



Photo by Kate Max Stock

NOVEMBER 2020: Organizing for the Holidays

I once helped a client clear out and organize her closet. In the back sat a few rolls of gift wrap and three medium sized containers.

Minimal work was needed to consolidate and organize her holiday decorations. After a few minutes, I asked if we could centralize these holiday items with the rest of her other decorations. She said that was it and I was introduced to Christmas minimalism.

I neglected to let her know I have TEN large size containers brimming to the top. They sit in one of the four corners of the attic. Sure, they are lelled and an inventory sheet

sits atop each one. I had worked my 6-8 hours of decorating the house each year down to 3 hours by creating a new system. Is all that weight and time worth it?

Whether you are a minimalist or a maximalist holiday decorator, what matters is what gives you and your loved ones joy and peace, spaces that share love. I highly admired my client; she spends less time decorating and has more time entertaining and celebrating. For some, the decorating is a key part of the celebrating.

I admit it... I broke my golden rule of decorating before Christmas. Not yet in my house, but in my mind. I too want to rush from a glorious harvest season straight to the holidays. Many folks are decorating now instead of waiting until post-Thanksgiving, or the first weekend of advent / in December.

I am plotting a more micro approach to the holidays. With limited to no travel to visit loved ones, we are in the position not to go ALL out this year. This gifts us the space and time to conserve and reflect on the heart reasons for Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Christmas, and Kwanzaa.

Here are some micro organizing tips for the holiday seasons:

1. **Decorate with less.** My goal is to bring down 50% of my holiday containers. I am leaving all the paper/party products in the attic and selecting our few favorite pieces to reflect all the senses. Just enough music, colors, textures, and smells of the seasons.

2. **Organize and decorate your belongings by "scene" or space.** I cut down my time decorating by 60% when I started organizing by what I put on the mantle, the bookcase, the sideboard, instead of by macro "room". It may feel a bit mechanical to do this, but there is joy in unwrapping your goodies from bubble wrap and placing them in their special spot.

3. **Spend more time enjoying the cozy moments:** baking, cooking, Hallmark movie watching, and crafting/making. Take inventory of what you have in your pantry, cookware, and serveware. Do you really need anything else for the pared down celebrations? Organize by activity and how you use your ingredients and hardware. Check your pantry goods to make sure everything is before the expiration date. You deserve to eat fresh and keep healthful.

4. **Shop small and local.** Save on shipping costs by shopping for smaller, meaningful gifts from small, local businesses. This year's reflection is to make sure to shop thoughtfully and support those who have been greatly impacted by COVID; and shop small so you are not spending a fortune in shipping costs.

5. **Toss (responsibility) what is not working** (tree lights), damaged, or no longer helping you celebrate in this life chapter. Donate extra decorations and holiday items in good shape. to your favorite people or charities to spread the love.

6. Organize your gift wrap, bows, and ribbons to **make it fun.** Gift wrapping can be overwhelming and make some of us anxious. Inventory your goods and buy to fill in only what you need. Organizing ahead of can save you time and money and make this some times arduous task more fun and meaningful.

Reach out and share your ideas for a more micro approach. Send your ideas to kristine@mermaidcs.com and we will post them in the December blog. The Mermaid family wishes you and yours a very Happy Thanksgiving and holiday season!