

Mental Floss

Volume 5

December 2004

Holiday Shopping Tips to Help Maintain Your Sanity

By Dr. Gary Calhoun

IT SEEMS THAT EVERY YEAR WE ARE BOMBARDED WITH AN INCREASING AMOUNT OF ADVERTISING PUSHING US TO PURCHASE MORE GIFTS THAN LAST YEAR.

IT IS NOT UNCOMMON FOR PEOPLE TO FEEL THE PRESSURE TO ALWAYS SPEND MORE THAN LAST YEAR ON GIFTS. SOME PEOPLE EVEN COMPETE WITH THEMSELVES TO FIND AN EVEN MORE PERFECT GIFT THAN LAST YEAR FOR EVERYONE ON THEIR LIST.

THE JANUARY BLUES OCCURRING WHEN ALL THE BILLS ARRIVE IN THE MAIL CAN BE EVEN WORSE THAN THE HOLIDAY BLUES. SO WHAT CAN YOU DO THIS YEAR TO AVOID THE JANUARY BLUES AND THE DREAD OF OPENING THE MAIL BOX?

TAKE A CLOSE LOOK AT YOUR BUYING OUT OF OBLIGATION. CROSS OUT THOSE ON THE LIST THAT ARE THERE MAINLY
continued on page 2

Tips On Shopping For Your Kids This Holiday Season

By Dr. Susan Calhoun

AS A PARENT YOU KNOW YOUR CHILDREN HAVE BEEN BOMBARDED WITH COMMERCIALS AND ADVERTISING FOR EVERY POSSIBLE TOY AND GADGET. SINCE AS EARLY AS OCTOBER THEY HAVE SEEN COUNTLESS SALES PITCHES. UNFORTUNATELY, MANY OF THESE ENCOURAGE CHILDREN TO ASK FOR GIFTS THAT ARE BEYOND THE FAMILY BUDGET OR JUST AS IMPORTANT, NOT APPROPRIATE FOR EVERY CHILD.

TODAY MANY PARENTS ARE FEELING GUILTY ABOUT LONG WORK HOURS AND TRY TO COMPENSATE WITH EXCESSIVE GIFTS DURING THE HOLIDAYS. THIS ATTITUDE ONLY TEMPORARILY RELIEVES A PARENT'S GUILT AND SENDS THE WRONG MESSAGE TO THE CHILD.

A CHILD'S REQUEST THIS TIME OF YEAR IS LIKELY TO BE EXCESSIVELY FUELED BY THE CONSTANT BARRAGE OF COMMERCIALS AND ADVERTISING. THE GIMME, GIMME, GIMME SYNDROM IS STRONGLY REINFORCED BY THE RETAIL INDUSTRY. CHILDREN ARE CONSTANTLY GIVEN THE MESSAGE THAT THEY CAN HAVE EVERYTHING THEY WANT. REMEMBER IT IS THE ROLE OF THE PARENT TO SET THE LIMITS. DISAPPOINTMENTS CAN HAVE A VERY VALUABLE ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR CHILD. INSULATING YOUR CHILD FROM EVERY DISAPPOINTMENT IS ACTUALLY A DISSERVICE TO YOUR CHILD. WHEN CHILDREN LEARN TO HANDLE LIFE'S DISAPPOINTMENTS THEY ALSO DEVELOP THE RESILIENCE THAT WILL SERVE THEM WELL LATER IN LIFE. IF YOUR CHILD NEVER HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP THE ABILITY TO DEAL WITH DISAPPOINTMENTS THEY WILL ENTER ADULTHOOD AT A GREAT DISADVANTAGE TO THEIR PEERS.

continued on page 3

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1** Holiday Shopping Tips to Help Maintain Your Sanity
- 1** Tips On Shopping For Your Kids
- 2** Holiday Shopping Tips cont'd.
- 3** Tips on Shopping For Your Kids cont'd.
- 4** More Tips For The Holidays

SHOPPING TIPS, CONT'D.

BECAUSE YOU FEEL AN OBLIGATION. ASK YOURSELF IF THOSE ON THIS LIST WILL REALLY BE DEVESTATED IF THEY DO NOT RECEIVE THAT OBLIGATORY GIFT. THE TRUTH IS THAT MOST OF THE TIME THESE TYPES OF GIFTS END UP IN THE CLOSET OR YARD SALE INVENTORY.

END THE INSANE COMPETITION TO ALWAYS OUTDO YOURSELF EACH YEAR WITH MORE ELABORATE GIFTS. APPROACH EACH HOLIDAY SHOPPING SEASON AS A FRESH START WITH NO COMPARISONS AND THE FREEDOM TO START OVER EACH YEAR.

SET A GIFT BUDGET. DECIDE HOW MANY GIFTS YOU ARE GOING TO BUY AND SET A DOLLAR LIMIT. YOU MUST STICK TO THIS LIMIT WITHOUT FAIL. IF YOU BEGIN TO WAIVER JUST REMIND YOURSELF OF THE POST HOLIDAY STRESS YOU ARE GOING TO EXPERIENCE WHEN THE BILLS ARRIVE.

IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO CONTROL CREDIT CARD AND DEBIT CARD USE. TRY TO PAY CASH FOR YOUR PURCHASES WHEN POSSIBLE. WE REALLY DO TREAT PLASTIC AND "REAL MONEY" DIFFERENTLY AT THE TIME OF PURCHASE.

DO ALL THAT YOU CAN TO LIMIT IMPULSIVE PURCHASES. HAVING A LIST WHEN YOU GO INTO THE MALL TO PURCHASE GIFTS IS AS IMPORTANT AS HAVING A GROCERY LIST WHEN YOU GO FOOD SHOPPING. IN BOTH CASES YOU TEND TO SPEND LESS AND HAVE FEWER IMPULSIVE PURCHASES. KEEP IN MIND THAT MERCHANTS WILL TRY EVERY TRICK IN THE BOOK TO LASSO THOSE IMPULSIVE PURCHASES. IT IS EASY TO GET CAUGHT UP IN THE MOMENT AND LET THE MOMENTARY HOLIDAY SPIRIT CAUSE YOU TO PULL OUT THAT PLASTIC CARD. REFLECT BACK ON HOLIDAYS IN THE PAST AND RECALL HOW MANY GIFTS YOU GAVE OR RECEIVED THAT WENT UNUSED.

WE OFTEN SAY IT IS NOT THE GIFT, BUT THE THOUGHT THAT COUNTS. THIS IS A WONDERFUL SENTIMENT THAT IS OFTEN SPOKEN AND JUST AS OFTEN IGNORED IN OUR GIFT GIVING BEHAVIOR. WITH ALL THE COMMERCIALISM SURROUNDING US IT IS VERY DIFFICULT TO KEEP THE TRUE MEANING OF THE HOLIDAYS IN MIND. RATHER THAN ALLOWING MARKETING STRATEGIES TO GUIDE YOUR GIFT GIVING THINK MORE ABOUT THE ACT OF GIVING. THOSE THAT CARE ABOUT YOU WOULD MUCH RATHER RECEIVE A GIFT THAT DOES NOT BREAK YOUR BUDGET THAN HAVE YOU STRESSED ABOUT BILLS IN JANUARY.

SHOPPING ONLINE CAN BE ONE WAY TO AVOID THE MALLS AND ALL THAT MERCHANDISE STARING AT YOU AND CALLING YOUR NAME. ONLINE SHOPPING DOES HAVE SOME DOWNSIDES. YOU WILL MOST LIKELY BE USING PLASTIC TO MAKE YOUR PURCHASES SO MAKE THAT BUDGET BEFORE LOGGING ON TO ANY ONLINE STORES. REMEMBER TO SHOP AT ONLY SECURE AND REPUTABLE ONLINE STORES. WITH THE DISCOUNTS AND LACK OF SALES TAX ONLINE SHOPPING CAN BE ONE WAY TO EXTEND YOUR BUDGET THIS HOLIDAY SEASON.

DID YOU KNOW THAT ALL HOLIDAY GIFTS DO NOT NEED TO BE PURCHASED? ONE WAY TO STRETCH YOUR BUDGET AND EVEN BRING A SPECIAL QUALITY TO YOUR GIFT GIVING IS BY GIVING OF YOURSELF. YOU MIGHT CONSIDER GIVING A SERVICE TO A FAVORITE RELATIVE RATHER THAN A GIFT THAT MAY NEVER BE USED. DOING SOMETHING FOR SOMEONE CAN BE A WONDERFUL GIFT THAT IS LONG REMEMBERED AFTER THE EXCITEMENT OF THE HOLIDAYS IS LONG PAST. A FAVORITE RELATIVE MAY NEED SOME WORK DONE AROUND THE HOUSE, WASHING AND WAXING OF THEIR VEHICLE, ERRANDS RUN, OR COMPUTER HELP. THERE ARE MANY WAYS YOU CAN GIVE OF YOURSELF THAT WILL COST YOU LITTLE AND BE REMEMBERED FONDLY. YOU MAY HAVE A SPECIAL TALENT OR SKILL THAT WILL ONLY COST YOU SOME TIME AND WILL SERVE SOMEONE'S NEEDS. GIFTS OF TIME AND SERVICE DO NOT HAVE TO BE DONE BEFORE THE HOLIDAYS. YOU CAN PRESENT THIS TYPE OF GIFT IN THE FORM OF A GIFT CERTIFICATE TO BE USED AFTER THE HOLIDAYS. YOU CAN PURCHASE A CARD AND WRITE YOUR GIFT INSIDE OR MAKE ONE ON YOUR COMPUTER.

THE IMPORTANT THING TO KEEP IN MIND IS TO REMOVE THE STRESS OF FINANCIAL HARDSHIP FROM YOUR GIFT GIVING SO THAT YOU DO NOT GO INTO THE NEW YEAR PAYING FOR LAST YEAR'S GIFTS.

This Holiday Season Keep This in Mind

THE BEST WAY TO CHEER YOURSELF IS TO TRY TO CHEER SOMEONE ELSE UP...MARK TWAIN

SERVICES PROVIDED BY DRs. GARY AND SUSAN CALHOUN:

OFFICE SESSIONS:

Office sessions are available by appointment only.

Individual, Couples, Adults, & Adolescents

Confidential counseling for those seeking an active, directive, but supportive counseling experience.

TELEPHONE SESSIONS:

We offer phone sessions for a select group of clients. Telephone sessions are scheduled just like a regular office session. Busy moms, as well as professionals find telephone sessions fit their busy lifestyles.

NEED A SPEAKER:

Drs. Gary and Susan are available as speakers on a number of popular topics.

VISIT US ON THE WEB AT OUR WEB SITE

WWW.ONLINELIFECOACH.COM

EMAIL US AT: NEWSLETTER@ONLINELIFECOACH.COM

GIVE US A CALL AT 727-480-8362 OR 727-480-9743
DON'T BE SURPRISED IF WE ANSWER THE CALL
PERSONALLY!!!

**WE STRIVE TO OFFER THE MOST PERSONALIZED SERVICE
AVAILABLE FOR CLIENTS DESIRING OLD FASHIONED
PERSONAL SERVICE**

IN THE NEWS...

DR. GARY CALHOUN HAS BEEN ACCEPTED AS AN ASSOCIATE MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF BARIATRIC SURGEONS.

DRS. SUSAN & GARY CALHOUN ARE HAPPY TO ANNOUNCE THAT THEY WILL BE CONTINUING THEIR FREE SUPPORT GROUP FOR WEIGHT LOSS SURGERY PATIENTS INTO THE YEAR 2005.

NEXT MONTH'S NEWSLETTER WILL PROVIDE NEW YEARS RESOLUTIONS.

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL OF YOU THAT HAVE MADE REFERRALS TO OUR PRACTICE OVER THE PAST YEAR. YOUR CONTINUED CONFIDENCE IN OUR PRACTICE IS APPRECIATED!

SHOPPING FOR KIDS, CONT'D.

ASKING YOUR CHILD WHY THEY WANT A GIFT WILL GIVE YOU MUCH MORE INFORMATION THAN ASKING THEM WHAT THEY WANT. IF YOU ASK THEM WHAT THEY WANT THEN YOU WILL GET THE MESSAGES THEY HAVE RECEIVED FROM THE MARKETING EXPERTS. IF YOU ASK YOUR CHILD WHY THEY WANT A CERTAIN GIFT YOU WILL LEARN THE REAL MEANING THE GIFT HAS FOR YOUR CHILD. THIS WILL BE A MUCH BETTER GUIDE TO YOUR DECISION MAKING. FOR EXAMPLE, IF YOU KNOW WHY YOUR CHILD WANTS A CERTAIN GIFT YOU MAY BE ABLE TO SUBSTITUTE THEIR EXACT REQUEST WITH A MORE AFFORDABLE ALTERNATIVE THAT MEETS THE SAME NEEDS.

WHEN YOUR CHILD PRESENTS YOU WITH A GIFT LIST ENCOURAGE THEM TO PRIORITIZE THE LIST. THIS HELPS YOU AND YOUR CHILD. YOU ARE ABLE TO LEARN THE IMPORTANCE OF EACH GIFT. YOUR CHILD LEARNS THE VALUABLE LESSON OF PRIORITIZING WANTS AND DESIRES.

KEEP IN MIND THAT THE GIFT OF AN EXPERIENCE CAN LAST MUCH LONGER THAN THE LATEST FAD TOY. HOW MANY TOYS DO YOU RECALL FROM YOUR OWN CHILDHOOD? IF YOU ARE LIKE MOST PEOPLE YOU RECALL EXPERIENCES FROM PAST HOLIDAYS MUCH MORE THAN SPECIFIC GIFTS. GIVING A CHILD A GIFT OF LESSONS, TRAVEL, AND AN OPPORTUNITY TO TRY NEW EXPERIENCES CAN OFTEN LAST MUCH LONGER THAN A TOY OR GADGET.

THE HOLIDAYS CAN ALSO BE A WONDERFUL TIME TO TEACH YOUR CHILDREN THE JOY OF GIVING. ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD TO DROP COINS INTO THE SALVATION ARMY BUCKET. WITH OLDER CHILDREN AND TEENS ENCOURAGE THEM TO DO VOLUNTEER WORK AT THE CHURCH, HOMELESS SHELTER, ETC. THIS CAN LEAVE THEM WITH WONDERFUL MEMORIES OF THE GIFT OF GIVING TO OTHERS.

GIFTS WHEN IT IS NOT YOUR CHILD

WHEN GIVING GIFTS TO CHILDREN OTHER THAN YOUR OWN BE SURE TO CHECK WITH THEIR PARENTS. YOU WOULD NOT WANT TO GIVE A GIFT THAT DID NOT MEET A PARENT'S APPROVAL.

WHEN GIVING GIFTS TO TEENS IT MAY BE A GOOD IDEA TO STICK WITH GIFT CERTIFICATES TO THE MALL THAT CAN BE USED AT ANY STORE. THIS MAY BE PARTICULARLY TRUE IF YOU DO NOT KNOW THE TEEN VERY WELL.

Drs. Gary and Susan Calhoun
801 West Bay Drive
Suite 704
Largo, FL 33770

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

MORE TIPS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

- REACH OUT TO OTHERS – IF YOU KNOW OF SOMEONE WHO IS GOING TO BE ALONE FOR THE HOLIDAYS PICK UP THE PHONE AND INVITE THEM OVER TO YOUR HOME. THE JOY EXPERIENCED WILL DEFINITELY GO BOTH WAYS.
- CONSIDER VOLUNTEERING YOUR TIME TO A HOLIDAY CHARITY AS A COUPLE OR FAMILY. GIVING TO OTHERS THIS TIME OF YEAR CAN LEAVE LASTING MEMORIES TO CHERISH FOR YEARS TO COME.
- IF THE FAMILY BUDGET PERMITS CONSIDER TRAVELING TO EXPERIENCE HOW OTHERS CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAYS.
- AS A FAMILY PROJECT COMBINE YOUR CREATIVE ENERGIES TO START NEW HOLIDAY TRADITIONS.
- MAKE AN EFFORT TO SPEND TIME TOGETHER AS A FAMILY WATCHING SOME OF THE TRADITIONL HOLIDAY FILMS SHOWCASED THIS TIME OF YEAR.
- MAKE AN EXTRA EFFORT TO BE PATIENT WITH OTHERS THIS TIME OF YEAR. KEEP IN MIND THAT MANY PEOPLE ARE GOING TO BE VERY STRESSED SO A LITTLE EXTRA PATIENCE GOES A LONG WAY.
- IF TRAVELING DURING THE HOLIDAYS ALLOW EXTRA TIME FOR TRAVEL DELAYS.
- ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILDREN TO PASS ALONG THOSE UNUSED TOYS FOR DONATION.
- REMEMBER TO BE RESPECTFUL OF HOW OTHERS CELEBRATE THE HOLDIAY SEASON.
- DO NOT FORGET TO TAKE BREAKS DURING THIS BUSY TIME OF THE YEAR AND REMIND YOURSELF OF THE TRUE MEANING OF THE HOLIDAYS.