



## EXECUTIVE VITALITY™: ARE YOU PREPARED FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON?

For many, the holidays are right around the corner. With good planning, good preparation and realistic expectations, you can ensure your holiday experiences will be restorative rather than stressful.

Here's what we suggest to ensure positive experiences:

1. **Expectations:** Make sure your expectations for the holidays are realistic—expectations for visiting your family, the travel, the weather, the food, and so on. Expecting something different from what has happened in the past can be disappointing. Realistically, the only thing you have some control over is yourself. Trust yourself and give yourself the opportunity to have a positive experience by preparing and setting realistic expectations. We found two articles about the correlation between realistic expectations and happiness we recommend you take a look at—see Additional resources.
2. **Preparation:** Manage what is reasonably within your control. You can manage some aspects of your holiday so that your expectations are met—travel, for example. Be attentive to details regarding accommodations, food, shopping, activities—whatever is important to you—spiritual and religious services, 12-step meetings, specialty grocery stores and restaurants, etc. Many times, unrealistic expectations are simply a result of making assumptions rather than careful planning. Avoiding dashed expectations can boost your vitality and ability to deal with touchy family situations.
3. **Wellbeing toolkit:** Have a wellbeing toolkit with plans for fun and escapes (techniques you may need for avoiding various triggers), and ways to reduce stress. Include in your wellbeing toolkit, for example, a mantra that says, “I will have realistic boundaries around finances.” Before going to parties, plan what you will eat and what will you avoid (sugar, alcohol, drugs?). Bring what you like to drink (e.g., sparkling water or whatever fun beverage you enjoy). Create an “escape” plan so you can depart when you feel the need. Have a script for triggers at family gatherings. All of these things may be part of your toolkit.

Keep your expectations realistic. Control what you can. Keep meditating, exercising, and doing whatever you do all year to stay healthy and sane—and come January, you will not be lamenting “oh, why did I ...?” (fill in the blank). These are great ways to sustain your emotional well-being and vitality no matter what comes your way between now and the new year. Being ready emotionally, physically, and mentally for the probabilities of what the season might hold will put you in a position to benefit from the holiday season and take care of yourself at the same time.

*Do you have plans for navigating the holidays? How will you make sure your experience is upbeat and positive all the way through?*

### Additional resources

- [Forbes: The Power Of Realistic Expectations In A World Of Unrealistic Pressure](#)
- [Psychology Today: Unrealistic Expectations Impede Happiness and Empathy](#)
- [Executive Vitality™: How to Avoid Going Insane During the Holiday Season](#)
- [Executive Vitality™: Prepare for Holidays](#)
- [Executive Vitality™: Prioritize Your Emotional Well Being for the Holidays](#)
- [Executive Vitality™: Restorative Holidays](#)
- [Executive Vitality™: Your Happiness Quotient](#)