

Simplicity Newsletter – October 2009

TIME FOR TIME MANAGEMENT



Swamped is the new busy. Remember the old saying, “The hurrier I go, the behinder I get.” It’s no wonder. With work inside and outside the home, tugging from elderly parents and children alike, fears of the slow economy driving you to be Wonder Woman... you’re answering to a lot of masters. And you’re not alone. Our schedules are out of control!

Fall is upon us and the holidays are just around the corner. So, before you become too overwhelmed, ask yourself these questions. We’ll start with the easy ones:

- How do I keep track of my schedule and commitments- electronically, on printed calendar, scraps of paper and Post-it notes or a hybrid?
- Am I happy with my system or does it need a tweak or a total revamp?
- Does the right hand know what the left is doing? In other words, does everyone who is affected by the schedule have a stake in its creation and maintenance?

Now the harder ones:

- Are the activities over which I have control, controlled?

For example, if you’re run ragged, do you really need to be in the book club, the garden club and the bridge group? Better to be fully committed to one of these social outlets than to be a half-hearted participant in several. Ditto for children. In addition to school and homework, many children play team sports year round, take music, karate or dance lessons, participate in Scouts, have weekly religious obligations and just might need to find some time to play with friends or just hang out. If it’s enough to make your head spin, imagine what it is doing to your children!

- Is everyone in the family clear on the difference between obligations and commitments that are carved in stone and activities over which you can and should control the reins?

If in doubt, ask yourself, “What’s the worst that will happen if I don’t _____?” Fill in the blank with “go to work” or “go to school”. The consequences of those choices would make a prudent person pause. Alternatively, fill in the blank with “make homemade carrot cake for the church bazaar” or “attend my next door neighbor’s ballet recital”, and the consequences are not so negative. If you’ve scheduled time and haven’t committed to too many extras, making that cake or attending the recital will be a joy, not a burden.

You CAN be more in control than you think!

Taming your unruly schedule is a matter of making choices - ones better made proactively than reactively. So before the hectic holiday rush, take some time to really examine your schedule. You’ll probably find the “command performances” are not the problem - it’s all the extras you’ve heaped on top. Now is the time to bow out gracefully from unfulfilling activities and self-imposed obligations.

Once you've culled your schedule, honing your system for keeping track of things will be a snap.

If Simplicity can help, we're just a call or a click away.

SAY CHEESE! - ORGANIZE YOUR PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORIES

Simplicity's Top Photo Organization Tips



1. Sort and organize your photos.

Do not agonize over this process! Make it fun and easy. If you have children, ask them to help you. Invite your friends over and have a photo sorting party. Sort while watching a movie. Or just grab your favorite beverage and enjoy time reminiscing.

Chronological sorting is the most common. However, do not worry if you have not dated your photos. If you know the timeframe (early childhood, college years, etc.) you can still effectively tell a story with your album. Photos can also be sorted by photo subject, your child, your dog or your friends. They can be sorted by event. For example, organize all of the birthday party pictures together, holiday photos together and vacations photos together. Sort your pictures in a way that enables you to tell your story.

Photo-safe boxes with photo-safe index dividers make it easy to keep your photos in order until you are ready to insert them into your new favorite photo album or scrapbook.

2. Keep the best, then toss the rest!

Too many of us keep photos for the sake of keeping photos. Be discriminate. If the photo is out of focus, too dark, unflattering or embarrassing, you cannot identify who or what is in the photo, or if photo stirs up unpleasant memories - toss it!

3. Label your prints.

Label your photos with the date, location, names of the people or subject, and event name. You swear you'll never forget (enter your special moment here), but when you have 100's of photos of equally special moments, the specifics can get fuzzy.

If you choose to label the back of the photos, be sure to write close to the edges only, using a photo safe pen, which can be purchased at most craft and photo processing stores.

4. Digital photos.

Just like with prints, keep only the best of your digital pictures. Too many saved pictures on a computer can slow the processing speed tremendously. Thanks to technology it is much easier now – smile, click, review, keep or delete. Deleting unwanted pictures immediately on the camera helps you never miss that perfect shot due to a "full memory card".

To organize your digital pictures, follow the suggestions under sorting and organizing and just use your technology. If you have a Mac, Apple's iPhoto let's you create folders sorted by event, date or person -- using face recognition software. For Microsoft computers, create subfolders in the My Pictures folder including year, month, dates, and event or subject names for quick retrieval later.

Photo Storage Tips

1. To preserve your priceless memories, make sure all albums and supplies you use are not only listed as photo safe, but are archival quality and also lignin-free and acid-free.
2. Have several extra empty albums on hand to keep incoming photos organized. You can fill an entire 200-photo album in less than an hour. It's a great "waiting" project – waiting at the doctor's office, in carpool line, etc. Just bring your album, envelope of photos and photo-safe pen, and you'll have a new treasure to share and enjoy in no time!
3. Keep photographs in a climate-controlled environment, away from direct sunlight, heat and humidity. Attics and basements that are not climate-controlled will ruin your pictures. Beware of the bottom of your closet backing up to your bathroom. If you have plumbing issues your photo treasures could be destroyed.
4. Framed photos are usually the "Best of the Best". Make sure you are framing a copy and keeping the original safe. Sunlight can cause fading and humidity can cause the print to stick to the glass, destroying your photo.
5. Every time you download your digital camera's memory card to your computer, be sure to back up your photos -- to an external hard-drive, or a CD that you'll put in your fireproof safe or lock box. Another option is to save (and share) your pictures online ([Snapfish](#), [Flickr](#), [iWeb](#), [Carbonite](#), etc.), but be sure to read the fine print -- some require minimum purchases to store your photos online.
6. Creative Memories, [MyPublisher](#), iPhoto, [KodakGallery](#), [Blurb](#), and [Heritage Makers](#) are just a few of the companies that offer digital editing and photo book creation software to help you design professional-looking books and gifts with your digital photos. A great way to get your photos off your computer and in your hands.

Photo Project Tips and Ideas

1. Mom and Dad, get IN FRONT of the camera!

This is not a tip, but rather a suggestion to parents. Make sure your life's special moments are being recorded along side your child's, too. Give your children the opportunity to take photos of you on your next birthday or family vacation. You may be surprised by the images they capture.

2. Photograph your child's artwork.

We love our child's artwork and want to cherish it forever, but the macaroni Eiffel Tower and the paper mache solar system unfortunately don't store well. Have your little artiste pose with their masterpiece, and when it's time to make room for the next art class creation, purge the original knowing you have the lovely photo to cherish forever.

3. Holiday photo greeting cards.

If you are the lucky recipient of beautiful, holiday photo greeting cards, and collect them throughout December just to put them in a boxes labeled with Christmas 1998 – 2008, consider lightening your load, and tossing them. If that's not an option, give them a proper home. Tricia Nelson, a local Creative Memories Consultant, gave us a wonderful idea -- insert the photo cards into a Christmas scrapbook shortly after removing them from the mantel. As the years progress, you will enjoy perusing the pages and seeing the families grow up right in front of your eyes. For more of

Tricia's ideas, scrapbooking supplies and class schedule, visit www.mycmsite.com/sites/trician.

Another option is to display the cards in a [clear pocket shower curtain](#) for family to enjoy throughout the year. Or, create a collage per year and display the posters during the holidays.



Photo Printing, Scanning and Supplies

- [Creative Memories](#) has a wide variety of wonderful scrapbooking and archival quality items.
- Target's Home Goods aisles will carry photo safe albums and scrapbooking products.
- Art supplies stores (Michael's, AC Moore, Hobby Lobby, etc.) – check out their scrapbooking section.
- Photo processing centers (Ritz Camera, Biggs Camera and Wolf Camera, etc.) carry albums, offer bulk scanning, enlargements, and photo gifts (t-shirts, mugs, calendars, cards, etc.).
- Office supply stores (Office Depot, Staples, etc.) carry photo-safe index cards, folders, envelopes and labels.
- [Exposures](#) has many quality photo-safe photo organization supplies.
- [Kolo](#) carries archival quality photo organization items. [Paper Skyscraper](#) in Dilworth and [Paper-Source](#) in SouthPark carry Kolo albums.
- [Archival Methods](#) has many photo-safe photo organization items.

If you would like help getting started, contact Simplicity to help you "[Organize Your Memories](#)"!

GET YOUR "What's Up Charlotte!" Events & Performing Arts Calendars TODAY!



Get your “**What’s Up Charlotte**” **Events & Performing Arts Calendar** while supplies last! It’s a calendar LOADED with events in Charlotte for the next 12 months! The who, what, where & when in ONE place! PLUS the contact information for the top Mommy Venues in town for sunny days, rainy days or a day trip away! Even if you can't go to everything, at least knowing the events actually occurred can help you feel "in the loop!" Cost \$15.00 with \$1.00 of each calendar donated to [The Relatives](#) on East Blvd in Charlotte, NC. E-mail Lori Martin of [The Purple Martin & Co.](#) at thepurplemartin@bellsouth.net

for your calendar today!

GIFT CERTIFICATES AVAILABLE

Gift certificates are available for all Simplicity services. Give the gift of organization to someone special in your life. For more details visit the [Simplicity website](#) or contact Simplicity today.

All our best!
Your Simplicity Team of Organizers

Simplicity is...

We are a professional organizing company dedicated to helping you make your life easier — simple. How? Our company believes Simplicity is about making life easier — more balanced, more peaceful.

We evaluate your current situation, develop customized organizational solutions and systems — tailored specifically for you and your individual needs — teach you how to maintain your new systems and offer on-going support services as needed.

We have a team of professionals who can help you find your balance again and live the life you want to live. After we complete your Organizational Needs Assessment, we will match your specific needs to the skills and expertise of one of our organizing consultants. Then you are on your way to Simplicity.

Our Mission

Simplicity is committed to changing homes and lives by creating customized and maintainable organizational systems.

Our Values

Confidential. Professional. Committed. Knowledgeable. Trustworthy. Methodical. Hard-working. Informative. Respectful. Punctual.

Simplicity Services

- [Home Organizing](#)
- Home Office Organizing
- Organizing [Moves & Relocation](#)
- [Rightsizing Your Life](#) Program
- [A Year of Simplicity](#) Program
- Organizing Your [Memories](#)
- [Simplicity Kids](#)
- Organizing for Guest Arrivals and Parties
- Post-event and Holiday [Decorating Wrap-up](#)
- Garage, Attic & Storage Unit Organization (Spring and Fall months)
- Virtual (Telephone/Email) [Coaching](#)
- Motivational [Speaker](#)

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