

Ty Ankrom's Here's What I Think ...

The recent long Thanks-giving weekend reinforced two things for me: The holiday season is definitely here and there never seems to be enough time to get everything done that needs to be done.



Thanks to technology, we have become a culture tied to work. Even when we have days off, there's often a part of our brain that is thinking about what we didn't do before we left and what is waiting for us when we return to the office.

With the holiday season upon us, the workload increases, bringing with it some extra stress.

Numerous studies have shown that people's stress increases around the holiday season, as tasks – preparing holiday cards, going shopping, hosting meals or traveling to see family – are added to an already-full day.

An article on the Greater Good's Web site (<http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/>) highlights three areas that are important to remember during this busy time. The one

that probably makes the most sense may also be the hardest to implement: simplify.

The Center for a New American Dream, an organization that works to raise awareness of the negative impact of a hyper-consumer culture, was founded in 1997.

Considering that after Thanksgiving, retail has created a shopping mecca with Black Friday, Small Business Saturday and Cyber Monday, it may not be a moment too soon.

The Center has a free booklet available for download called Simplify the Holidays that covers topics such as gifts and spending, budgeting, and connecting with children.

In the section on Time and Stress is the following exercise:

List all of the holiday-related tasks that you were responsible for last year (e.g., buying gifts,

Things to do:
Relax!!!



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making cards, decorating the house, entertaining guests, etc.). Put a star next to the activities you truly enjoyed.

After making the list, the book asks such questions as: "Which activities could you scale back to reduce stress?" and "Which activities could you cut out altogether?"

I think this is – no pun intended – a simple way to prioritize what really is important to each of us at the holidays.

Download the booklet at <http://act.newdream.org/page/signup/simplify-holidays-booklet>.

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