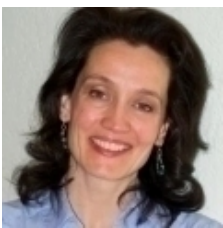


# Thanksgiving does not have to be stressful

By Mandy Kendall

The holidays can often be a double-edged sword. On one hand it is wonderful getting friends and family together, but on the other hand, the reality can often have even the closest families coming to blows (physically or verbally). Extended travel, house guests, hosting, cooking, overindulging and the odd skeleton in the closet can make for some tense times around the holiday season.

There is often a tendency for us to try to be all things to all people during the holiday season. The perfect hostess, the perfect cook, the perfect housekeeper all sounds very desirable, but ultimately can leave us feeling exhausted, underappreciated and left wondering why we bothered in the first place (again). Admitting that we are human and accepting, or asking for, help could result in a much more enjoyable experience.



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So in true *Qwik-e* tradition here are some tips for helping to make this holiday season a much calmer and more enjoyable time.

**Prepare** – The older I get, the more I rely on lists. Lists help map out timings and job delegations. A list of jobs on

the fridge, with spaces for names alongside, gives family members an opportunity to choose what jobs they dislike the least. You may be surprised to find out what people prefer doing when given a choice. You can then take charge and allocate jobs randomly if the kids (big kids included) don't sign up voluntarily. If you are going to delegate dishes for your guests to bring, try and leave yourself with dishes a) you love cooking and b) can be prepared as much in advance as possible. That way everyone arrives to the gathering ready to start having fun.

**Delegate** – I know some of us like to think we can do everything ourselves, but the fact of the matter is a) it's a pretty lonely, and a lot of hard work when we do and b) people generally like helping as it makes them feel useful. Utilize guests/neighbors/kids/friends who offer to help...they likely wouldn't have offered if they didn't want to help. Even those who don't offer (you know who you are) can be asked to do small jobs to make sure everyone is part of the day and no one person is left doing everything. A meal where each guest brings a pre-arranged dish makes for a much more relaxed and enjoyable time all round. The host is less stressed and can enjoy their guests rather than slaving away in the kitchen and guests feel like they have really contributed to the event.

**Be realistic** – There are only so many hours in the day and time becomes a precious commodity especially around the holidays. Start with how much time you really have, then take away how much time you would like to have for yourself to enjoy the occasion (be selfish here; you deserve it). Then you can decide what to do with the remainder and remember a job delegated is a job you don't have to do ... giving you more time.

**Say no** – It's OK to say no. People will still love you and may even end up respecting you more for your decisiveness. Adding an alternative suggestion or solution that suits you better, or at least explaining why you've said no, can help take the

sting out of turning someone, or something, down. However, if your reason for saying no is just because you don't want to, sometimes just leaving it at no is best.

**Pace yourself** – Having a protein rich breakfast will help you resist the urge to snack throughout the day when prepping in the kitchen. A bit more protein (a protein drink or bar perhaps) a little while before the main meal will also help you from overeating.

**Stay hydrated** – We all get a little fractious when we are dehydrated and alcohol will have a much greater affect on you (and you will likely drink more than you mean to) if you are thirsty.

**Don't forget to breathe** – If all else fails, take yourself somewhere quiet (even if that's the bathroom) and just breathe in and out for a couple of minutes. It may also help to focus on the word "accepting" when breathing in, and "releasing" when breathing out.

**Be thankful** — This is a day of Thanksgiving for all that we have, and that it is a day of sharing with friends, family and loved ones. Start the holiday meal with everyone saying one thing they are grateful for. This will help bring all the guests together and may also help diffuse any tense moments that may have happened before the meal ... or even prevent some occurring after.

Wishing you all a very happy, peaceful and thankful holiday.

Until next time.

*Mandy Kendall operates Health Connective in South Lake Tahoe, which aligns wellness seekers with their ideal wellness provider. If you have questions, would like some advice, or would like to request some Qwik-e tips on any health and well-being topic, drop her an email at [connect@healthconnective.com](mailto:connect@healthconnective.com) or keep an eye out on Lake Tahoe News for regular Qwik-e tips*

*on how to make healthy changes one Quick and Easy step at a time.*