

IN THIS ISSUE, WE WILL DISCUSS:

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– PURGE-O-RAMA!



ORGANIZE YOUR LIFE!

GIFT BUDGETING



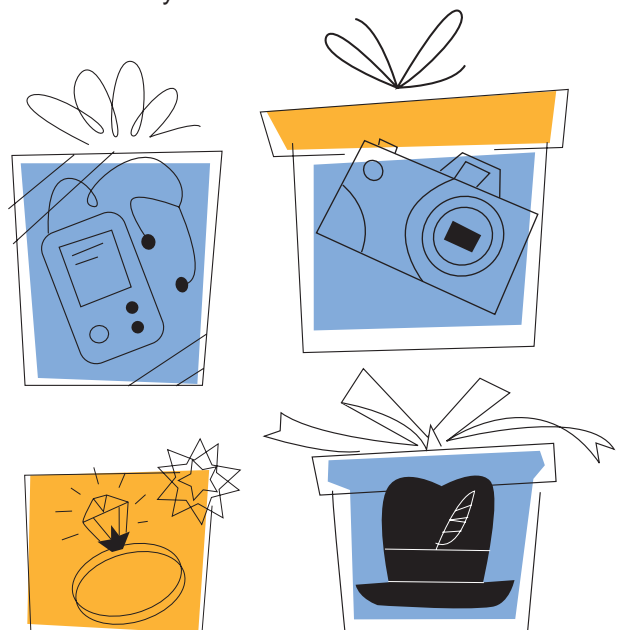
Most of us love the holidays, totally get into it and then forget that we don't have a bottomless bank account. At the end of the year we see that we have maxed out our credit cards yet again and are left scratching our heads wondering where the heck all the money went. My proposal is a gift budgeting system.

Being an organizer, I love lists. Therefore, I am going to suggest making a simple list, starting with the names of all the people for whom you are intending to buy gifts. This will probably be the hardest part, because if you are of a giving nature you are going to put down every Tom, Dick, and Sally. So do it! Write down everyone when you start out.

That is why it is essential to do a budget next. The list becomes a little clearer when you know how much you can really spend. Once you have an idea how much you can spend you can decide who to buy gifts for, and who to make gifts for, if you should choose to. Always remember, your time is money too! The budget is a great way to put a firm invisible hand down on the pocket book.

When you sit down to make your final list of who to buy gifts for you will also need to determine how much to spend on each person. As you go through the list, you may find you weed out more people because of how much you want to spend on the p people that are the most important in your life, such as your significant other, a child, or a parent.

If you feel guilty about not purchasing gifts for the others that you have done so in the past, send them a batch of cookies with a card. Or treat them to a holiday tea at a local café. Make it a special time for the two of you to spend some quality time together, instead of a material gift. That way they won't feel left out, and you won't be wondering how to pay for groceries in January!



ORGANIZING THE KITCHEN FOR THE HOLIDAYS – PURGE-O-RAMA!

Now that it is November, Thanksgiving is almost here and we're all most likely chained to our kitchen. Regardless of whether or not we are hosting a dinner or a brunch, or we are asked to bring something to someone else's home. Even if the kitchen is just being used to put brownies on a platter it's good to be organized! If you are using your kitchen for a Thanksgiving dinner, you are going to need to prep it for guests and a great deal of cooking.

Paper Clutter - The most common clutter in the kitchen is paper, mostly mail. Because the goal is to clear out the kitchen for the holidays and for sanity, I would recommend creating a filing system for your daily mail. You could either use a file box or a file cart that rolls on wheels, depending upon the set up of your kitchen. A file box is perfect if you have a desk in your kitchen, while a file cart on wheels is great if you don't. (This can be wheeled away into a closet when you aren't using it). Below are some examples of filing carts and cabinets: <http://tinyurl.com/y52gv9> or <http://tinyurl.com/y4vsjd> or <http://tinyurl.com/yx64xl> or <http://tinyurl.com/swhb8>.

Countertop Clutter – This type of clutter mainly consists of cooking utensils and gadgets. A lot of times we think we use all of the cooking utensils and gadgets constantly, but in reality, we don't. Take a moment to really think about how many times a week you use the Cuisinart. Or how many times do you use the blender versus the toaster. Or, how many spatulas and wooden spoons you actually need. Don't get me wrong, I adore my Cuisinart, but I don't use it every week, so I found a place for it directly underneath the counter (I had to do some maneuvering underneath the cupboards, but I managed to make it fit). I accomplished this by getting rid of excess Tupperware and gadgets I never used (such as a fondue set).

Junk drawer – This drawer is always good to go through. After you have purged it, you will be amazed at how much more space you have to for other things that it's hard to find homes for, like candles.

Pots and Pans Cabinet – Most of us have far too many pots and pans. If you actually do use them all, I am sure there are some just for special occasions, such as when you are canning, or cooking lobster. If that is the case, these can be stored elsewhere, such as the garage, basement or attic. This will allow more space for the pots and pans that you do use on a regular basis. Purge the pots and pans that have seen better days, as well as the ones that you haven't used in a year or more.

Utensil drawers – These are the drawers that have things like baking tools, cooking tools and all those fancy gadgets that you bought at parties. While they are fantastic, you may never remember to use them, because you have so much stuff in that drawer. Purge cooking tools and gadgets that you bought at parties. Purge that melted spatula, as well as the burnt wooden spoon, because like me, I'm sure you have 3 more to replace them. If you have more than one set of measuring tools for baking, donate them*. You only really need one kind of lemon zester, as well as bottle opener and carrot peeler. Hopefully, this clutter has been pared down so much that you have freed up a drawer to put your every day linens in, or maybe even the art supplies (see last item).

* If you have a kosher kitchen, keeping three sets is ok!

The Catch-All Cabinet – This space holds platters and large bowls which you would be most likely using for extra serving dishes for the holiday feast. A stand up rack (<http://tinyurl.com/gfht2>) would be perfect to maximize space in your cabinet. This will also allow space for larger bowls for salads.

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ORGANIZING THE KITCHEN FOR THE HOLIDAYS – PURGE-O-RAMA!

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The Buffet, Server, or Hutch – While sometimes this is in your dining room, it is all connected when having a dinner event, such as Thanksgiving. It is an essential space to utilize if you are lacking space in your kitchen cabinets. The bottom area of a buffet/server/hutch is almost always full of paper napkins and plates, extra glassware, table linens, candles that haven't seen the light of day in years, and sometimes even more paper.

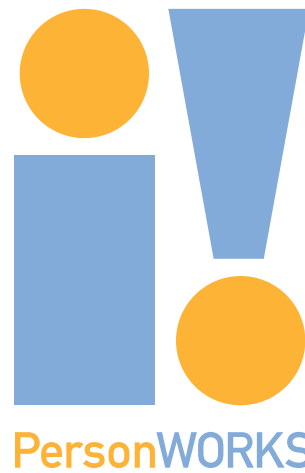
Take out all of these items and lay them either on the floor or the dining room table. Determine what you will really use and what you don't. The things that you use rarely can be put into containers and labeled so that they are easier to see, even if they are pushed further back. If visually they are still hard to see, you may need to put up a small inventory on the inside of the door as a reminder of what you have inside so that you actually use it. Hopefully during this purging session this won't be necessary, since you will be getting rid of some of the less important things.

Purging and arranging will allow you to make room for the things you haven't used in the last year because you couldn't see them. You may find that you can also move some of the items to another location. Perhaps some of the candles can go in the newly found kitchen drawer, and paper goods can go into the basement into a bin, or in a kitchen cupboard specifically designated for such things. Or perhaps in the pantry, if room permits. If you still find that there is not enough room it is time to downsize even more of these items.

Arts & Crafts Cabinet/Drawer – A lot of times parents with kids will have an area in their kitchen for their kids to make art. This is a great idea you just need to be sure that there is room for the activity. If it's taking up a great deal of space in a much needed cabinet, you may need to do one of two things: pare it down, or store it differently. The art supplies could go into another one of the great rolling carts (see above), or a small clear bin.

By now the kitchen should be in tip top shape and ready for you to cook and have company. You also have a filing tool to organize your paper work into.

As you can see holidays are a great way to do the organizing you have been putting off the whole year.



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HOW TO PACK IN THE NEW DAY & AGE



I am an avid traveler, and although I am grateful for them, boy, have I have felt the effects of the new security programs in local and international airports.

In learning to negotiate these changes, the first thing I found to be helpful was to keep abreast of the changes in airport screening measures. These procedures can change daily (sometimes more often), getting stricter or more lax at a moment's notice. A friend's husband recently traveled to Ireland and traveled home with some liquor. He was told by Duty Free in Ireland that he could take it to the U.S. When he got to Chicago to customs, he was told that he had been misinformed and it could not go on as a carry on. Fortunately, he was allowed to find a box, pack it up and check it in time for his flight. Some people are not so lucky, and simply have to leave their purchases behind. That is why it is essential to check the airline's website for changes in rules before travel. Remember, sometimes no matter how much planning you do, glitches occur, just do the best you can!

Airport Arrival Times – I always go with the rule that is better to be early than late. I suggest you arrive 60 minutes before your scheduled departure for U.S. flights if you are not checking bags. If you are checking bags, arrive 90 minutes in advance. For international flights, arrive two hours before departure. There is always the potential for boredom setting in, but that can be remedied with a book, a crossword puzzle, or a laptop with


movies saved on it. If you have forgotten these items, there will most likely be an overpriced bookstore nearby on the concourse to help you through your problematic situation.


To Carry or Not to Carry That is the Question - If you are an expert packer and can pack a light load, I suggest carry-on baggage. While the restrictions for flights from/within the U.S. are getting stricter, if you follow the new guidelines you can still use a carry-on bag. Just remember the golden rule and bring things that hard to replace in your carry-on such as medications, electronic equipment (lap tops, hand held devices, cell phones and so on). If your luggage is lost, at least you have the things that will be necessary for the interim. My sister, who travels constantly, packs an efficient carry-on and managed to travel comfortably when her luggage was lost for five of the seven days she was on the road.


Some final tips to ease travel


- Pack light. It will save you time going through airport screening if they do search your bags. It will also allow more room to bring mementos back with you.
- Bring some clear Ziploc plastic baggies, just in case you come back with more liquids than you had when you left.
- Bring one or two small boxes that collapse easily for packing objects to ship back or check upon your return.

- Check the baggage carry-on and checking rules for the airlines before you travel it may save you a lot of grief.

United airlines: 
<http://tinyurl.com/y7xt83>

Alaskan air: 
<http://tinyurl.com/yxdylc>


American airlines: 
<http://tinyurl.com/f6htq>

Northwest airlines: 
<http://tinyurl.com/y48n84>

Transportation Security Administration:
<http://tinyurl.com/ptxdw>

Delta: 
<http://tinyurl.com/kw8le>

US airways: 
<http://tinyurl.com/m24da>

Continental airlines: 
<http://tinyurl.com/gmxk5>

To recap, to survive and thrive during your trip through airport security remember to be early, pack lightly, review the airport/airline rules, and know that you are doing the best that you can under these strict circumstances!