

Keep The Holidays Simple

Tips from Dr. Joyce Brothers

(NAPSA)—Keeping the holidays simple can be difficult since it's one of the busiest times of the year, with meals to prepare, gifts to buy, last minute errands to run and finding time to visit with family. Dr. Joyce Brothers, world-renowned psychologist and best-selling author, suggests that by focusing on the basics you can reduce the clutter and remember the joys and the bonds the holidays can bring to everyone, young and old.



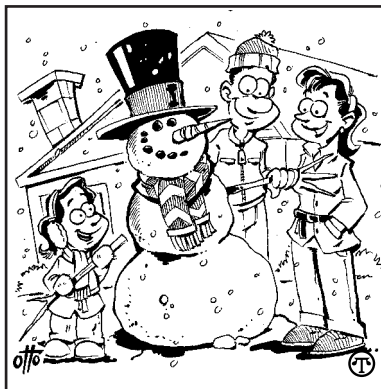
Dr. Brothers

“This holiday season in particular is very important for us all to remember our family and friends and so many of those in need,” said Dr. Brothers. “This year, more than ever, people will want to simplify the tasks at hand so they can focus on what's really important. That involves trying not to stress out over unnecessary activities.”

Following are a few simple tips Dr. Brothers suggests to reduce stress and focus on the people and traditions that really matter during the holidays:

- **Stick to the basics:** Embrace your family's traditions, bring out the time-honored decorations and eat family favorites. It's important to remember lifelong holiday traditions can provide a sense of continuity through the ups and downs of life, while offering stability.

- **Enjoy the convenience of**



- **mail order and one-stop Internet shopping:** Shopping online at reliable sites like Amazon.com (www.amazon.com) can be a simple way to conveniently find something for everyone on your list, from books to electronics to toys. Online shopping can save you time and reduce stress because you can shop from home or the office and your gifts will be sent for you—beautifully wrapped and on time.

- **Reach out and touch someone:** Instead of signing and sending out 100 holiday cards that may or may not be personalized, select 10 friends or family members you have lost touch with during the year and give them a call so you can really catch up and rebuild those relationships.

- **Recapture the magic of childhood:** As a child life was simple. See the holidays through the eyes of a child and remember what made the season “magical”

for you as a child. Read your favorite fairy tale or sing your favorite childhood song.

- **Keep it simple:** When the kids are home from school for the holidays or relatives are visiting, don't try to be the constant entertainer or plan big activities. Simply share your hobbies or interests with your visiting friends and loved ones. Go bird watching or fishing together or teach your children to bake an old family recipe.

- **Prioritize your holiday activities:** Don't try to do everything. A great tip for simplifying your holiday to-do list is to prioritize the tasks and then cut your list in half, or cross out every fourth item.

- **Listen to your instincts:** Pay attention to the connection between what you do and how you feel. Schedule activities that you want to do rather than the ones you feel obligated to do.

- **Don't sweat the small stuff:** Have friends over even if the floors aren't waxed or you haven't had time to dust.

Dr. Brothers also says that if things do get too busy and you feel you've lost control, leave the situation for a couple of minutes and return with a new attitude. If that doesn't work, call a friend you can talk to or put whatever it is you're doing away and start fresh tomorrow. The key is not to let the stress outweigh the fun and focus on what's truly important this holiday season.