

Enrich your life during the holidays



Written by Susanne Phelps
South Florida Professional Organizer
Clutter Tamer | (954) 987-0396
www.cluttertamer.net

Here in South Florida, we have all had some stressful times. And now the biggest holiday season of the year is approaching. Will it be the most fun or the most stressful? Let's remember that holidays are all about relationships:

- With your culture, community, and spirituality.
- With your biological family and family-of-choice.
- With yourself; your past and memories, present situation and future desires.

As you consider how best to fulfill that most important relationship: the one with yourself, you may realize you enjoy some holiday traditions more than others.

I love to send cards, and have a special box for holiday cards, stored where I can locate it easily long before needing other seasonal items. I use colorful pens, stickers and write notes or send photos to some people. There is one 'rule.' When the box is full of new and old cards, something has to go. Some of last year's cards may be turned into gift tags, the rest are discarded. And no more new card purchases until there is space in the box! Some of the holiday cards no longer seem so attractive. I often put several cards in a new jiffy bag and donate them to a local thrift shop.

If, however, you find sending cards a bore, chore and 'headache-making', by all means give yourself permission to simply send warm thoughts to your friends. Call those who mean the most to you and have a nice long catch-up chat.

You may enjoy decorating your home. The decorations remind you of wonderful relationships and happy celebrations in your life. If, as you decorate, you find that some items are worn, broken, or evoke no pleasant memories, eliminate them. Use and keep the most memory-

laden or beautiful things. If some decorations are worn, but are very sentimental, pack them carefully. And place a note with the decorations so that your children will know the history and why the item was so carefully saved.

Even storing holiday decorations, dishes, and linens can be fulfilling. Using storage containers which keep these precious items in excellent condition will guarantee that they will bring pleasure to your life for years to come.

Decorations and dishes, or any breakable item should be kept in sturdy, damp and mildew resistant containers, which have dividers to keep fragile things separate and whole. If kept in a garage, storage shed or attic, consider the extreme heat and use high quality plastic containers with tight lids. Use white tissue paper to wrap items rather than plastic bags, especially like those from the grocery. This plastic will become sticky in the heat and the ink or plastic itself may adhere to glass or china. Linens and other fabric items should be clean, folded gently and stored loosely in sturdy un-crushable containers. Or if you have the space in a closet, hang linens over padded hangers and cover with an old sheet for protection. Again, no plastic, as it will eventually become sticky and will also attract dust.

If your spirituality and culture bring you the most meaning during the holidays, plan to spend your time enjoying participation in services and other events. Let the events which have less meaning for you pass without your attendance. Also, allow time for reflection and relaxation. Nurture your spirit!

Happily, holidays return each year, bringing continuity to our lives. Give your energy, time and resources to the parts you enjoy most. And everyone around you will bask in your holiday glow.