***FOR THE HEALTH OF IT....***

**Embracing Self-Care this Holiday Season**

I’m writing this in the afterglow of hosting a wonderful Thanksgiving gathering where the focus wasn’t on perfection, but simply on spending time with people we love, sharing food, and laughing together. It didn’t matter much that our stovetop decided to malfunction the night before and then refused to cooperate when we needed it most. It didn’t matter that as the first guest arrived, and reached onto the bannister spindle for balance, it came off in her hand causing her instead, to lose balance. And, it didn’t matter (much) that our son and his girlfriend were more than an hour late or that tradition has changed a bit now that our daughter and son-in-law are alternating holidays between families. Oh, and did I mention that I forgot the dinner rolls until after dinner? Yet, we all had a great time and I’m still reveling in all the good feelings that made it so. Clearly, it wasn’t our perfect planning that made the day special, it was the willingness to go with the flow and be grateful for the things that matter. Although the world around us forged ahead to the next set of holidays more than a month ago, I’m choosing to hang on to this feeling for as long as it lasts, and let the rest of the season unfold. For me, it’s a form of self-care.

So, how are *you* feeling this holiday season? Are you wound up in a frenzy of too much to do and too little time, looking forward to the holidays with childlike excitement or perhaps feeling a bit blue? Whatever your answer, it is possible to partake in the transformation that occurs this time of year—a transformation fueled by the spirit of giving. The act of giving, whether through gifts, time, or kindness, ignites a sense of fulfillment unlike any other. It’s not merely about material things; it’s about the gestures that foster connection and uplift spirits. The season can act as a gentle reminder that despite life’s uncertainties, there’s always a glimmer of possibility and promise on the horizon.

It’s true that as the world is being painted in vibrant hues of celebration and joy, we can experience a range of emotions and some of those emotions may not be very warm and fuzzy. However, if we stop for a moment, regardless of how we’re feeling, we may notice that amidst the lights and festive cheer, the holiday season can infuse our hearts with hope. When we pair the spirit of giving with gratitude, even when life is chaotic, we are more inclined to acknowledge the blessings that surround us. Whether it’s the kindness of strangers, the warmth of family gatherings, or the simple pleasures of a shared meal, gratitude can find its way into our hearts if we let it, grounding us in humility and appreciation.

Be mindful though, that being grounded in humility and appreciation does not require self deprivation. The true spirit of gratitude and giving needs to include self-care. Does that sound selfish, especially during the season of giving? Self-care is not selfish, it’s essential and if that sounds like a foreign concept, we’ll keep it simple for now with just a few suggestions,

Find ways to simplify and minimize stress which can significantly impact health. This can be through balancing social invitations with self-care, setting boundaries and honoring the body’s need for rest and rejuvenation.

Carve out moments for relaxation, and allow yourself to unwind amidst the seasonal rush; even if it’s a 10 minute time out in the middle of the day.

The values of love, compassion, and generosity that permeate this season have the power to rejuvenate us from within. Embrace it, be open to both give and receive.

As you navigate the joyous whirlwind of the holiday season, remember that the most meaningful gift you can give yourself is the gift of health. Instead of viewing health as a seasonal endeavor, use the holiday season as a launching pad for lasting healthy habits. Consider setting realistic goals and incorporating small, sustainable changes into your routine. This way, the gift of health extends far beyond the holidays, becoming a lifelong treasure.

***My Holiday Gift to You: Due to such a positive response, I am happy to extend the offer of free 20 minute “Get Your Healthy Back”, Healthy Lifestyle and Nutrition consultations to all, throughout the month of December. To schedule yours, please contact me at joann@wellnessfusion.net. Remember this monthly article is here for you, For the Health of it!***