

Lamorinda OUR HOMES

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Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

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Simple reminders to make the holidays bright

By Amanda Eck



Photo provided

Can you believe we are in the home stretch of 2018? Where did the year go? It's like they say, the days are long but the years are short. I am sure most of you are gearing up for the holidays: shopping, baking, wrapping gifts, and getting your home ready for guests. Today I thought I'd share a few tips to keep you from getting frazzled during these last few weeks of 2018.

Keep it simple: Keep the holiday décor to a minimum. No need to haul out the 252 boxes of decorations this year. Keep the set up and take down to a minimum and have more time to just "be". Use fresh poinsettias or greenery to decorate your home. Fill decorative bowls with ornaments and add sprigs of greenery. Tie bows around lamps or vases. And candles, candles, and more candles. There is nothing more magical than candlelight during the holiday season.

Buy, don't bake: Anyone else have 342 invites to holiday parties? From school parties, work events, book club cookie exchanges, mom's groups, you name it there is a party happening almost every day of the week. How about this year you step away from the oven and head to your local grocery store for some yummy baked goods. Place them in fun decorative tins or wrap them in clear cellophane and tie with a festive bow. Give yourself permission to take it easy this season. No one needs to know you didn't battle all afternoon with the hand mixer.

Write it down: Instead of gifts this year to every aunt, uncle, second cousin and neighbor, what about writing a heartfelt note? We live in such a digital age that handwritten notes of gratitude and encouragement are few and far between. Why not take an afternoon to sit down and write a letter to someone telling him or her how much they mean to you? Believe me, that letter will mean much more than a hastily purchased gift.

Brian Tracy wrote, "The greatest gift you can give to others is the gift of unconditional love and acceptance."

Wrap as you go: Who needs to spend Christmas Eve catching up on wrapping chores? I'll admit gift-wrapping is one of my least favorite jobs. I tend to leave it to the last minute and then I am overwhelmed with stacks of gifts asking myself "why did I buy this?" and "who did I buy this for?" Some simple things to make the task easier: use Post-it notes on gifts so you can keep track of who gets what. Wrap gifts as soon as you purchase them. Or better yet, forgo the wrapping and instead use a decorative bag tied with ribbon!

Just say no: Don't overbook yourself! This time of year it is easy to find yourself invited to multiple events and have something to attend every weekend in the month of December.

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