

December 2007

"Unplug the Christmas Machine"

In 1986 Troy H. Cole, Ph.D. gave us a Christmas message worth pondering. It's just as viable today, and this edition of e-news is taken from his original message.

Christmas means joy, fun, vacationing, and visiting friends and family. Great times, right? Well, maybe. But for many of us Christmas also means taking on more responsibility than we can handle, spending more money than we can afford, and having less free time to relax than at any other time of the year. Too many of us become "Christmas machines." We go through the motions on automatic, not really experiencing the joy and fun of the season.

This year, don't let the Christmas machine take over. In order to ease the stresses and increase the joys of the season, why not sit down with the family to discuss meaningful, satisfying ways of expressing our love for each other and extended family and friends. Examine traditional holiday activities in the light of the true spirit of Christmas, and determine how you really want to spend the Christmas season.

Consider the following tips to ease stress and increase joy

- Look first to the real meaning. Seek out the spiritual significance of Christmas and stand firm in what the celebration is all about.
- Include others. In some of your holiday activities include people who otherwise have nothing special to do.
- Set priorities. Ask: What do I need now? What can wait? What can others do? What can go undone?
- Make a budget and stick to it!
- Start new traditions if old ones are no longer appropriate. This is particularly important if you've experienced a loss during the past year. If this is the case, don't hesitate to ask others for help during the holidays.
- Care for yourself. You know the drill: get rest, eat right, and do some form of exercise. You'll feel better at your holiday functions if you've taken care of yourself.
- Plan some relaxing activities amidst the flurry of holiday activity.
- Talk it out. If you're experiencing holiday blues, seek professional help.

[Unplug the Christmas Machine](#), Robinson & Staeheli