

MaxTips!

Productive to the Max

Productivity

Performance

Profitability

Christmas

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It is that time of year again! The ghosts and goblins have completed their tasks and soon Chestnuts will be "roasting on an open fire". We envision those wonderful images of cheerful family members gathered around a beautifully decorated Christmas tree. Gorgeously wrapped gifts compete with delicious, gourmet type meals prepared fastidiously and with loving care. Not to mention all those houseguests, for which we provide matching decorator linens and exciting excursions.

Not quite, you say!!! In this newsletter, a NICE JEWISH GIRL, who happens to have been born on CHRISTMAS DAY is going to tell you how to get organized for Christmas. Simply, efficiently and effectively while still maintaining your sanity.

Now what would I know about Organizing for Christmas, you may ask? Well, organizing for Christmas encompasses the same principles as organizing anything in your space, time and life.

Principles like

- Establish what is important to you and your family
- Emphasize the Kiss principle (Keep It Simple Stupid)
- Organize common things together
- Take care of small details and the larger tasks will take care of themselves
- Live for today and only today
- Increase your opportunities to effectively use your time
- Delegate, hire, get help, bribe, cajole, threaten
- Take care of yourself
- Say no
- Constantly reward yourself for all your wonderful work and for the terrific qualities you possess

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Take inventory

This is a great time to take an inventory of everything in your house. Make sure you put all common items together in places where they are easily accessible and you get rid of those things you haven't dealt with in a year. Nothing is more frustrating than trying to find those special napkins five minutes before the guests arrive!

Have a gift closet? Or regifting closet? Now is the time to go through it, divide into appropriate sections and allocate the gifts. (You can even wrap them right now!)

Make room for the new gifts, extra food and decorations that are part of this season. There is enough excitement without having the difficulty of extra clutter. Need help organizing for Christmas? Take a look at our organizing special on our website.

Start Early

Some people like to plan for Christmas all year. This is a wonderful idea as all the tasks that are spread out are achievable in small bits of time. It is too late for this year but do keep in mind that starting in January 2005 for next Christmas may be a good idea. You still have six weeks to get organized. If you start right now, it will be easier. Create an organizer or an organizing center for Christmas. It can be a book, a binder, a sectioned file folder or a series of boxes. Divide it into the following categories:

- Christmas Cards
- Home cleaning
- Cooking
- Entertaining
- Decorating
- Travel plans
- House guests

Use this "organizing centre" to keep lists of everything you want to do, need to do (all those ideas from magazines and catalogues) and any receipts for purchases. Include a calendar of what has to be done for everything you have created in your organizing sections. Plan all your tasks in weekly components and remember to break them into smaller portions (just like we should be doing with all that food!) in order to complete everything on time. Post the calendar in a prominent place. Check off everything as you complete it. Reward yourself!!!

Establish your values and priorities

Take some time to evaluate Christmases past. Be objective in deciding which traditions or activities were enjoyable, intolerable or missing. Think back to the memories that make you feel warm and fuzzy and decide to incorporate them into your current traditions. It is not

the quantity that counts, it is the quality, the simplicity, the involvement of family, friends and neighbors and the creation of a memorable experience that does not leave you shattered by the end of the holiday season. Do not be taken in by commercial demands, or expectations perceived or real. With the help of those close to you decide on a plan of action that will incorporate meaningful activities and bring you closer to what matters in life.

Remember to:

- Get enough sleep
- Eat properly
- Budget
- Keep your focus
- Take a deep breath
- Enjoy

Some people work during the holidays

The stress of Christmas is evident to everyone. We are all tired and tempers are short. Some of us are lucky enough to have time off. For others, it is the busiest or most difficult time of year as they attempt to accommodate our needs and desires to make our holiday a wonderful experience. So, as you wait in that intolerable lineup to make your purchase, or have your ailment taken care of, remember to take a deep breath, offer a kind word and a thank you to those who help us make this time of year special. Remember also, that extra kindness in the form of a gift or monetary offering to those who service us throughout the year.

MaxTip of the Month

Decorating for Christmas? You don't have to do it all at once. Decorate in layers so you have a basic layer first and then you can fill up around the layers as time permits. When you put away the decorations, put them away in the order in which they were initially put up to save time next year. Take a picture and separate into boxes by room. Remember to label the box with the contents and the name of the room. You can even paste the picture on the outside.