



# *Humbuggery & Laughter*

15 WAYS TO PROTECT YOUR  
PEACE THIS SEASON

WORDS BY ANDREA CORP



### *I have a love/hate relationship with Christmas.*

I've been losing my oomph for the holiday season little by little, year by year. Where once I was sentimental and excited with idealistic visions of love, family, cheer, and hot chocolate, now I find myself disillusioned by consumerism and the misplaced collective energy of the masses. I become bitter as the holidays start suffocating me with well-intentioned events and activities, and obligatory gift-giving.

Not to mention all that scurrying. It makes me want to spike the eggnog heavily, get chocolate-wasted, and throw the ornaments across the living room.

### *It is counterintuitive to what my heart craves and contradictory to what my soul knows about the true meaning of the season.*

I tend to feel a little warrior-ish about it. However, I've decided that rather than hating on the holidays, I am going to craft my own custom blend of seasonal joy in order to preserve my sanity ... and my hope in mankind. I invite you to do the same. To really explore, understand, and then connect with what the holidays mean to you. How do you want to feel? How can you be true to yourself rather than being swept away by the hoopla? This is some intentional living type stuff my friends. You have to strengthen your self-care muscles. Protect your peace.

Here are some ideas to inspire my fellow spirit seekers to resist the madness:

### *Let go of Expectations*

As everything tends to be amplified during the holidays, this Buddhist life reminder becomes all the more relevant. I have spent hours picking out gifts because each one had to be perfect and meaningful and also fit within my budget. I become neurotic about every decision. I torture myself with expectations of everything being just so. Like how my teenagers are going to want to hang ornaments and sing songs together, and be perfectly pleasant. Ha! The list goes on and on. Surrender control over how things turn out. Let it all go. Ditch the "omnipotence" and strive for "benevolence." It's much more attractive.

### *Reduce the Noise*

Plans, presents, parties, promises. Cut back. Say no. Simplify. That's where the joy is. Reduce the energetic clutter so you can connect with what truly brings gladness to you and those you love. Release the FOMO (Fear Of Missing Out). A lot of things are fun, but not when you try to do all of them.

### *Say No to More Stuff & Yes to More Experiences*

Rethink all the consumerism bullcrap. No to the latest technological gadget that will just be replaced the next year. Yes to sharing love letters and kissing by the fire with someone irreplaceable. No to more presents. Yes to more presence. A beautiful idea is to wrap up your phone and give it to your spouse as a gift. Let them know you won't be using it all day or, better yet, all weekend. Quality time is a gift of immeasurable value.

### *Prepare a Bliss Kit*

When you find yourself in holiday hell, bursting with bitterness and ready to explode from overwhelm, you need to have something to turn to. A little treat tucked away. Remember to keep it simple. Here's mine: a bath bomb and Baileys. I drop a Lush bath bomb in the tub and enjoy a good soak with "an invigorating explosion of scent and color" followed by a glass of Bailey's with frozen coffee cubes. Yours might be 20 minutes of heart chakra meditation with Tibetan singing bowls followed by your favorite cup of hot tea. Bliss out, baby-cakes.

### *Embrace your Inner Party Pooper*

You know all those white elephant parties where you are expected to spend your precious time and hard-earned money picking out some silly gag gift so you can end up with another silly gag gift that ends up getting thrown out? I hate to be such a curmudgeon, but that throwaway crap makes me die a little inside. Instead, see if everyone wants to take that same amount and pitch in to donate it to a good cause. Just say no to anything that doesn't feed your soul. »







## *Create Your own Tradition*

Every year I watch the movie “Little Women” while I wrap presents on a snowy night. I spread all the wrapping paper and gifts on the floor, make myself a delightful hot chocolate loaded with marshmallows, and lose myself in the magic of simpler times as the feisty and romantic March sisters “bear their souls and tell the most appalling secrets.” Oh the happiness of reconnecting with my kindred spirit, Jo March.

*Kelly Knox*

## *Plan for Politics*

As relatives gather for the holidays, let everyone know that political talk is unwelcome and charged with a fine. Put a rant jar out (kind of like a swear jar) and make your obnoxious uncle pay up every time he tries to provoke you. Or if you love a bitter political debate and the awkwardness that follows, then wear that controversial shirt loud and proud. Who am I to judge? Maybe that’s your idea of a good time. It’s your holiday, after all.

## *Gift Yourself First*

“Pay yourself first” is some solid financial wisdom for your savings account. Why not fill up your holiday spirit account? Gift yourself first. Each year I treat myself to a symbolic treasure to represent the New Year ahead. Because I am fueled by meaning in life. Because I treasure myself. Because I prioritize self-care. Because I believe in positive rituals. Last year it was a colorful camera strap because I was devoted to creative expression. This year I bought myself a beautiful Shakti Mala necklace to represent my divine feminine power.

***Choose a gift for yourself that will serve as a tool to inspire the very best of you and bring alive the essence of who you wish to be.***



## Laugh

Post about your holiday follies on social media. It's good for the collective spirit and reminds everyone to laugh. Last year I posted a lovely picture of my dog next to our decorated tree with the words "You would never guess how much swearing and 'bah humbug' and 'I hate Christmas' went on today. And then how much we all laughed as the tree fell down on my husband's head ... except he wasn't laughing. And how so many of the ornaments are still in boxes because we are like so whatever about it ... and how I don't have it in me to fix all the red bulbs that are clustered in one area. Nothing but peace and joy right here though. The heart of our family posing next to the tree."

## Remember the Natural Sanctuaries

Silence. Solitude. Stillness. Simplicity. Take refuge daily.

## Get "Barenaked for the Holidays"

That's right, sassy pants. Best holiday album ever!

## Be a Fanciful Idealist

When I really want to find my holiday spirit utopia, I play music and let my fanciful imagination take me there. I have two renditions of perfect holiday moments. I play "God Rest Ye Merry Gentleman" by Barenaked Ladies for the lighthearted version. I picture myself in a room filled with all my favorite friends and family, Santa hat on, spiked eggnog buzz, dancing around, eyes closed, heart open. Hallelujah. The wholehearted sketch goes like this: I play the song "Christmas Canon" by Trans-Siberian Orchestra and imagine that I'm outside on a perfect snowy day arms up to the sky, twirling, leaping, eyes closed, snowflakes hitting my face, love beams, and heart filled with true meaning. You know I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one. What are your visions of sugarplums dancing in your head? Music required.

## Be Happy for Everyone's Happy

May I suggest putting the Holiday Music station on Spotify while scrolling through the Facebook newsfeed to take in friends' and family's snapshots of merriment.

**Let everyone's best versions of their holidays inspire you. Send love beams to all.**

## Keep Your Merriment Simple

Instead of a gift exchange, invite your bestie over for a glass of wine or hot cocoa, listen to some music, dance, and just be glad you're alive on Earth together at the same time.

## Engage in Humbuggery

Pick a friend who gets you. When you're feeling overwhelmed or disenchanted by it all, send a "bah humbug" text knowing you can count on a safe Scrooge conspiracy. Make sure it's someone who understands that you don't intend to live in that negative space. The whole point is to get it out of your system. Conspire. Collect yourself. Then continue forward in glee.

Your list might be different than mine. Perhaps you love the hustle and bustle. Maybe you find great enjoyment in white elephant parties. What's important is to understand your own emotional, spiritual, physical, energetic rhythms so you can honor what's right for you and your family.

**Tune in to your joy.** Trust yourself. Then give yourself the space of grace to live within the spirit of the season.

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