

## IT'S OUR 15th ANNIVERSARY - LET'S KEEP THE CELEBRATION GOING!

*Last month we focused on WORK. This month, we spotlight ThirdPath's groundbreaking work on the LIFE side of the equation!*

Did you ever notice how December is a notoriously stressful month? For the past 15 years, we've been working with a progressive group of men and women who have learned how to put the JOY back in the holidays. Want to learn how?

**Join us next Thursday** ... two long-term ThirdPath community members will participate in our next Thursday with ThirdPath webinar and share their insights on reducing the stress and increasing the joy over the holidays.

**Enjoy this month's email update** ... today's update includes a sneak preview of the discussion we'll be having, including a list of ideas you can put into practice today. As our gift to you, we have also included a link to download a free copy of our **Holiday Planner** and **Vacation Check List**.

**Read our opinion piece for Fortune.com** ... Jessica DeGroot was asked to write an opinion piece for [Fortune.com](http://Fortune.com) about why we need to stop blaming men for the challenges families are facing around work/family balance. What a thrill that the world is catching up to our cutting-edge thinking!

Thanks for being part of the growing, vibrant, inspiring ThirdPath community!

/Jessica and the ThirdPath team

**PS - Help strengthen our movement for change. Become a ThirdPath donor. Email us at [Time4Life\(at\)ThirdPath.org](mailto:Time4Life@ThirdPath.org) and we'll send our 15th anniversary donor letter to you. Or [click here to donate today](#).**

## The simple but profound impact of turning off our cell phones ...

*In a recent Harvard Business Review article, the author shows how increased cell phone use has negatively impacted vacation time. Here's an excerpt from the article.*

"A few years ago, I was struck by a study of Disney parks: the company had hired a team of analysts to figure out what kids found most absorbing about their theme park. Was it Mickey and Minnie? Cinderella's castle? Space Mountain?

"No. It was their parents' mobile phones. Because the parents were always staring at them, the kids wanted to as well... These soaring rates of phone-usage coincide with a sharp decline in taking time off from work. Americans today take almost a week less of vacation, on average, than they did in 2000 - but prior to that year, American vacation time had been relatively stable.

**"By 2014, 42% of Americans were telling pollsters they had not taken a single day off in the past year. So while America has long been the only developed nation not to guarantee workers any paid time off, our elective status as No-Vacation Nation has been a relatively recent phenomenon..."**

"Here's the rub. Kids don't want an all-expenses paid trip to Belize. In fact, the most popular activity the kids in the PTO survey mentioned was a parent simply joining their school field trip. As one 11-year old girl put it, "It doesn't matter what we're doing, it only matters that we're having fun." Simple gestures had a huge impact on children's well-being. While only 19% of the kids in the survey said that they're typically in a good mood on an average day, on days their parents took time off to spend with them, that number shot up to 60%."

The author then reminds us that too many American don't have the right to take any paid time off. Something that we need to fight to change! She also includes some staggering statistics that underscore the degree to which leaders struggle to turn off work while on vacation.

***Want help turning off work and putting away your cell phone over the holidays?***

**Download a free copy of ThirdPath's "vacation checklist" from our website.**

Or read [Jessica DeGroot's interview](#), entitled: *"Having a hard time getting away from work? Here's how to make sure your vacation actually feels like one."*

## **Want holidays to include more joy, less stress?**

*We've spent the last 15 years talking to families who have redesigned their lives to create more joy and less stress.*

*Here are some of the questions they ask themselves around the holidays.*

**Work and Time Off** - December is a good month to set some limits around work when possible. How demanding is work in December? How much time can you take off? Do you need to work over the holidays? What can you do differently around work and taking time off next year?

**Gift Giving** - It's easy to get caught up in gift giving and buy more than planned - sometimes putting a strain on our budgets and values. It also takes time to buy gifts, including helping relatives know what gifts to give. What are you enjoying most about gift giving this year? What would you like to change?

**Other Holiday Expectations** - Creating holiday cards, putting up holiday decorations, attending holiday events - at work, with friends, and at your children's schools - can all require a lot of time over the holidays. Which ones do you enjoy the most? Are there any you would like to skip next year?

**Family Time and Family Traditions** - The most important part of the holidays is creating time with our families. Which family traditions create the most fun and cause the least stress? Are there any that could be simplified or maybe even crossed off the list next year?

### **Holiday Planning** -

The fantasy is that holidays magically happen. The truth is: advance planning helps us focus on what is most important. It also helps us find ways to share the workload. Who can be part of your planning team and how can you work together to create more joy and less stress?

One of the best holiday gifts you can give yourself is to take 20 minutes after the holidays to write down your thoughts. Next year, revisit your list as you plan for holidays 2016!

***Want a free copy of ThirdPath's holiday planner?***

***Email us at [Time4Life\(at\)ThirdPath.org](mailto:Time4Life(at)ThirdPath.org) ... Subject: Holiday Joy!***