



## Assessing Your Holiday Activities

*In this exercise, you'll look at some activities of the holiday season, and reflect on whether you are spending your time in meaningful, pleasurable ways. The hope is that, through this evaluation, you can begin to reshape your holiday to create what you want.*

- 1) Review the following list of holiday activities shown below.
- 2) Think about the amount of time you spent on these activities during the last holiday season, and how much meaning and pleasure you derived from each.
- 3) Then rate activities on the meaning and pleasure you derive from them. Use a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being “a great deal of meaning or pleasure” and 1 being “no meaning or pleasure.”
- 4) To the right of the Meaning and Pleasure columns, indicate if you would like to spend more or less time on that activity this holiday season. If you want to spend more time, put one or two pluses (+ +). Use the minus sign if you want to spend less time, and a double minus if you want to spend a lot less time (- -). If you are satisfied with the amount of time you spend on the activity, write in a zero (0).
- 5) Feel free to make notes—such as what might work better, or why you don’t find meaning or pleasure in a particular activity—in the Comments column.
- 6) Skip activities that you did not do last year, and/or add activities.
- 7) A few examples are shown at the top of the chart.

Activity	Meaning (rank 1-5)	Pleasure (rank 1-5)	More, less or about the same time (+, -, 0)	Comments
<b>Ex: Home decorating</b>	3	3	0	Invite friends over to make it more fun.
<b>Ex: Making music (singing, playing instruments, etc.)</b>	5	5	++	Be intentional-go to events where I know singing will occur.
Home decorating				
Time with family				
Time with friends				
Volunteering or helping others				
Spiritual/religious activities				
Time to myself				

Shopping for gifts				
Making gifts				
Baking for the holiday				
Making a big dinner				
Attending holiday performances/entertainment				
Making music				
Listening to holiday music				
Playing outside with family/friends				
Writing cards				

**What did you learn? What would you like to do differently this year?**

**References:**

Ben-Shahar, Tal, Ph.D, Happier: Learn the Secrets to Daily Joy and Lasting Fulfillment, New York: McGraw Hill, 2007.  
 Robinson, Jo and Jean Coppock Staeheli, Unplug the Christmas Machine, New York: William Morrow, 1991.

This exercise was written by Susan Salterberg, University of Northern Iowa Center for Energy & Environmental Education. This project is made possible thanks to funding support from the REAP Conservation Education Program and the Iowa EPSCoR. Find more at [ReclaimYourHolidays.org](http://ReclaimYourHolidays.org).