

BRING BACK THAT FESTIVE FEELING!



Reclaiming a relaxed, joy-filled Christmas begins with positive thinking, says success coach *Sharron Lowe* – lumpy gravy or not

AS Christmas draws near, TV shows and magazines show us endless ways to make it extra-specially magical – from the food we cook, to the friends and neighbours we entertain, to the outfit we pick for the big day. Sometimes, these tips will involve a makeover: how – with a few seasonal tweaks – we can give last year’s recipes, table decorations and even the Christmas tree a completely fresh look. But what about giving our frame of mind a Christmas makeover?

While we want to create the perfect Christmas, it’s easy to give in to resentment when faced with the most overwhelming to-do list the year demands. We’re expected to juggle work, friends, food shopping, family, present planning and buying, relatives, cards with handwritten messages, children, partner, parties, entertainment and cooking. And even the most confident cook might quake at the prospect of serving Christmas dinner for ten or so family members, as many of us do.

But are we really expected to turn multitasking into an Olympic sport? Are these overwhelming expectations put upon us by others or are they self-imposed? Are you setting yourself up to win or to lose, be happy or stressed? Are your expectations realistic or doomed to fail? And are they already keeping you awake at night?

When we think of Christmas, most of us have

a picture in our heads of how it should be: relaxed and stress-free. These thoughts are emphasised by TV advertisements and billboards that idealise the occasion and set up exaggerated expectations. Instead, avoid getting caught up in the frenzy of Christmas marketing – set your own rules.

Would you like to remember Christmas 2017 as brilliant, fun and laughter-filled, with memories to treasure? Of course, we all would.

So why do so many people look to Christmas with dread and describe it afterwards as exhausting?

Imagine asking a three-year-old child, ‘So how was your Christmas?’ and they answer, with a pained expression, ‘It was so stressful; I’m exhausted, I can’t wait to get back to nursery school!’ Happily, our natural state is to feel joyous and positive. Stress is what we create by not taking charge of our single greatest asset – our mind.

Everything in life starts here, in our thoughts. Good or bad, positive or negative, our beliefs are our choice. Your mind and emotions will give you joy and positivity just as readily as they will give you stress and negativity. The good news is that the brain is neutral and will simply accept the focus and thoughts we give it. The emotional states we find ourselves in (positive or negative) are the ones we create by our own thinking.

This is how it works...

Your thoughts about Christmas will create your focus. Your focus triggers your feelings, moods and emotions. These in turn trigger your actions and behaviour, and your actions create your Christmas. If you start with a positive outlook, you will create a positive Christmas.

It’s almost impossible to describe the impact your thinking has on you and your life. It’s like saying breathing is ‘useful’.

We’re all born positive, powerful and full of imagination. When young children think of Christmas they can barely contain their excitement, imagination and energy. To them, everything is possible. In the thousands of people I’ve coached through my Mind Makeover workshops, I’ve yet to meet an adult who wasn’t once a child. We all contain vast reserves of positivity and imagination – it’s there in our DNA – we just have to remember how to tap into it.

At Christmas time most people fall into one of three camps: they either make it happen, watch it happen or don’t have a clue what’s happening. Having a Mind Makeover will put you confidently in the first camp, and help you make it happen – your way.

Change your thoughts and change your Christmas. Turn the page to find out how. ►