

Holiday De-Stress Guide

Week 2: Giving Back To Others



“It’s better to give than receive”

Reaching out to others may fall on the back burner when the holiday’s endless festivities take over your to-do list and wallet. **But, generosity is its own reward that may help you relieve stress.**

The personal benefits of helping others

- **“Helpers high”**: the act of giving can activate the area of the brain associated with positive feelings.
- Those who volunteer report **fewer stress symptoms** and lower rates of **insomnia**.
- Helping others less fortunate can provide you with a sense of **perspective** on the things in life that cause you stress.
- **“Pay it forward”**: when you give to others you may enable them to do nice for others, and the phenomenon grows.
- **“Mother Teresa effect”**: amazingly, witnessing acts of charity have been shown to influence immune responses.
- If you feel lonely or isolated, seek out community or social events. They can offer support, companionship, and lift your spirits.



The practice of generosity appears to benefit the giver, recipient and surrounding community – not a bad thought for the holiday season!

Help Others This Holiday Season

This holiday make the season a little brighter for others. Try some of these **simple ways** to make a difference this holiday season.

- ▶ Donate old clothing and toys.
- ▶ Give a financial donation to a charitable organization.
- ▶ Provide a healthy meal to those less fortunate.
- ▶ Use your talents to help others – tutor, teach yoga, do handy work.
- ▶ Listen to someone in distress.
- ▶ Offer encouraging words to someone going through difficult times.
- ▶ Engage in random acts of kindness (e.g., hold the door for a stranger).
- ▶ Give the gift of life – donate blood.
- ▶ Become a life mentor – become a Big Brother or Sister.



Give Smart: 3 ways to check up on the charity of your choice

1. **Find out how the charity spends the money.**
2. **Check the name twice:** beware of “sound alike” names.
3. **Beware of charity tie-in products:** a product doesn’t substitute for a direct donation.

Innovative Ways to Give Back

- ✓ **Give for the future.** Turn charity in to a team project – create a scholarship program.
- ✓ **Sharing Sprees:** a new “daily deal” site – 10-15% of every deal is donated to a local charity.
- ✓ **Go local:** support small business in your community – the economy will thank you.

Resources: www.savingadvice.com, www.oprah.com, www.stress.about.com

