



## **Is It Really The Most Wonderful Time of Year?**

By Jennifer Kersten, CMT

It's the most wonderful time of the year...Is it really? How many of us really feel that way or still feel that way? For me, somewhere along the line, I lost that feeling. The holidays started to feel forced and more about the economy and consumption than about anything spiritual. For me, the magical, peaceful and glowing feeling gave way to a never-ending barrage of things having to be done, stuff having to be bought and gatherings needing attendance.

Our body and soul's natural instinct during these short dark days is to slow down, consume less and rest more. Our modern culture demands we do just the opposite. I know I'm not alone in saying this leads to more stress and fatigue than peace and joy leading up to and during Christmas season.

I'm going to straight out admit that, as I got into my late thirties, I actually started resenting the approach of this "wonderful time of year". When I changed careers and became a massage therapist and yoga teacher in 2008, I didn't anticipate it would help turn my attitude around about the holidays, but it has.

Many of us put aside the things we do for self-care such as massage, yoga, acupuncture, meditation, psychotherapy, etc. because Christmas time is a busy time. The holidays also require a chunk of our financial budget that might otherwise go towards self-care needs. I experience this in my practice; my schedule slows down as clients get busy with their holiday preparations and goings-on.

In the last few years I've taken advantage of my lighter client load in December to spend more time practicing what I preach. I receive more massage therapy and do more yoga, privately and in classes. As a result, my attitude towards this wonderful time of year has begun to shift. I find that doing more self-care in these last weeks of the year, instead of less, helps to cultivate a feeling of greater heartfelt, inner peace. With more peace in my heart, I find it possible to connect to those magical feelings again. It becomes easier to be thoughtful about what to do for and give to others. I find it easier to disconnect from the flood of consumerism that has taken over our celebrations and feel truly present for the people and celebrations that are most important.

I know now, through experience, that slowing down and allowing the body and soul to rest, whether by meditating, doing yoga, getting massage, Reiki or acupuncture, we provide ourselves with space that allows us to reconnect to what this season truly means to us. For me, allowing time and resources to continue care for myself has brought the wonderful back to Christmas. It can do the same for you.

**Jennifer Kersten, CMT, RYT practices massage therapy, acupressure and one-on-one yoga at The Ommani Center. She sees clients on Monday, Wednesday & Friday. A 60 minute massage is priced at \$68. Schedule an appointment with her by calling: 262.695.5311.**