

A Note from Executive Director, Lisa Zimmers

That's a Wrap

December is often a very busy time of year for many people. The holiday hustle and bustle can ignite different emotions. Setting realistic expectations on ourselves and those around us helps set us up for moments of joy and protect us from disappointment.

When I reflect on holidays of yesteryear, those memories often go way back. I remember one family holiday when I was probably 10 years old, and my grandma was close to 50. Gathering at my grandma's place that was about 900 square feet with my parents, siblings and all of my aunts, uncles and cousins was a tight squeeze. There was never enough room for everyone to sit down. I could smell the fried apple pies and chicken and dumplings as soon as the car door opened, well before I reached the front door. Unfortunately, as soon as I opened the front door, cigarette smoke suffocated the wonderful aroma. Although I remember the awful hot pink fuzzy tights and a pair of shoes that were two different sizes fondly, in the moment I didn't display the grace I wish I had exhibited. I was annoyed and ungrateful. I failed to recognize the amount of work that went into bringing this motley crew together and the resources required to do so. It was a genuine hot mess and I sure do miss those who experienced it with me. The gift that keeps on giving are the memories made.

Some people endure a sense of overwhelming stress with the holiday season. Striving to create perfect meals, memories, gifting moments and experiences of a lifetime can be exciting and exhausting. Expecting those you love and have had holiday celebrations in past years to replicate those same joyful or chaotic moments can also be a source of tension. Planning to create memories shouldn't be something that creates sadness. Unfortunately, when we hold so tightly to what has been, we fail to recognize what can be. Overcompensating to set the bar for future endeavors to exceed our wildest dreams is dangerous. Seek to simplify. Recognizing blessings in new traditions is easier said than done. It takes intentional focus and a willingness to recognize that just because something is different, doesn't mean it can't be just as wonderful. As dynamics change, opportunities for others to share their talent or passion are exposed. Empower them to lead in their own way or embrace the opportunity to try something new.

Whether spending time with friends or family, getting involved with a group project or working on a solo initiative, it's important to do something. Write cards, paint a picture, or make some cookies. It's easy to get focused on tasks that have to be completed and making the perfect experience. We often whittle away the most precious gift of living in the moment. Whether we enjoy the comfort of quiet time alone or embracing those around us and the chance to do things together, make sure to recognize when enough of either is too much. No matter how you fill your days, pause and give thanks for the ability to do whatever it is you do. The end product may not turn out perfect but the memories of accomplishing an individual or common goal and how it made us and those around us feel will last a lifetime.

Blessings to you and yours during the holidays and always.

Lisa Zimmers

