

CHILL OUT: Stay Cool and Remember to Laugh
Written by Mary Claybon

I just returned from vacation. Being in the mountains of Southern California was relaxing and made it easy to be in the moment. My husband and I were gone for two weeks away from work and everyday responsibilities. Coming back to the thought of work and the rush and roar of holiday preparations created both excitement and apprehension. Flying home and thinking about everything we needed to do before Thanksgiving, Chanukah and Christmas was mind-boggling.

As I was thinking about all I had to do and about life in general, I put on my headphones to watch the in-flight movie *Evening*, a wonderful film about a woman on her deathbed going in and out of consciousness while looking back at her life and wondering if she had made a mistake in her love life. Her best friend comes to visit during her last hours. They reminisce about their memories and shed some mutual tears. The dying woman's daughter asks the friend if her mother was perhaps reliving something in her life that was a mistake or regret. The friend says "We are mysterious creatures, aren't we? And at the end, so much of it turns out not to matter." On her deathbed the mother reassures her daughter by saying, "there are no mistakes." Both of these quotes suggest that perhaps we take life too seriously and just need to CHILL OUT.

Chill out means to relax. There is a whole genre of Chill Out music to help us along. I own a set of CDs called *Chillout I and II*. Songs like *Instant Relieve*, *Transparency*, *Madhouse*, *Cosmic Dance*, and *Holy Mountain* are some of the titles. Listening to this music makes me want to dance and sway my stress away.

The holidays can be a time of joy if we remember to CHILL OUT. When you are stressing about buying the perfect gift or equaling all of your children's piles under the tree, take a look at what you are doing and laugh. The perfect gift is your loving thoughts and the warmth of being around someone who can be a symbol of peace at this time of the year. And if you are in a baking frenzy trying to make the hundreds of cookies you do each year, relax and make less, enjoy baking those cookies more and smile. Buy the dessert this year and spend the baking time with your family and friends. If the house is just not clean enough, who cares? It's the warmth of the home and not its spotlessness that welcomes the glee of the season.

In this short human life, think about what matters most. This is a time to focus on relationships, enjoy the season, every snowflake and wind chill. I love the quote from A Course in Miracles that says, "It's all a silly mad idea, don't forget to laugh." 'Tis the season to be jolly, not jostled. Have fun and smile more this year.

Happy Holidays and a Happy and Peaceful New Year.

Mary Claybon is a life and wellness coach with over 30 years of experience in health and wellness. Through her business Promoting Health: The Middle Way LLC, Mary has facilitated wellness programs for businesses and individuals and now offers telephone and web based coaching nationally to promote lasting change. Mary also facilitates A Course in Miracles group in Cincinnati, Ohio. Visit www.themiddlewayhealth.com or call Mary at 513-309-8377. Mary's e-mail is maryfree@cinci.rr.com.