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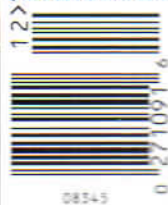
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Feel More Joy This Season

The secret is a technique psychologists call savoring, a way to fully absorb life's special moments. Try it for yourself with these expert tricks:

Celebrate early.

Stores that stock holiday decor in the fall have the right idea. Thinking about and planning a holiday extends its bliss beyond a few short weeks. One study found that anticipation in the weeks *before* a vacation is a big part of the happiness the vacation brings.

Have an intermission.

Try taking a break in the middle of gift giving, or waiting an hour before serving dessert at your holiday feast. Even a brief hiatus from something enjoyable can reset your pleasure level.

Create mini traditions.

Engaging in a short ritual before doing something you like can make your experience even better. Study subjects told to unwrap and eat a chocolate bar in a specific step-by-step style savored it much more. Find ways to turn tree decorating into a fun routine.

Take a photo...in your head.

If you snap a mental picture of an unexpected delight, like your kid's face as she bites into a gingerbread cookie, you can replay those images in your mind later and instantly rekindle the positive emotions.

Give thanks freely and often.

Research suggests that the act of saying thank you can actually increase our own happiness by making us more aware of positive feelings.

Treat joy as if it's finite.

The awareness of an ending encourages us to seize the moment while it lasts. Acknowledging that your tree will come down soon and your extended family will go home (Sob! But also, phew!) can help you treasure all of it even more.

SOURCES: Fred Bryant, Ph.D., author of the book *Savoring*; Jordi Quoidbach, Ph.D., a professor at Esade Business School in Barcelona, who has studied savoring extensively; Jeffrey Froh, Psy.D., author of *Making Grateful Kids*.

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