisions may have been made by majority vote, resulting in nonsupport by those who were out-voted.
- Ask questions that get needed answers. For example, ask, "What do you think

about this issue?" "What should we consider when making this decision?" and "What do you think we should do to get back on track?" If few agree on the answers to these questions, you facilitate a resolution.

- Actively bring out new and opposing opinions. This information can be controversial but may be important to the decision or outcome, so you do not want it to go unheard. Ask questions like, "Who has an opposing opinion?" and "What are other ways we can proceed?" Instead of "Let's move on to the next agenda item," ask "Does anyone have anything to add on this agenda item?" or "Are there any other comments before we decide what action to take?"
- Show good listening skills. This will make it easier for you to obtain the collaborative process information you are looking for.

(Source: *Expert Opinion* by Joe Wynne.)

## WORDS OF WISDOM

### The Most Important Gifts of All

By Pauline Wallin, Ph.D.

In this season of holiday gift buying, advertisers bombard us with messages, some of them contradictory. One ad tells us that the best way for men to show love is to spend three months' salary on a piece of diamond jewelry. On the other hand, MasterCard commercials remind us that there are some things ("Priceless" moments) that money can't buy.

"Oh, that's a sweet sentiment," you might say, "but can it really substitute for the latest videogame or hot toy?" Very few children raised in this materialistic culture would say, "Gee mom, thanks for making my favorite meal. What a great Christmas gift!"

Yet 20 years from now, these same children probably won't remember the items that they got for the current Christmas. They will, however, recall the special games that their family played together, the time that their older brother took them to a movie, or the way their parents tucked them in at night.

These are the little moments, which over time, have a huge impact.

Unfortunately people tend to take them for granted. With so much emphasis on holiday shopping and on buying the perfect gift, we can lose sight of the importance of the less flashy but "priceless" gifts such as thoughtfulness and gratitude that we can give to one another all year round. A diamond may be forever, but its value is nothing compared to a lifetime of moments that money can't buy.

I'm not suggesting that you forego the presents this holiday season, but don't worry so much about how "perfect" they are. Go ahead and buy some gifts, but, more importantly, resolve to focus your energy on helping others feel valued and appreciated. They will remember your acts of thoughtfulness and compassion long after the material gifts are gone.

Here are some examples of small gestures that can help people around you feel valued.

- 1) Show your appreciation with a thank-you, a smile, or a hug (or all three.) It takes just a moment, but it can make a person's day.
- 2) Practice a random act of kindness every day. Make this your "gift" to a stranger. For example, let someone in front of you in line. Hold a door open for someone. Smile and greet people you pass at work. These acts take only a few seconds or less, yet they create a mood that can last for hours.
- 3) Call up someone you haven't spoken to in a while just to catch up on how they are. You've probably been meaning to do this for a long time. Now is a good time.
- 4) If you have children, give one child at a time your full attention for an afternoon. Go for a walk, go to the library, or just sit and read or draw together. The activity itself isn't as important as sharing time and interacting together. Going to a movie or watching a video doesn't count.
- 5) Write a note of appreciation to someone who is important to you. Don't be surprised if that person keeps the note for years to come.
- 6) Think of the way you'd like to be remembered by those around you and give of yourself accordingly throughout the year. The added benefit for you is that you'll be in a more positive frame of mind overall.

(Source: Pauline Wallin, Ph.D., psychologist and author of *Taming Your Inner Brat: A Guide for Transforming Self-Defeating Behavior*. <http://www.innerbrat.com>)

## FINANCES

### Work Together, Save Money

By April Borbon

Individually we can come up with a variety of ways to save money on a daily basis. We can cut coupons, save our pocket change, cook from scratch—in essence, do everything for ourselves that we can possibly do in order to save a bit of cash.

There is an entirely different way in which to save money that is often overlooked, however, and that is working communally. Helping others to save money also can help us to save money; oftentimes, this will equate to even greater savings than we would be able to realize on our own.

The following is a short list of ways to enlist the help of your friends and neighbors to accomplish more than what you could do by yourself, save money, and enjoy the added benefit of developing better relationships.

**Share babysitting.** Trade off with friends and neighbors for evening or daytime childcare. Just think, if you can gather six friends and each of you takes a day of babysitting, you would not have to pay any childcare expenses at all.

**Host an annual neighborhood garage sale.** A one-family garage sale will draw some customers, but a 20-family garage sale will have a much greater draw. Plus you can share the work of sign-making and organizing your event.

**Start a lunch club.** You and a group of coworkers could agree that each day a different person will bring lunch for the group. You would only have to cook one day a week, and you would get to enjoy other's cooking for the rest of the week. This saves lots of money over the cost of eating out every day.

**Make your next party a potluck.** This spreads both the cost and the work around so that everyone can enjoy the party.

**Use the Web to work together.** A neighborhood or a group of friends can use a Web site, provided free of charge by some hosts such as Geocities, to advertise and organize such things as tool exchanges, work parties, and food co-ops.

**Old-fashioned quilting bees are once again becoming popular.** Not only do these bees produce a beautiful product, but the camaraderie is an added bonus.

**Vacation together with friends.** Vacationing in a group is an excellent way to save money, since you can use group buying power to get great accommodations, discount show prices, and even reduced-rate airfare.

**Participate in, or organize, a community garden project.** Gardening in your backyard is fine, but gardening with a group of like-minded community members will reap even greater rewards. You will receive great advice, plant starts, help with the heavy labor, and encouragement.

**Form a study group.** School can be difficult for both children and parents. Instead of hiring a tutor, coordinate a study group. This will allow each participant to help others as well as receive help. In addition, encouraging success in school now can reap huge rewards in the future.

**Holidays are a great time to save money when working together communally.** Cookie exchanges are always popular, gift-wrapping bees, neighborhood Easter egg hunts, and Halloween parties can all be done as a group and save not only time but money as well.

**Organize a community clothes exchange at the beginning of each school year.** This way, used clothing can be shared and distributed before making a sweep at the mall for school clothes.

**Bring back bartering.** If your neighbor can fix cars and you can do landscaping, why not trade services instead of breaking out the checkbook? Other services can be added as you find out what special talents and skills your friends and neighbors possess.

**Work together to sell your homemade products.** Holiday bazaars, farmers markets, and flea markets are all ways you can work with others to provide a place to sell your wares while sharing the cost of space, advertising, and organizing.

As you can see, there are a variety of ways to work with others in order to accomplish the things you desire. The more work and expenses you can share, the more money and effort you will save.

(Source: April Borbon, posted on [www.stretcher.com](http://www.stretcher.com))

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### Questions/Comments to:

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An online version of this newsletter may be found at [http://www.hq.nasa.gov/office/codecc/cc/navig-12\\_04.pdf](http://www.hq.nasa.gov/office/codecc/cc/navig-12_04.pdf)

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