

The Lara Croft Advice Column: How to Ease Holiday Stressors

Dear Lara:

I find the holidays terribly stressful! The weather is horrible this time of year, I feel blue because it is so dark and cold, and I struggle to find the perfect gifts for everyone. In addition, I have one family member that is terribly annoying, with their constant complaining. Do you have any advice on how to best handle these concerns? I know you give great advice, and your help is most appreciated!

Fondly, Cindy from Essex

Dear Cindy:

Keep calm and carry on as we Brits say! Cold weather can be your best friend-I recommend wearing shorts with your jacket to help you develop that stiff upper lip! A little frostbite never hurt anyone, who needs all that skin on one's legs? As far as the perfect gift, you can really dazzle with something that can end the world as we know it! Gift a Scion, ornamental dagger or an artifact collected by a madman. Turn your annoying family member into a spider with limbs akimbo and REALLY give them something to complain about. No, in all seriousness, just lock them in the freezer. Hope this helps, tata for now, I'm off to deal with some yetis.

Best Regards, Lara

In all seriousness, as a psychologist I know that holiday time can present many challenges, from finances to loneliness, from difficult families to dark and cold weather. Here are a few considerations to ease the stress of this time a little bit. (Disclaimer: this is not an exhaustive list and not meant to substitute for professional advice)

- Whenever possible get as much natural light as you can.
- Try to spend time with people you enjoy.
- Do at least one activity during this season that gives you a sense of purpose and that you find fulfilling.
- Prepare ahead of time to deal with difficult people; you can try to listen and not engage/react. Give yourself permission to leave early.
- Rather than finding the perfect gift, consider finding a just right gift that is special because it is from you. Finding the exact right thing does not matter, the sentiment does.

Reach out if you want to know more about the science behind these evidence-based suggestions!

Happy Holidays all
Fondly, ArkRaiderMs