Don’t Let Money Woes Get You Down This Holiday Season

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A whopping 80 percent of parents are stressedabout tough economic times this holiday season, and this anxiety isamplified by children’s gift expectations, according to the latestStress in America survey released by the American Psychological Association (APA).

Butdon’t let the cash crunch crush your spirit and steal your family’sholiday cheer. Instead, try these expert tips for getting through goodor bad financial times during the holidays.

Honesty is the best policy. Don’ttry to hide money troubles from your kids. The APA survey showed that90 percent of kids knew their parents were stressed, even though lessthan one third of parents believed this was true. But before sittingdown with the kids to explain the situation, think about what to say.This will help ease your kids’ fears about how a job loss or pay cutwill affect the family.

Plan ahead. Havea family meeting and ask everyone to contribute creative money-savingideas for the holiday season, such as game nights or trail walks.

Less is more. Go ahead and get into the seasonal spirit by buying a Christmas tree,but there’s no rule that says it has to be the biggest one on the lot.The same goes for your Christmas list. (Just check it twice!) You canscale down and limit it to just a few meaningful items.

Think outside the box. Suggest everyone give each other creative no-cash gifts, such as doingsomeone’s chores or scheduling future family activities. And homemadegifts can also be great and thoughtful alternatives to store-boughtgifts.

See the glass as half full. Nice and simple: Focus on what you have instead of what you lack.

“Duringthe holidays, it’s important for families to think outside theexpectation of everyone getting everything on their lists,” said MaryK. Alvord, PhD, a clinical psychologist in private practice inRockville and Silver Spring, Maryland. “Otherwise, it just sets adultsand children up for disappointment.”

And who wants that added stress?

Click here to learn how to alleviate holiday tension with meditation

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