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Choice Relationships: The Season of Gratefulness and Crazyiness

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Which You Experience Is Up to YOU!

We've come to that time of year where we are supposed to be gathering with those we are close to and counting our blessings. And yet, most of us experience it as a time that is fraught with tension, stress, and lots of emotion.

My Personal Insights:



Tension and stress can result from a number of sources. For some of you it will be due to the more practical issue of trying to get so many things done in preparation for the Holiday. For others, it may be more emotional as a result of having expectations disappointed or harboring old feelings of resentment.

Regardless of the source, it will take away from your true enjoyment of this Season. And, though you cannot control outside situations or other people, you *can* control how you react. As you take steps to change your perceptions and reactions, you can create a more positive experience and a life for which you are grateful.

I recently went to a talk given by Bernie Siegel who is a doctor working with cancer patients. The thrust of his talk was how much influence one's attitude has to do with the course of one's illness. In that same weekend, I also spoke to a friend who's been diagnosed with a life threatening cancer and worked with a client who is having difficulty finding a job. The contrast in their attitudes was glaring, my friend being far more optimistic. When I get several incidents like these all at the same time, I know there's a message I'm supposed to be paying attention to. I decided it's a reminder to me that life is

Choice Tips:

1. **Attitude:** *You can learn to be positive.* Don't wait for Thanksgiving to count your blessings. Every night write down 3 things for which you are grateful; they can be small things (e.g., I got to work without traffic, lunch was really tasty). As you do this, you will start to expand your focus on all the things in life that you have that is positive. (Note: This will be most effective if done at night and if written.)
2. **Emotional:** Remember to *think of the "whole" of the person* rather than focusing just on a particular trait that is upsetting so that you can enjoy the person as you get together.
3. **Emotional:** Accept that *everyone is different* with varying needs. Those differences don't mean that they don't care about you
4. **Practical:** *Ask for help.* You do not have to do everything yourself, but people cannot

what we make it.

And one more note I'd like to make at this time: I'd like to express my gratitude to all of you who allow me to share my insights with you. I truly believe that part of my journey is meant for me to help others learn from my experiences. Your subscription to my newsletter permits that to happen. Thank you.

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read your mind so you need to ask for what you need.

5. **Practical:** Be willing to *change some habits*. If you are totally overwhelmed, consider serving buffet rather than a sit down dinner or use fancy plastic ware rather than china.
6. **Stress busters:** Don't forget your *deep breathing* and *muscle relaxing*. Also, take your *5 minute quick rejuvenating breaks*.

Additional Resources I Recommend:

Enright, Robert, D. *Forgiveness Is a Choice: A Step-By-Step Process for Resolving Anger and Restoring Hope*, American Psychological Association; May 2001.

Seligman, Martin. *Authentic Happiness: Using the New Positive Psychology to Realize Your Potential for Lasting Fulfillment*, Free Press; January 2004.

Empowering Information and Tools:

An e-mail I got that I really liked offered the following tips:

- Focus your thoughts on what is right with your life. There is so very much that you have to choose from.
- Abundance is as close to you as your next thought. A thankful attitude will connect you to that abundance.
- There is something of positive value in every moment, every situation, every relationship. Zero in on what's right with life, and that value is yours.
- What you expect has a major influence on what you get.
- Expect to move forward on this day, and you will.
- Let the challenges inspire you. Let the possibilities encourage you.
- Choose to see and to live what is right with life. Whatever may come, be thankful, and you create much to be truly thankful for.

As you start to think about Holiday gifts, have you considered my practical and empowering tools offered in either:

Marriage Magic! Find It, Keep It, Make It Last. This self-help book is a great way to help any couple in a committed relationship gain the skills they need to help revitalize their relationship or make a good partnership even better!

[Yes! I'd like more Marriage Magic!](#)

The CD: *Choose to Live a Stress-less Life*. This is a powerful motivational talk I gave that lets people know that they can make choices to minimize their

stress and maximize a more gratifying life!

[Yes! I'd like a Stress-less Life!](#)

email: drk723@aol.com

web: <http://www.drkarensheerman.com>

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Dr. Karen Sherman, Ph.D. | 50 Pasadena Drive | Plainview | NY | 11803