Mindfulness for the Holidays
Managing your energy
with meditation

Planning - Take control of the season by visualizing your perfect holiday. Find five minutes where you will not be disturbed. Close your eyes and envision your ideal holiday. Bring in your senses to help you with this exercise. Are your surroundings quiet and peaceful? Bright and colorful? Can you smell fresh air or freshly baked cookies? Perhaps you are envisioning a quiet Christmas eve, followed by a joyous Christmas day filled with friends and family. Remember some of your favorite rituals. Notice how you feel when accessing these memories. Remember some of the holidays past that were stressful and left you feeling depleted. Notice how this memory makes you feel. Come back again to your perfect holiday. Take a few more deep breaths to integrate your happy memory. Make a few notations below about what restores you, then read on.

Know what you need - After completing the exercise above you will have a good sense of what you need to stay balanced and joyful through the holiday season. Take out your calendar and block out time for yourself before you plan anything else! Do you need a certain amount of quiet time? block it out. Do you need to exercise or attend religious services to stay grounded? Block time out for these activities now before your time is taken over by other social and family commitments. By making time for yourself a vital and sacred commitment, you will have more energy to cope with challenging family members and long lines at the mall. You will also have more energy and willpower to make healthier choices when attending holiday parties or other situations where you might be tempted to overindulge. At the same time know your weaknesses. Are there certain festivities that need to be avoided or certain activities that drain you no matter how mentally prepared you are? Remember moderation = self-compassion = more energy to be kind to others. Right here and now, write down three activities that you need to stay balanced over the holidays, and three activities you would like to cut out of your plans.

Drop expectations and see things anew - We often have expectations about friends and family members. Before certain individuals arrive on our doorstep we have already predicted what they will say and how they will act. Try to drop expectations and see what happens. Does your great Aunt Sarah act more relaxed and less judgmental if you become more relaxed and less judgmental? Play with this energy flow. If all else fails, let go. It takes tremendous energy and willpower to hold a grudge. Freeing up that energy will help you take better care of yourself, which will in turn help you react with greater kindness to the people you love and the people you don’t.

We wish you twenty minutes of mindfulness every day!