

# Carpe Diem – Seize the Day Blog

*Editor's Note: Content presented in the Carpe Diem – Seize the Day Blog is for awareness and informational purposes only, and it is not meant to be a diagnostic tool.*

Usually, in the Carpe Diem – Seize the Day Blog, I provide a whole array of information focused on epilepsy and how to deal with epilepsy. This week, I want to focus on the self-care of the caregivers of those with epilepsy. It is always important to practice self-care, especially during the holiday season.

Joshua Becker writes, “The holidays can be a most wonderful time of year. The season is often marked with family, tradition, and giving. And no matter our age, it stirs up fond memories and creates new ones. The holidays can indeed bring out the best in all of us.” However, despite all the hope and preparation, often, holiday expectations go unmet. Meals do not turn out right. Kids get crabby. Family members bicker. Gifts are not received as fondly as we expected. And before we know it, shades of disappointment begin to creep in as we realize the season will not measure up to the pictures we had in our mind.

As you enter this final stretch before the holiday, is it possible to avoid this disappointment during the season? Of course, it is. But it often takes some intentional steps on our part. For your own self-care, consider following these twelve suggestions:

## **1. Identify your main thing.**

From food and decoration to presents and parties, the December is full of opportunity. But there is a fine line between opportunity and distraction. Determine the main thing you want the season to represent. It may be based on religion, family, or rest. Whatever you decide, keep your main thing in sharp focus first.

## **2. Slow down.**

Peace is rarely found in adding commitments and errands. So cut a few—on purpose.

## **3. Realize perfection is not possible.**

Travel gets disrupted. Houses get messy. Kids want more presents. Family members bicker. This is life. And unless you are part of a magazine photo shoot, perfection is simply not possible. Stop expecting it.

## **4. Do not push your expectations on to others.**

We all have different expectations of how Christmas should be. Often, these expectations are based on childhood memories. But we all have different childhood memories... so do not assume everyone expects Christmas to look the same as you do. I am all for developing traditions. But I am against thinking everyone expects my traditions to become theirs.

### **5. Make room for rest.**

Take a nap, retire to bed early one evening, or find a morning to sleep in later than normal. Running ragged to make everything perfect rarely results in perfection. Instead, it results in snippy attitudes, short tempers, and runny noses.

### **6. Offer forgiveness quickly.**

People make mistakes. Be quick to offer forgiveness and mend broken relationships—whether the offense occurs today or happened many years ago. Take the step. Because holding on to ill-feelings towards another is one of the greatest sources of disappointment in life (and the holidays).

### **7. Remember memories are made in the mistakes.**

Some of my fondest Christmas memories center on the mishaps that have occurred over the years: discovering a Christmas gift early, my grandmother wrapping the gifts but forgetting to mark who they were for. These mishaps make me smile even today... we should also learn to smile when they are unfolding right in front of us.

### **8. Realize the meaning is in the giving, not the gift.**

You will not get everything you want this Christmas and conversely, you will get some things you do not want. Put less emphasis on the gift in the wrapping. And put more emphasis on the fact that somebody thought you were special this holiday season. The gift is not the gift. The true gift is the giving... and the giver.

### **9. Admit you cannot change others.**

We can set bold examples. We can look for teachable moments. We can offer advice when appropriate. But we cannot make decisions for others. They are going to choose options for their life we wish they would not. In those moments, remind yourself that you were not called to live their life, you were called to live your own.

### **10. Know when to stop.**

From over-eating to over-drinking, knowing when to stop quickly becomes a lost art during the holiday season. But too much of a good thing quickly turns into a bad thing with lasting consequences. In almost every regard, for maximum enjoyment, embrace moderation.

### **11. Stay within your budget.**

Avoid holiday disappointment by celebrating it within your means. This pertains to the number and extravagance of gifts. But should also extend to travel, celebration, and entertainment.

## **12. Embrace spirituality.**

Regardless of your religious (or non-religious) preference, there is much more to this world than the things we see. Embrace spirituality this holiday season by championing love, hope, forgiveness, and grace. Rather than losing yourself in the hustle and bustle, find intentionality in remembering the heart of Christmas and celebrating the soul of everything good.

From our hearts at Epilepsy Alliance Ohio to yours, may your holidays this season be happy.

*Editor's Note: The Carpe Diem – Seize the Day Blog will be distributed and posted weekly.*  
Always remember – **CARPE DIEM – SEIZE THE DAY!**

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