

Holiday Nachos

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What Kind of Holidays Do You Want?

Do you like your holiday to be filled with lots of parties or do you prefer a quiet walk in the woods with a friend? Do you love bumping elbows with thousands of shoppers at the mall or relaxing at home with family?

These are good questions because what's good for one may not be good for another.

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As years pass, families change and holidays come and go. With this passage of time and traditions, people's views and expectations about how they would like to spend the holidays often change. With this fact in mind, it is a good idea to have open communication from year to year to ensure that everyone's holiday expectations are understood and met as much as possible to avoid potential "holiday disasters." Before the holiday season begins this year, sit down with your significant other and/or family and discuss what each of you expects and desires from the holidays this year. Talk about what you would like to do the same and then discuss what you might like to do differently. You can use the following checklist to help identify and prioritize your desires.

Directions:

- Have each family member assign a number from 1 to 10 to each of the items below, with 1 being most important.
- Have members of your family compare their lists. Discuss how everyone's most important need(s) can be met.

Editor's Note: if you discover *that your* No. 10's are *everyone else's* No. 1's, there is still hope, but communication is the key.

During this holiday season, I would like to:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Spend quality time with my family. | <input type="checkbox"/> Help those less fortunate. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Create a beautiful home environment. | <input type="checkbox"/> Create special meals. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rest, revitalize, introspect, find solitude. | <input type="checkbox"/> Bake cookies and other goodies. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strengthen bonds with my relatives. | <input type="checkbox"/> Do special recreational activities. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Celebrate my spiritual beliefs, exchange gifts. | <input type="checkbox"/> Stay at home. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Entertain and visit with friends. | <input type="checkbox"/> Travel. |

By yourself, or with a special friend, you can plan ways to do what you want to do— even though your partner or family is not interested. If you have a No. 5 and a family member has a No. 10, work out a compromise.

If you find that everyone's highest priorities do not match up, there is still hope. Some of *your* favorite activities can be done alone or with a single family member or special friend. Then the common desires can be done together as a group. Some compromise will be required but the harmony will be worth it.

This little exercise has been around a long time. It's one of my favorite thought provokers this time of year as I have learned over the decades that holiday hopes and expectations can be very different from one person to the next. Take time this season to determine how you would like to spend your time and share this activity with family members so that everyone understands each other's expectations. This can create balance in your household and hopefully tone down some holiday tension.