

MAINTAINING PATIENCE DURING THE HOLIDAYS

The holiday season can come with a lot of emotions. And while many of those feelings will hopefully be positive, there's no doubt people can also experience trying situations during this time of year.

Defined in part as "even-tempered care," patience is a skill that allows us to remain calm in stressful circumstances. But being patient is easier said than done, so here are three tips to help you manage potential frustrations while maintaining your holiday cheer.

FOCUS ON WHAT'S IN YOUR CONTROL¹

Stuck in a traffic jam? Waiting for medical results? Agitated by a new policy at work?

You can't control those types of situations, but what you *can* control is your response. Negative knee-jerk reactions can become an almost automated response to certain stressors, but by noticing your thoughts and slowing down you can mitigate impatience by resisting the urge to impulsively react in an unhelpful way.

Remember: when you can't change your reality, try changing your reaction.

SCAN YOUR BODY²

There's a corresponding physical response to emotions, and impatience is no different. Once you feel it coming on, notice the sensations arising in your body.

These sensations might include:

- Tensing chest muscles
- Warming skin
- Accelerated heartrate
- Faster breathing

Understanding how the body responds to the stress of impatience can help us relax and regain control. When you're aware of how your body is reacting, you can more easily detach the emotions associated with the sensations.

BREATHE¹

When impatience strikes, deliberate breathing may be your best tool to slow your mind and body down. Taking deep, high-quality breaths until your heart rate starts to drop and your body relaxes is a technique you can use anytime, anywhere.

Focus only on the sensations and movements produced by your breath; this can help cement you in the present moment and detangle you from whatever stressful and impatient thoughts may be racing through your head.

INTO THE HOLIDAYS AND BEYOND

Situations that test your patience may spike during this time of year, but impatience can impact your well-being year-round. Regardless of how your holiday season appears, developing your "even-tempered care" can help bring balance and calm to whatever stresses life throws your way.

¹"7 Tips for Better Patience." *Cleveland Clinic*, 2019

²Raypole, Crystal. "How to Do a Body Scan Meditation." *Healthline*, 2020

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