

100 days till Christmas

Just hear those sleigh bells ringing... I know, I know, you think it is too early to start thinking about Christmas. However, the organizer in me says if stores start to stock Christmas items in August, September is not too early to start planning for the Holidays. Each month from now until Christmas I will give you three things that, if implemented, will get you prepared for the hectic holidays. Who knows, you may just find yourself less stressed and several strides ahead of your friends. Decide what makes the holidays special. Talk to your family about what they love about the holidays. Get the kids involved in this discussion. Ask what makes them happy during the holidays and what they find frustrating. And then be prepared to listen to their answers. List these thoughts on the front cover of a spiral. Talk over holiday strategy plans with your spouse (will you spend Christmas Eve with his mother or travel to spend time with your family?). Let your families know early of your plans and intentions so there will be no confusion. Making a list of what your family values during the holidays will help you prioritize your family's holiday activities.

Dust off those holiday duds. Everyone has an arsenal of holiday wear they lug out from under the bed or the back of the closet when they hear those sleigh bells ringing. Many times we forget to get that sweater out until we need to wear it, only to discover we spilled wine on it at the office Christmas party. This scenario leaves us sad, depressed and attending the Christmas Mommy and Me Tea without our appropriate holiday attire. To alleviate this embarrassment, be sure to get out those holiday wears (shirts, sweaters, ties, socks and other essentials) before the Holidays begin. Department stores are already carrying the new sweaters and coordinating accessories. If you need to replace one, shopping now will offer you the best selection. Don't forget to dry clean or wash clothes that may have been stored, as they tend to smell like last years gingerbread. Gross!

Make a list or few. I would be permanently removed from the Organizer Hall of Fame if I did not advise you to make a few lists. (We take a very serious oath!). Joking aside, lists can help you properly prepare for the upcoming season. Remember that spiral you used to write down your holiday value list? Now is the time to use it to make a few lists. One list should consist of people you need to buy gifts for during the holiday season. On this list needs to be the Recipient (who you're buying for), Ideas you have for gifts, and the gift you finally decided to purchase. Other things you may want to include are a budget column to set a budget for each recipient and a place to jot down where you hid your gifts so you're not scrambling on Christmas Eve. Other good lists to begin are Christmas card lists, friends you want to give baked or homemade gifts to, and a party planning list. These lists will help guide you through out the next few months.

The holidays can be less stressful when we take a little time to plan. Doing these three things this month will help you as Christmas approaches. Look for my article next month called, "**60 days till Christmas**" for things to do in October to prepare you for a very Merry Christmas.