

Create Holiday Joy ... Without Breaking the Bank

By Pat Heydlauff

POSTED: October 23, 2009

Is your family expecting the same holiday festivities, food and good fortune this year as in years past? Are the economy blues making your heart ache and yearn for calmer, more secure times? It isn't just children having a hard time dealing with making do or going without. All generations are feeling emotionally unstable and financially deprived. And, no matter what the age, many are apprehensive about how to face the usual abundance of holidays past.

Don't be discouraged, there are a number of things you can do to create holiday joy without breaking the bank.

Get grounded in reality

Begin preparing today for a special holiday season. For most, the holidays will be different this year because of the economic upheaval, whether it's touched you personally or not. However, upheaval doesn't need to mean bad or unhappy. You can prevent holiday doom and gloom by handling fears and apprehension now.

Get connected with your children and grandparents, and talk with them about what lies ahead. Acknowledging that the holidays will be different and less abundant puts all of the fear on the table for discussion. Prepare them for what they can and cannot expect. Also warn them that some children and families might have a lot less, while some will still be able to have the same abundant holiday season as in the past. Being forewarned will help dull the pain of seeing other families and children with lots if they have less.

Talk to grandparents about not feeling guilty if they cannot provide the usual contributions to holiday joy. Discuss with them how you will celebrate the holidays together even if miles will separate you.

Acknowledging the unusual economic circumstances surrounding the holidays this year ahead of time, and planning together to create the best holiday season possible will replace the guilt, fear and apprehension with understanding and anticipation.

Get creative

Think of all the things you could be doing to enjoy the holidays with your family that don't cost a TON of money. Make each event special in some way. If your family members can't be together over the miles, what are some things they can do to feel connected to each other?