

GIVE THE GIFT OF PRESENCE

10 Ways to Give the Gift of Presence to Yourself and Others This Holiday Season

Presence can be a gift that is much more valuable than something you can buy. Try any of these ten ways to be present to yourself and others.

- 1. Be in the Now by Practicing Mindfulness.** Be aware of how you are doing this very moment. Take the time to actively check in with yourself throughout the day. Check in on your loved ones too. Ask others how they are doing.
- 2. Actively Listen.** Be present; let people know you see and hear them. Listen without thinking of the next thing to say back. Limit screen time to help you listen without distraction.
- 3. Take Downtime.** During the holidays people are often overscheduled and busy. Mindful downtime can be useful—take a break or do something not to get a result but just to chill. When others are overdoing it, try offering a gentle nudge to take a break.
- 4. Engage in Self Care.** It is necessary, not selfish, to care for yourself! It doesn't need to be a whole day's task. What micro things can you do to show yourself that you matter? Enjoy a warm cup of tea or coffee? Take a little longer in the bath or shower than you usually do? Do something with a loved one that is also one of the things you do for your own self-care.

5. **Allow Time For Play.** Spend time having good, old-fashioned fun—decorate some cookies, engage in arts and crafts projects, or play outside. Be present to how others are doing; engage them to join in.
6. **Work on Boundaries.** At this time of year, when it can be hard to balance life, setting boundaries is essential. You don't have to always be a "yes" person; "No" is a complete sentence. Modeling boundaries is useful for others to see in your life too. Take pause when making decisions and taking action—for example, before responding to a text. Let others know when you notice they are spread too thin.
7. **Focus on Strengths and Pride.** Pay attention to and acknowledge your own strengths. When you see strengths in others, tell them. It is okay to be proud of yourself and to let others know when you are proud of them. Raise people up, including yourself.
8. **Practice Kindness and Express Love.** How do you like to be treated? What are some things you wish others would do for you? Do them for yourself! Do one kind act for another person. Tell the closest people in your life you love them. Write little notes of kindness and leave them around your home. Leave a love note for a loved one.
9. **Take a Break From Social Media.** Communicate with others through a call, a text, or a face-to-face visit. Turn off social media for even a few hours. Go for a walk, play a board game, mail a card to someone, print out a picture on your phone.
10. **Take in the Good.** Alone or with someone else, engage in what you consider a beneficial activity. Use the acronym HOT. Have a beneficial experience. Open to the beneficial experience. Notice your senses, thoughts, and feelings. Take in the beneficial experience. Savor the sweetness of the experience, absorbing it like water gets absorbed into a sponge.

Remember, it is especially important to be present during the busyness, stress, and demands of the holiday season. Give the Gift of Presence!

