



**WASHINGTON,D.C. (WUSA) - The holiday season can bring some unwelcome visitors: stress and depression.**

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And women are more likely to feel overwhelmed with the holiday gift-giving, cooking, travel and family gatherings.

Andrea McCarren found some expert advice on coping with stress.

A strong relationship helps to reduce stress, and it's a key to good mental and physical health. We met one couple who clearly proves that point.

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"My husband last week celebrated his 98th birthday. Okay, so what's wrong? I am working on 99!" said Erika Axelrad.

If anyone knows how to handle stress, it's Erika and Joseph Axelrad. They've been married for 67 years. That's a lot of Thanksgivings.

Erika said, "This is the nicest holiday. The nicest. No religion, no differentiation, all brotherhood. "

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"She was originally my secretary," said Joseph.

Erika interjected, "He hired me. For life!"

"I saw how she works, how she behaves, how she does, how she doesn't do," Joseph finished.

Joseph is 98 years old. Erika, a youthful 91. Their admiration is mutual.

"Fantastic intellect, the intellect, the memory. He works on it. He reads three papers every day," she said.

"I say 100% she's right, for my part," said Joseph.

It increases our general sense of well-being and during the holidays, especially.

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Dr. Anita Gadhia-Smith says a solid relationship like theirs may well be the key to their longevity.

"It gives you someone to talk about things with, someone to share your lives, share the responsibilities. It doubles our joy and it halves the burdens," said Gadhia-Smith.

The Alelrad's say, "We don't own a car anymore. We walk. We go a lot to opera, concerts, music. It helps the soul."

"I have every morning a papaya," Joseph said. Erika added, "It's not all wine and roses I can tell you. It's not."

But take it from the Axelrad's. Nothing in life is perfect, but some things come pretty close.

The experts say portion control is critical to surviving the holidays-not just food and alcohol, but limiting the time you spend with difficult people.

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**Written by**

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