



Take A BreakSimplify the Holidays

It seems like the holiday season starts earlier each year and our list of things to do and obligations to fulfill seems to grow and grow. This season, consider stepping back and looking objectively at your holiday workload. Is there a way you can make it a holiday payload instead?

Absolutely! Why not re-focus on what's really important? Quality time with your family and friends.

Practical tips for the busy holiday season:

- **Be choosy with your time** - it's okay to say no to party invitations.
- **Change your outlook about gift giving** - set a small dollar limit on gifts, draw names instead of giving to every person in the family or donate to a charity instead of buying a gift.
- **Give the gift of time** – spend time with those you care about or reunite with a long lost friend.
- **Work smarter, not harder** - do not wait until the last minute to shop or prepare for a holiday. Do as much as you can ahead of time.
- **Stay local** - chances are you live near an historic area and may not have visited local museums, battlefields, shops, etc. Take the family on a field trip and if you have out of town guests, invite them along! A great resource is the *Virginia Tourism Guide*. Download the electronic version and sort by date for activities that might interest you. Go to www.virginia.org and filter events by the holiday category.

Feeling Overwhelmed?

As much as we may try, it's easy to fall into the hectic pace of the holiday season. If you find yourself feeling overwhelmed in traffic, at the mall, at a family gathering, etc. here's some advice. There are two questions to ask yourself about things that stress you out over the holiday season:

Is it important? Can I control it?

If the answer to either question is NO, then don't spend your time and energy on it! Only choose to spend time and energy on things that are important and you can control!



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