REALITY CHECK
the holidays

The secret to having a joyous-happy-merry season? Keep expectations in check.
This time of year, do you feel pressure to be extra crafty, social, generous, and downright festive? If not, great! If so, that’s normal: It’s easy to get caught up in unrealistic visions (your own, or someone else’s) of a picture-perfect holiday and be disappointed if they fall short. A holiday reality check is a simple way to manage expectations.

Take a minute to examine what you’re really thinking—and how those thoughts affect how you feel, which in turn affects what you do. Doing so can better prepare you to handle holiday challenges, like difficult relatives or dessert buffets. When you can identify and reality check your unhelpful thoughts, you can change your feelings, and that can set you up for actions that help you enjoy the season’s pleasures without losing sight of your goals.

**WHAT TO DO:**
**SHIFT YOUR MINDSET**

We’ve all been there: stressed over a tight schedule, navigating the office party, or seated next to that relative who pushes your buttons. Follow the examples and fill in the blanks to identify tricky holiday situations and unhelpful thoughts that result. Reality check the unhelpful thought: Is it really true? If not, what is?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE SITUATION</th>
<th>MY UNHELPFUL THOUGHT</th>
<th>REALITY CHECK</th>
<th>MY HELPFUL THOUGHT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I’ve got two hours to find amazing gifts for everyone on my list.</td>
<td>The mall's crowded; I’ll never get my shopping done in time.</td>
<td>The mall is crowded, but is it really true that I’ll never get all of my shopping done?</td>
<td>I’ll make a plan for the stores to go to first and if I’m not done, I’ll shop online tonight.</td>
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<tr>
<td>My parents and in-laws each want us to come for the holidays.</td>
<td>I hate this time of year. I can’t make anyone happy.</td>
<td>Your turn:</td>
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**FOLLOW UP** Use the technique above to reality check your unhelpful thoughts during the busy holiday season.
THINK AGAIN
Manage the many moods of the season by reality checking situations where emotions and stress can run high.

UNHELPFUL
“There are so many holiday celebrations, I’m never going to be able to stick to my plan!”

HELPFUL
“Now that I’ve counted them on the calendar, I see there are really just four events to plan for. If I decide what’s worth it beforehand—and use my zero Points® foods and rollover SmartPoints—I can stick to my plan.”

UNHELPFUL
“The holidays are so stressful! With all my to-dos it’s hard to have any fun.”

HELPFUL
“The holidays are stressful, but I’ll ask my partner to help me tackle a few things on my to-do list. Making time for fun can help me stay on track to make healthier choices.”

YOUR TURN! What unhelpful thought have you had about the holiday season? Write it here. Give it a reality check, then write your helpful thought here.

UNHELPFUL
________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________

HELPFUL
________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________

INSPIRATION FROM OUR COMMUNITY!

“WHEN YOU ARE AT HOME WITH YOURSELF, THAT’S WHEN YOU GET TO LIVE YOUR BEST LIFE.” —OPRAH

“I will feast my eyes on the beauty of the lights, and the wonderment in the eyes of little ones. I will drink in all the sounds of the season.” —BOBBIBOW

“I’D MAKE PRETZEL BARK FOR THE HOLIDAYS, BECAUSE I THOUGHT PEOPLE WOULD BE DISAPPOINTED IF I DIDN’T. BUT I TENDED TO OVEREAT IT. THEN I RETHOUGHT: WITH SO MANY HOLIDAY GOODIES, PEOPLE MIGHT LIKE A NON-FOOD GIFT—PLUS THEY WOULDN’T WANT ME TO JEOPARDIZE MY SUCCESS!” —ALYSON

“I’m in another city for Christmas. I’ll check out a meeting, and I’ve got my workouts ready. I’m planning to make great memories while staying on track.” —LOSN4ME2005

*Posted on Connect on the mobile app (for subscribers).
Line a mesh strainer with a paper coffee filter or piece of cheesecloth; set over a small bowl. Add ricotta; cover with plastic wrap and top with a heavy can. Refrigerate at least 1 hour to drain. • In another small bowl, combine drained ricotta, whipped topping, sugar, vanilla, and orange zest; fold in chocolate and set aside. • Microwave one pizzelle on a paper plate for 20-30 seconds. Immediately remove warm cookie and wrap around a utensil handle (such as a peeler) to form a shell (or carefully shape shell with your hands). Let cool; repeat with remaining cookies. • Spoon or pipe 2 Tbsp filling into each cookie shell; serve immediately. • Yields 1 cannoli per serving.

Fancy-looking, but super-easy.

4 SmartPoints® VALUE PER SERVING // PREP 20 MIN // COOK 6 MIN // SERVES 8

18 Tbsp part-skim ricotta cheese (1 cup plus 2 Tbsp) ¾ tsp finely grated orange zest
½ cup lite whipped topping ¼ oz 60-69% dark chocolate, finely chopped
3 Tbsp powdered sugar 8 vanilla pizzelle (3-4"")
⅛ tsp vanilla extract

PIZZELLE COOKIE CANNOLIS

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