

HOLIDAY MINDFULNES

The holiday season often comes with a lot more than boxes and bags. For many, it brings high expectations, family drama and memories of lost loved ones. Making a concentrated effort to be more present during the gifting season can powerfully change how you close this year and ring in the new.



For a truly festive Yuletide, turn the light of your mind on finances, food, family and friends. Create a plan that will celebrate the season without the holiday hangover.

Revisiting Stephen Covey's 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, place Habit #2 at the top of your Christmas list - **Begin with the End in Mind**. Where do you want to be after all the wrapping paper is in the recycle bin and you're standing on the bathroom scale?

Budget your money, appetite and time for the best holiday bottom line. Financially, consider expenses like travel, food, entertaining, and gifts. What spending makes sense with your income? It's easy to get caught up in the feeling of the season but often those feelings fade into the reality of stressful debt.

Pare down your gift giving list. You're not Santa Claus. You don't have to provide a present to everyone. Be selective and then agree on spending limits with those special people in your life.

Replace excess presents with more presence. Look for ways to spend quality time together and enjoy the company of those you love. Rather than exchanging gifts, could you share an experience? Experiences have the potential to bring people even closer together.

Research also shows that spending more doesn't guarantee a well-received gift. Appreciation is derived from thoughtfulness and the recognition of an individual's interests and desires.

On the food front, budget your appetite. Have a snack before you head to your holiday function. With something in your belly, you'll be less likely to ravenously gorge.

Think 'less is more'. Bring your attention to the food you eat and be wary of standing near the occasion table absent-mindedly ingesting while conversing. Give your attention to the tasty treats and mindfully enjoy the sensations. This will keep you from constantly reaching for more.

Finally, budget your time. You can do anything, but you can't do everything. Prioritize your holiday visiting. "Yes" lives in the land of "no". Don't be afraid to decline an invitation or make plans to connect after the holiday hustle. By not overbooking yourself, you'll stay well, have greater energy, and connect more deeply.

Consciously planning the outcomes you're after in regard to finances, food, family and friends will make for a fabulously good holiday and a solid start to the New Year.

Paul Larmer offers workshops, webinars and one-on-one training to help individuals and teams bring out their best. Contact Paul at plarmer@livnorth.com