

Harmonious Holidays – Reduce Stress by Planning Your People Zones Before Family Visits



When you think ahead about how you want your holiday visit to go, you can plan your “people zones” so that when you’re in the midst of the visit, you have a more enjoyable, less stressful, more meaningful holiday. If you don’t plan how you will spend your time, you may be disappointed that you missed talking to some people or you might want to flee the gathering. If you spend most of your time in one zone – say the *me & us zone* - you can get worn out by the hubbub and feel that you haven’t really connected with individual family members. If you go off by yourself - the *you zone* - you may feel like a hermit or an outsider.

For each of the three zones, brainstorm things you can do to add more pleasure, relaxation, and wellness to your holiday visit. I have included ideas to get you started:

Me zone (you alone) - leave company behind and go to bed early to read for 20 minutes, take a walk by yourself, volunteer to run errands, use their Jacuzzi, take a refresher nap, step out onto the porch and look up at the stars, etc.

Me & You Zone (you and one other person) – peel off one person and volunteer to run errands with them, wash dishes with one other while you talk, discuss a good movie or book, color with one of the children while you talk, go for a bike ride, massage each other’s feet, etc.

Me & Us Zone (you and several other people) - Pop in a yoga video and hold a “yoga class,” take the gang for a walk after dinner, play a group game, turn off the TV and electronic games and talk, tell stories about the family, have the kids set up a health spa with foot soaks and massages, etc.