

HOW TO HAVE MORE FUN THIS HOLIDAY SEASON **by Marlene and Bob Neufeld**

Holidays are times of joy for some, stress for others, and joy and stress for most of us. We often are frustrated because we think we SHOULD be having more fun that we are having during holiday seasons.

Our expectations are high. Many of us are longing for “the past perfect holiday that never was” (Drs. Gay & Kathlyn Hendricks). People tend to think that this year may be the year they finally get the love or appreciation that they never got in the past. Almost everyone experiences nostalgia around holiday times. Sometimes this takes the form of longing and regret. “Christmas is a time when you get homesick even when you are at home” (Carol Nelson)

Holidays bring up a sense of entitlement, a belief that we have a right or a claim to something, we are owed it, and we should get it. Sometimes this goes along with comparison; we believe that everyone else is having more fun than we are.

Another aspect of holidays is that we see people we haven't seen for a while and anything incomplete with them or that we've been withholding tends to bubble up. This may include feelings we haven't communicated, things we said we would do or wouldn't do that we haven't done or have done. The increased energy of holiday seasons magnifies anything that isn't clear (and of course, alcohol plays a role in people being unclear). Just before holidays is a great time to get complete and get clear.

Holidays like Christmas are times of an abundance of giving and receiving that's been packed into a few weeks of the year. We may get over-loaded and unable to handle any more abundance.

During holiday times it is common for people to be running old beliefs, beliefs that are no longer useful.

How to know you have a belief running you that's not useful?

1. You're not having fun
2. Your breath is shallow and quick
3. You are inflexible, literally and mentally
4. You are seeing the world in either/or alternatives

What can you do when you're running a belief that's not useful?

1. Feel all the feelings that are part of the nostalgia and longing, fear, anger, sadness, joy.
2. Generate appreciation for what is (become sensitively aware, see what is going on as a treasure or something to learn from).
3. Get clear on what you can control and what you can't control. You can only control your own choices and actions; you can't control your feelings, other people's feelings, their choices or their actions.
4. Breathe (notice how you are breathing, slow it down, deepen it).
5. Generate wonder and get curious

6. Notice when you are getting close to your “Upper Limit” of your capacity for joy and love. For more on the Upper Limit Patterns see www.marleneandbob.com/articles.htm

We invite you to enter this holiday season with a new perspective.

Marlene & Bob Neufeld practice body-centered Coaching and Psychotherapy. They are a couple who help couples learn life-changing skills and create closer, more loving relationships with one another. To learn more, see www.marleneandbob.com or call 613-594-9248 to arrange a complimentary 1-hour introductory session.