

Three wise tips for an organized holiday season

It's early November, and I don't know about you, but I start getting a little anxious about this time every year just thinking about the upcoming holiday season. With warnings of supply chain issues, some retailers are starting extra early with holiday promotions. Although some people



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say the holidays are "the most wonderful time of the year," they can also be a stressful time. In this article, I'll share three wise tips to help you be more organized and less stressed this holiday season.

TIP #1: CURATE THE CALENDAR

"The office Christmas party is a great opportunity to catch up with people you haven't seen for 20 minutes." — Julius Sharpe

One of the reasons the holiday season is often stressful is because we usually fill our calendars too full. You can prevent a crazy holiday schedule by being more strategic and selective about what you plan. Use the following suggestions to keep your schedule in check:

- Don't automatically add "the usual holiday activities." Just because you always bake homemade cookies, drive around to see the holiday lights, make your own cards, and go to the Christmas cantata, etc., doesn't mean you always have to do those things. If no one in the family is really into baking cookies, seeing the holiday lights, making the cards, or going to the Christmas cantata, take the pressure off by dropping those activities.

- Poll your family and close friends about the holiday activities they really love. Have them each pick one or two things. Here's a good question to ask: "How would you fill in the blank: 'It wouldn't really feel like Christmas if we didn't get to _____?'" Make time for the events that are most meaningful for your friends and family, and drop the ones no one really wants to do anyway. If you live alone, be honest about what you



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really enjoy, and prioritize those activities.

- Leave some white space in your schedule for doing something relaxing, like watching a holiday movie and drinking hot chocolate by the fire. Some of the most meaningful moments occur during unplanned, relaxing time. Not only that, but the more rested we are, the more we'll enjoy the planned activities. Imagine how restful and relaxing it would be to have several free evenings leading up to the New Year. It's possible if you plan carefully and fiercely protect your free time.

TIP #2: PLAN FOR PRESENTS

"It's always consoling to know that today's Christmas gifts are tomorrow's garage sales." — Milton Berle

Clutter and Christmas go together like ... well ... they don't go together. Or at least they shouldn't! Here are a few suggestions for making sure clutter isn't a part of your Christmas:

- Prevent Christmas clutter in

gift recipients' homes:

Take the time to get a wish list from the recipient or to talk to close friends or family for gift ideas. I can hear your objection now, "But I want them to be surprised!" I understand the desire to surprise someone. However, I would much rather make sure to give a gift someone wants than to try picking out something and risk giving something that ends up as clutter. If you go the extra mile to buy something the recipient will love and use, recipients will be so grateful!

Giftster (a free app and website) is a great resource! Giftster was designed for every member of the family to create and share wish lists. Each person in a group creates a wish list, adding any item from anywhere, including links for online retailers. A family group can share the lists. Purchasers keep up with what's been bought, but the list maker doesn't see what's been purchased. You can even use it to draw names in a group. Consider giving consumables

(like food, drink and toiletry items), experiences (membership to a zoo, museum, gym, etc.; tickets to a play, movie or concert) and gift cards.

- Prevent Christmas clutter in your own home:

Do some more decluttering before those gifts come in!

Update any wish lists with consumables (like food or toiletries), experiences (like concert tickets or memberships), gift cards, or items you will definitely love and use.

If you receive a gift that's not ideal, don't be afraid to exchange it. The gift giver wants you to be happy with your gift! (Think of the situation in reverse. Would you want your loved one to keep something they don't like?)

TIP #3: DECLUTTER THE DECOR

"Thank you, stockings, for being a long flammable piece of fabric people like to hang over a roaring fireplace." — Jimmy Fallon

Whether or not you've already decorated for the holidays, THIS

is the perfect time to declutter and organize your holiday decorations!

- If you haven't yet decorated for the holidays:

Take a hard look at each and every decoration as you go. If you're not using it, there's a reason. If you don't love it and you aren't planning to use it, let it go!

Don't buy any new decorations until you look through the old ones. If you bring new ones in, remember to let some go. Without a one-in, one-out policy or some other method of limiting purchases, you'll just continue to accumulate.

- If you've already decorated for the holidays:

Anything you didn't use is fair game for decluttering. You probably have "decoration detritus," decorative items that stay in the bottom of the bin after you pull out the good stuff. Actually, you may have entire containers of decorations that you haven't used in years! They aren't doing anyone any good in the bin. It doesn't matter who gave it to you, how long you've had it, whether or not you "paid good money for it," or how many times you said you might use it next year. If you don't love it and you're not using it, the best thing to do is to get rid of it. Be ruthless!

Keep in mind that you probably buy new decorations every once in awhile when the others show signs of wear or you're just ready for a change. Make room for the new by tossing the old. Focus on quality over quantity!

If your holiday decor (or any area of your home) seems "too far gone" for these simple tips and you need help, contact us! We'd love to help you make their spaces more organized and inviting so you can spend more time doing what you love to do! Let us help you make this holiday season the most peaceful and organized one ever.

Angie Hyche is a certified professional organizer® and the owner of Shipshape Solutions. Her first book, "Unholy Mess: What the Bible Says about Clutter," is available on Amazon. You can email her at angie@shipshape.solutions.

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Does not include Seasonal Department or items labeled Wall Decor and Gifts



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Decorative Lanterns, Birdcages & Terrariums

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Glass Department and craft glass containers
 Does not include craft stained glass

Ceramic, Resin & Pottery Decor

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Wicker Department

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Wooden Table Decor & Plaques

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Includes fabric. Does not include needle art, candy, food, light sets, light accessories or Scotch® tape

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CHRISTMAS CRAFTS
50% OFF

CHRISTMAS PARTY & TABLEWARE
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Bead Stringing by On-A-Cord®, On-A-String™ & On-A-Wire®
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