

Carol McMullen's

• TIPS FOR GETTING THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS •

Disclaimer: These tips are the opinions of Carol McMullen, based on her own professional and personal experiences. The points below are meant to serve as suggestions rather than rules or guidelines. You have the freedom to decide which of these suggestions are appropriate for you, in your situation.

- What do you say when you receive a gift?
 - prepare scripts of what to say, focus on the gesture of the person getting you something, rather than whether or not you actually like the gifted item
 - "Thank you, that was so thoughtful." or "Wow, I really appreciate this!" were suggested
 - try to avoid: immediately asking for a gift receipt, saying you dislike the item, saying nothing
 - if accepted by family/friends, you could give a short list of things you would like in advance to increase the chance that the gift will be something you will like
- How do you deal with holiday meals and food?
 - express appreciation for the effort made to prepare the food, even if you are not going to eat certain items
 - make a plan in advance with other family members if possible
 - if knowing what will be served is important to you, try to communicate this to family members in advance
- What can you do to avoid an explosive response when you have had enough at a family gathering?
 - tell people ahead of time or upfront, that you will excuse yourself from the gathering when you've had enough or feel over stimulated
 - giving this warning allows you to give this information calmly and politely, rather than waiting until you are upset and are more likely to upset others
 - if possible, plan a safe place to retreat to if you feel overwhelmed (decide on this place in advance and discuss with the host) {note - this point was discussed a previous session with Carol I think, not yesterday}
 - don't plan to stay the entire time if you know it will be too long for you
- How can you get yourself organized to be on top of sending cards, buying gifts, etc.?
 - starting seemingly "simple" tasks early can be helpful, because when you break them down there can be many steps, and it may not actually be simple for you
 - use seasonal cues to get you started, and/or mark in your calendar in advance when you should start a given task
 - for example: when you put on your winter tires, start writing your Christmas cards (if that is something you want to do)

As stated by Carol McMullen, adapted by Cristina