



welcome

Welcome to Get Organized for the Holidays. I'm so glad you decided to join me in this workshop. I'm very passionate about the holidays because it's such a special time of year. Yet, it's also a time that's filled with great expectations. We expect to be happy. We expect to have a beautifully decorated home. We expect to buy just the right gift for our loved ones, create perfect meals, and send out adorable holiday cards well before the postal deadline.

Yet so often, with all of these expectations comes stress. We feel stressed that we won't get everything done on time. We feel stressed about how much money we've spent. We feel stressed that they won't love the gifts, the meal won't turn out, or our holiday cards won't get there in time. In short, we feel stressed that we won't measure up.

I don't know about you...but I want something different. I want to spend my holidays enjoying my loved ones, and really taking the time to drink-in the special events that only come around this time of year. And I want to do this without all the stress. I've found that stress and happiness don't go hand-in-hand, as I'm sure you've noticed, too. So the key to happiness during the holidays is to eliminate the stress. Getting organized for the holidays by having a plan and following it, will do just that—eliminate your stress.

When you create and implement a holiday plan that focuses on the aspects of the season that bring you and your family the most joy, you'll find that the stress you've felt in holidays past will be replaced by joy and happiness. In this workshop you'll find everything you need to create an organized and joyous holiday season. Here's how we're going to do it.

The first lesson will lay the foundation. We'll create a holiday inspiration statement that will serve as your compass through the holiday season. This statement will remind you what's most important to you. You'll also put together a Holiday Planning Binder that will be your command central throughout the season. Whether you decide to make it decorative, or keep it purely functional, this binder will be your go-to resource as you move through the holiday season.

During Lesson 2, I'll walk you through a planning process that will help you decide which activities to simplify, which to indulge in, and which to strike from your list altogether. In essence we'll craft a plan and prioritize your holiday to-do list, so each activity on your list has a home and a designated week in which to be accomplished. I'll also share my favorite tips for simplifying every aspect of the holiday season, such as entertaining, decorating, gift-giving, and sending cards.

In Lesson 3, you'll learn strategies to implement your plan and stay energized throughout the holidays. I'll also share some simple ideas you can use to stay inspired and focused on your holiday inspiration all season long.



REALITY CHECK...WHY IS IT HARDER TODAY?

When I was putting together this workshop I thought to myself...why does it seem like the holidays are so much harder today? Sure, there is the fact that now I'm doing it, and when I was a child my Mom took care of everything. But...what is it about my life now and her life then that is so very different? As I thought about this, quite a few things came to mind.

Quite simply, today we have more demands on our time. Many of us (including me) work full time and have busy families with jam-packed schedules all year long. Unfortunately, we can't just hit the snooze button on all of our other obligations when the holidays roll around. The reality is we take our already full schedules and add even more. There are school holiday parties—which if I'm recalling correctly, are far more elaborate today than when I was a child. There are holiday gatherings with family, friends and coworkers, holiday programs at school and church, getting our homes ready, getting the tree, going to see Santa, sending out cards, making cookies, and the list goes on and on. Plus, we have the everyday responsibilities of keeping our home together, making dinner, laundry, grocery shopping, and homework—just to name a few. It's no wonder we feel so worn-out by the start of the New Year!

As if these added demands on our time weren't enough, technology complicates things even more. Because of technology, we have less structure with our time—we can do anything any time we want. We can shop via the internet 24/7. We can watch our favorite T.V. shows anytime we want. We can call people using our cell phones any time and from any where. And they can do the same to us!

This technology, which was designed to make our lives easier, in many ways actually makes it harder. Being able to do anything anytime we want gives us the *illusion* that we can do it all! We have fewer built-in boundaries and natural “no's” today, all brought to you via technology designed to simplify your life!

Let me give you an example. When I was a child, one of the highlights of my holiday season was the Charlie Brown Christmas Special. We would check the T.V. listings in the newspaper, eagerly anticipating when this program would air for its one time for the year. That's right. Remember those days before DVD players and satellite T.V. when you had one chance a year to see your favorite holiday special? While today this feels like deprivation, there was an upside: fewer options forced us to make choices. If the Charlie Brown special was on the same night as my school program, we had to decide: Will we go see *Aby* in the school play or stay home and watch the T.V. program? In the past our choices were very clear-cut. If two activities fell in the same time slot we didn't have the ability to shift them around. We had to make a choice.

Today it's more complicated. You may *feel* as if you can do it all because you can do so many things any time you want. If your favorite show is on at the same time as your son's soccer practice, no worries. Simply record your show and watch it later. In essence, do both.

Because technology has made it possible for you to do most things any time you want, you may feel as if you can do more, or you may feel like you *should* be able to do more. But for all technology has given you, it has not given you any more hours in the day. You still have the same twenty-four hours a day that your Mom had (and her Mom had) but now you try to cram even more activities into these twenty-four hours. Technology has made all of us more efficient, but for all the space it created, we quickly fill it up with something else. Take email, for example. Email is more efficient than mail, but I'd be willing to bet the volume of email you get far exceeds the amount of mail you would have received in the days of snail-mail only. Sure email is more efficient, but it's also just plain *more*.

What it all boils down to is this. You have the same twenty-four hours you've always had and those same twenty-four hours a day are all you get during the holidays. But now you have technology that makes it seem possible to do more and gives you the flexibility to do anything any time you want. What this means is that the decision as to how to spend your twenty-four hours falls smack dab on your shoulders. There aren't as many natural no's anymore, so today you have to be intentional about how you spend your time. You have to provide your own structure and decision-making.

In a nutshell, today more than ever, and during the holidays more than any other time of the year:

- * You have to provide structure for yourself.
- * You have to set limits that keep you in your comfort zone.
- * You have to **decide** which activities to make room for and which to let go of altogether.

Here's the good news...this is very empowering information: You don't have to do it all! In the weeks ahead, we'll create a plan that provides you with structure, boundaries and a focal point that will help you make intentional choices about how to spend your time this holiday season. Your plan won't just be about getting it all done, it will start with deciding what should get done in the first place. Which activities on your holiday to-do list deserve your time and attention...and which ones don't? Your holiday inspiration statement will make it simple to answer this question.

This is a sample of Get Organized for the Holidays—a self-paced workshop from simplify 101. To continue on with this workshop, visit www.simplify101.com.