

# The Needle & The Narrative

DO LESS. LOOK BETTER. A GUIDE TO THE REST OF THE SEASON.

## THE MENTAL LOAD

The holidays don't arrive in December.

They quietly begin sometime in October, when someone says, "We'll figure it out later." Later becomes you.



The planning. The remembering. The distractions. The emotional air traffic control.

Nobody notices you're mentally cooked because, when it's done well, it looks effortless.

The irony?  
Your nervous system takes the brunt of it.

This season, your body doesn't need another scented candle. It needs one less responsibility.

### DID YOU KNOW?

2004 was the first year the **PSL** was released at Starbucks. The founding father of the **PSL** was a man named **Peter Dukes**. **Dukes** on Sunday is a song written by Jimmy Buffett (who briefly attended Auburn University); the song is about a legendary beach party held weekly at Duke's **Waikiki**, located inside the **OUTRIGGER Waikiki** Beach Resort in Honolulu. Pono Pie is one of their most popular desserts. It is locally made with "ulu" (Hawaiian breadfruit), passion fruit, toasted coconut, macadamia nuts, strawberries, and honey; it is gluten-free, dairy-free and has no added **sugar**. Which state is adding **sugar**, you may ask? **Utah**—Households there purchased 50% more Halloween candy on average than any other state. **Utah** has two skier-only resorts (sorry snowboarders): Deer Valley and Alta. The state has **15** ski resorts in total. **15** is the number of minutes it would roughly take you to drive from Mentone to Cloudmont, **Alabama's** only ski resort where the temp must drop below 28 degrees for them to make snow.

FIND THE NEEDLE!  
BRING THIS NEWSLETTER INTO  
STILL STUDIOS FOR A SURPRISE GIFT.

"ALMOST EVERYTHING  
WILL WORK AGAIN IF  
YOU UNPLUG IT FOR  
A FEW MINUTES...  
INCLUDING YOU."

— ANNE LAMOTT



### HOLIDAY PLAYLIST:

"REST" — SURFACES  
"LEAVE ME ALONE" — MICHAEL JACKSON  
"I WILL SURVIVE" — GLORIA GAYNOR  
"THE SOUND OF SILENCE" — SIMON & GARFUNKEL  
"QUIET" — MATILDA THE MUSICAL  
"YOUR DIRECTION" — GOOSE  
"HALFWAY UP" — THE BROOK AND BLUFF



## What Stress Does To Your Skin

Stress isn't just something you feel. It's something your skin experiences in real time.

When cortisol spikes as it reliably does during sustained pressure, poor sleep, and social overload, the skin's barrier function weakens. Moisture escapes. Inflammation increases. Collagen production slows. The result is

Your skin doesn't know it's "The Most Wonderful Time of the Year". It only knows:

- Chronic cortisol (*the gift that keeps on giving*)
- Less sleep (*because "just one more thing" never is*)
- More inflammation (*because your face has feelings too*)
- Less collagen (*currently unavailable until January*)
- More visible fatigue (*concealer has entered the chat*)

cumulative. Concealer becomes a main character instead of a NPC.

Breakouts are common too. Cortisol triggers excess sebum, meaning the same stress running your mental load is quietly working against your skin.

None of this is vanity. It's physiology and it's the body's largest organ showing the strain. The good news: the interventions are the same ones that help everything else. Sleep. Reduced stimulation. Genuine rest. Not luxuries. Maintenance.

## THE "I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO GET YOU" GUIDE

- ★ *Travel Steamer*  
For wrinkles every where except your forehead.
- ★ *Heated Vest*  
Tiny fireplace. Zero smoke.
- ★ *Sleep 8 Mattress*  
The most expensive nap of her life. Worth it.
- ★ *Grocery Delivery Membership*  
The gift of never standing in a parking lot in December again.
- ★ *A Free Afternoon*  
No itinerary. No one's dietary restrictions. No questions about where anything is. Wrap it if you can figure out how.
- ★ *STILL, All Year*  
A Year's Worth of Botox. The only thing on the list that's entirely, unambiguously, theirs.

A gift list for the person who has everything except time and sleep.

### THE SEASON'S CHECKLIST

- ☐ Bought gifts for everyone else and said "Don't get me anything."
- ☐ Took exactly zero photos you liked.
- ☐ Said "I'm fine." Meant "I'm tired."
- ☐ Enjoyed a PSL (pumpkin spice latte)
- ☐ Booked your Botox appointment at STILL Studios



**MYTH:**

**MYTH:** Stress only affects how I feel, not how I look.

**MYTH:** A glass of wine at the end of the day counts as stress management.

**MYTH:** If I slow down everything will fall apart.

**MYTH:** I'll feel better once this is all over.

**FACT:**

**FACT:** Cortisol shows up as dullness, breakouts, dehydration, and the particular kind of tired that concealer can't fix.

**FACT:** Alcohol temporarily suppresses cortisol but triggers a rebound spike during sleep, which is why two glasses in December feels like four in January.

**FACT:** Chronic stress impairs the part of the brain responsible for decision-making, emotional regulation, and problem solving.

**FACT:** The system that regulates your stress response takes weeks to recalibrate after sustained activation. You don't just feel better when it's over. You recover. Slowly.

*The holiday sleep debt doesn't disappear in January. It just gets bigger. Six hours is not enough, even if it feels like it. The doomscrolling decompress is a restful sleep's nightmare.*

*What helps?* One screen-free hour before bed. Your emails can wait. Your collagen would appreciate it. Instead, pour yourself into a few pages of a steamy novel before going to bed.

*YOU ARE WORTH THE SAME CARE YOU'RE EXTENDING TO EVERYONE ELSE THIS SEASON.*



## STILLness as a Practice

Not a retreat. Not a ritual. Just a moment that belongs to you.

**WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE**

The morning beverage before anyone else is awake. Ten minutes in the car to yourself with Ariana's new album. Being where your feet are. Pausing.

**WHAT IT'S NOT**

A fix for the list  
A meditation app  
One more thing to schedule

**WHAT IT DOES**

Creates a pause inside the noise.  
Puts you back in your own life, as it actually is.

**STILL**  
*All Year.*  
The Gift That  
Will Keep Giving.



Is there someone in your life who has you stumped on what to get them? This one you cannot get wrong: One Year's Worth of Botox. No size. No color. No line at Lululemon on the 26th. One flat fee. No unit counting. No ceiling. Same-day appointments. The only cost conversation is the one you're having right now.

**12 MONTHS, ONE FLAT FEE**

- 4 physician-directed appointments
- Unlimited units + touch-ups included
- Complimentary lower face, every visit
- Membership pricing on specialty services
- \$250 STILL Credit to gift a friend
- 3 areas: \$2,300 • 2 areas: \$1,500

She's spent enough of this season deciding things for everyone else. *Let this be the one someone else decides for her.*

Newsletter contributors: Elizabeth Adams, MD Mykah Kimbrell, COO Wit injected by James Kelley, world renowned BR & human performance coach

**STILL**  
STUDIOS

1031 BROCKS GAP PKWY #177  
HOOVER, ALABAMA 35244  
205-202-0881

PSRST STD  
ECRWSS  
U.S.POSTAGE  
PAID  
EDDM Retail

SAME-DAY AND WALK-IN APPOINTMENTS AVAILABLE

**Did you know STILL hosts private events?** Because sometimes the best girls' night includes Botox, not bad decisions. Gather your book club, mahjong group, neighborhood friends, coworkers, clients, or birthday crew. We'll handle the neurotoxin, you handle the guest list.



## GET IN TOUCH

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This isn't your permission slip to cancel Christmas. It's your reminder that you don't have to be the CEO of the holiday season.

