



## EXECUTIVE VITALITY: THE GIFT OF KINDNESS

Wow. It is the last month of the year. Where did 2013 go?

There are about four more weeks in the year and this is a difficult period for many. It is a time when expectation and reality often are vastly distant from each other, resulting in disappointment and unhealthy behavior in an effort to feel better.

It is also a time to be triggered by the anniversary of past events. We have just passed the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the assassination of a U.S. President. It is the one year anniversary, shortly, of the horrific shooting at an elementary school in Newtown, CT. Many of us may have more personal events that are called up at year end.

Our mission is not to depress you, but to remind you that preparation for such a mishmash of celebration and mourning, warmth and alienation, pride and regret, and probably many more such dichotomies can help you deal with what could otherwise be a very disorienting time.

Here are specific tips for coping:

1. If you have trigger dates/events, plan on what to do, with whom, and where—or maybe what **not** to do, with whom, and where—to ensure that those triggers are managed. An example might be, if you always spend a particular holiday with specific relatives, and if that is not healthy for you, maybe this is the year to do something different, like take a trip, or be with friends, or both.
2. Think about what you want to acknowledge to yourself on December 31st, once these weeks have passed. Are there any tasks or projects that you want to finish up by year end that will really give you a sense of accomplishment? Maybe it is volunteering with children, or maybe it is cleaning out the closets, coaching a direct report, or doing a first draft of your section of a project for work. Or maybe what you want to acknowledge to yourself is not about completing a task as such. Maybe it is about being able to say you feel at peace with the choices you make this month about work-life balance, family, food, etc.
3. Take care of yourself these last four weeks of 2013. We have been talking about this a lot (Executive Vitality articles [Fall Reset](#) and [Overcoming the “Perfect Storm”](#)). This is just a reminder. Give yourself the gift of kindness.
4. Just say no. Remember that is an option that you have, whether it is in response to too many parties, too much food, too much frenetic activity, or too much work. The work might have to get done, but think about delegation, prioritization, timing, and other resources.

*What are the top two things you can do to maintain your equanimity, productivity, and vitality through this often hectic period? When can you put the time and energy into planning for and actually maintaining your health—in all senses of that word—over the next four weeks? Depending on the activity, is it early every morning, late every night, four days a week, or Sunday nights?*