

# Winter Holiday Tools #2: The Quiet Hour



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This year, we have added a new custom to our holiday season. Along with our parties, shopping and preparations, we have declared a quiet hour to be kept sacred each afternoon we are home. Our flurry and scurry have already taken its toll as E lies on the couch with a miserable cold. We know we need to find a way to deal with competing demands on our time and manage our stress so that we can actually enjoy our celebrations. We've assigned the time between

3:30-4:30 in the afternoon as quiet time in our house. That means no media blaring, no running children, no loud voices. Reading is welcome. Snacks with high protein are encouraged (to combat the onslaught of sugar) and a hot cup of tea for Mom and Dad. I also tuck my to do list away so that I can't look at it. And play happens too as long as it is not noisy and physically taxing. Naps could occur during this time. Whereas I view a nap like I would a piece of fine chocolate, a rare luxury to be savored, my husband and son view it as punishment for the weak. So I know naps will not occur. But creating a calm, quiet space where individuals respect each other's sense of calm can take place during this time.

Talk about creating this sacred time at a family dinner or time when all are together. Be sure to agree on expectations ahead of time. What activities are acceptable for the quiet hour? What activities are not acceptable? Also, an hour may just be too long for a quiet time in your household but wouldn't a family agreement to stay quiet for 15 minutes a day be a relief to you — and perhaps to all? Decide on reasonable amount of time. Set a kitchen timer to remove the temptation to argue. Do it each day you are home at the same time so that the routine takes hold and family members begin to expect it. Maybe they will even rely on it. And maybe it will give each member the fuel to truly be present to the possibility of joy and wonder this season.

