



THE INSTITUTE FOR HEALTHY FAMILIES OF NORTH TEXAS

"helping achieve small miracles!"

IHF Newsletter, Vol. 4, No.12

December 15, 2015

All That Glitters isn't Gold

By Dr. Sandra W. Froese, LPC-S, ©2015. All rights reserved.

It is holiday time -- in every home, city, office, and retail store in the country! The sights and sounds with decorated trees, lights, music, and gifts are all around us. It is truly a wonderful time of the year. However, it is easy to get so caught up in the season that we wear ourselves out rushing here and there, buying stuff way beyond our budget and indulging in too much food and drink. All that glitters isn't gold. To be distracted by the glitter takes us away from the true spirit of the season.

Decorating the tree, mantle, staircase and entry doorway can be a hassle that involves choices from an accumulation of decorations. As I hung an eclectic collection of ornaments on our Christmas tree, I am tempted to use only those with gold glitter for a coordinated theme. But, wait! My children always look for the red and green construction paper ornaments with their school photos glued to the shape of a bell or Christmas tree! (They were lovingly made in Mrs. McCool's third grade class many years ago.) My hubby will look for the ornaments that he gave me the first year we were married. (They are red glass ornaments that came from Sears and are now faded and cracked.) All that glitters isn't gold, so I hung the ornaments that my family cares about.

Our expectations for the Christmas holidays can be unrealistic when we are bombarded with the commercialism all around us. We can become so immersed buying and wrapping gifts, decorating our homes, and preparing food for family dinners and parties that it is easy to become overwhelmed and stressed. Here are some tips to keep you grounded in this season of good will toward all people.

1. Stay **focused** on what is really important to you and your family. **Prioritize** family gatherings, church and school programs, and social events.
2. Do you really have to accept every invitation to a party, church event or school event? **Be selective** of the ones you want to attend and be gracious in declining those you do not care to attend or do not have the time to attend.
3. **Budget carefully** and set a limit on what you plan to spend for each family member and stick to it. January will sneak up on you soon enough with a pile of bills.
4. If you like to **share** your Christmas baking with your close neighbors and friends, **keep it simple** accompanied by a nice handwritten holiday card.
5. In lieu of purchasing a gift for someone who has more than enough stuff, **make a donation** to the person's favorite charity in their honor.
6. Schedule some time in each day to **relax with a cup of tea** or hot chocolate. Take a walk and enjoy the beauty of the season. Listen to beautiful Christmas and holiday music. Attend a concert, play or see a movie.
7. **Shop locally** when you can to help local retail business, but if you shop online to save time and money, **order early** to ensure delivery.
8. Rethink writing the "Annual Holiday Newsletter" and keep it to no more than three paragraphs! Or, **e-mail your greetings** to stay in touch with extended family and far-away friends.

*All of us at the **Institute for Healthy Families of North Texas** wish you and yours a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year whatever your religious tradition! For information and to learn more about our counseling services go to our website at www.texasicounselors.com or e-mail Dr. Sandra Froese at swfroese@sbcglobel.net.*