

Three Ways to Make This Thanksgiving Easy

If the idea of spending time with family and friends over the upcoming holidays fills you with a sense of foreboding, you are not alone.

Despite how much we might miss seeing loved ones throughout the year, family get-togethers are frequently sources of holiday-related stress.

Fortunately, there is a better way. Following are three ways to help you make the holidays memorable without the mayhem:

KISS: This stands for Keep It Simple, Stupid, and that is good advice when planning for family gatherings. Whether you are hosting an evening dinner or a full-fledged family reunion, emphasize the simple pleasures to avoid additional stress. Perfection is not required for everyone to enjoy family gatherings. The simple pleasures of food, family and fun are always in style.

Engage Others: Write an email or set up a Facebook page to help coordinate meals, travel arrangements and other essential tasks, and entertainment. Recruit others to bring a favorite dish, photo albums/camera, music and other tools to help commemorate the occasion. Not only does it help with time management, but it also ensures that everyone is up to date on any changes and encourages active participation by young and old alike. And don't forget to post pictures after the big event.

Rent It: Sometimes the easiest way to deal with big gatherings is to lease or rent equipment, space or even lodgings. Whether you need a couple of extra canopy tents and tables or an entire lodge for a fabulous family get-together, leasing is a quick and convenient way to get more space.

Want to Sell Your Home Quickly? Get My Free Guide



In a competitive real estate market, it pays to do as much as you can to help your house sell.

Discover how to make your home attractive to buyers by requesting my free guide, **"50 Essential Tips to Prepare Your Home for a Speedy, Top-Price Sale."**

Call me at **(604) 808-9661** or email robinmcinnis@shaw.ca and I'll send it right out to you.

How to Meditate ...Even if You Think You Can't

The everyday hustle and bustle of modern life leaves little time for reflection, much less meditation. Yet researchers have determined that downtime actually increases retention of new information and assists in productivity.

For those who simply can't slow down, the idea of a weeklong mountain retreat is enough to inspire more stress. Fortunately, meditation doesn't need to be prolonged to be beneficial. Following are some tips to help you achieve a more peaceful state of mind through meditation:

Find a Favourite Place: Very little is needed to begin meditation, but a quiet, restful place is essential. Whether at home or work, take time to carefully select a spot that will allow you to relax, close your eyes for a few minutes and avoid all distraction.

Breathing Basics: Meditation is practiced by diverse people in different positions and places around the world, but one thing nearly all have in common is the emphasis on breathing. Learning how to properly breathe takes a bit of practice but is simple to start. Simply begin counting as you inhale and exhale. Start with a count of one and continue to 10 as you progressively become more in tune with your rate of breathing.

Tame the Timer with Technology: Yes, technology is a major contributor to the stress of daily life, but it's also a terrific tool. Download free audio files with time limits to help guide you through a meditation session, reminding you to breathe deeply, take a short break and other healthy habits throughout the day. The Insight Meditation Center offers free audible downloads and timers at www.insightmeditationcenter.org/meditation-timers.

Cool iPhone Apps

Everlast - You can use it for voice memos, photos and text, while recording any geo-location information and attaching it to the note, so that you know where you were when you discovered that tasty bottle of wine whose label you snapped. Want to remember the name and artist of a cool song that is playing on your friend's iPod? Just enter text, take a photo of the screen or speak, (or sing!) into your iPhone to record the title! You can also sync Evernote to your Mac or PC, allowing you to upload and store vital messages, generally organizing your super-cool life.

Qype - Of all the location-based

apps, Qype has to be the coolest. This is an app that allows you to find any kind of place you want anywhere in the world, read reviews of any venue that you might be about to enter, check if your friends liked it or not and bookmark all of your favourite places so that you have your own personalized city guide.

RedLaser - it searches for low online and local prices from hundreds of thousands of retailers. Features product results from Google (US & UK), The Find, eBay, Milo.com and Half.com. It uses state-of-the-art barcode recognition that can read virtually any product barcode.

Quick Quiz

Each month I'll give you a new question.

Email robinmcinnis@shaw.ca or call (604) 808-9661 for the answer.

What type of camera did Edwin Land develop?

Why Not Pass Me to a Friend?

If you've enjoyed this newsletter and found its information useful, please pass it to a neighbour, friend or co-worker.

And if you have any comments about it, don't forget to give me a call or send me an email!

Wondering How Much Your Home Is Worth?

How has the price of your home changed in today's market? How much are other homes in your neighbourhood selling for?

If you're wondering what's happening to prices in your area, or you're thinking about selling your house, I'll be able to help.

Just give me a call for a no-fuss, professional evaluation.

I'll give you the most current market data about your home and its value.

Maybe I'll also give you the "inside scoop" on what's happening in the housing market near where you live!

Call me today at (604) 808-9661 to arrange an appointment.

Worth Quoting

"The man who can smile when things go wrong, has thought of someone else he can blame it on."

- Robert Bloch

"I want to have children while my parents are still young enough to take care of them."

- Rita Rudner

"I have a black belt in beating myself up emotionally for something stupid I said ten years ago."

-Josh Hara

"Cars should have a thing where if you drive around with your blinker on too long, they explode."

-Shawn Ries

"Television in the 21st Century will be most known as the time when companies spent millions of dollars convincing women to eat yogurt."

-Damien Fahey

"Just taught my kids about taxes by eating 38% of their ice cream."

-Conan O'Brian

Are Bright, Shiny Objects Slowing Your Growth?

It's not uncommon for entrepreneurs to exhibit symptoms of attention-deficit disorder (ADD) or attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). In many respects it's a benefit.

Some useful ADD characteristics include:

- Ability to process information from multiple sources quickly
- High energy
- Ability to multitask

-Ability to quickly grasp new concepts and ideas

-Ability to see things from many different angles.

-Openness to creative solutions

-Comfortable with ambiguity, change and chaos

The flip side of the coin, however, is that entrepreneurs with ADD can be easily distracted by the next bright, shiny object.

To be successful in business and in personal endeavors, an ADD

entrepreneur needs to establish structure and set boundaries.

Following are a few tips:

-Use checklists to ensure accountability.

-Delegate tasks that bore or frustrate you.

-Establish clear, fail-safe systems for financial accountability.

-Enforce balance in your life to avoid burnout or breakdown.

How to be a 'Greener' Driver

Eco-driving is catching on quickly in North America. You can reduce the gas your car consumes. Save money as you help save the planet.

Speed. Most cars utilize gas most efficiently between 55 and 65 mph. On the highway, keep your speedometer between these marks.

Tires. Under-inflated tires increase gas consumption by up to 3%. They're dangerous, too. Inflate your tires to the manufacturer's specifications, and check them often.

Drag. Additions such as roof racks and bike racks create drag. Remove them when possible. Keep the car light by not using it for storage. At highway speeds, moderate air conditioning is more fuel-efficient than open windows.

Flow. Sudden starts and stops waste gas. Look ahead, anticipate stops, and slow down gently. When it's time to go, ease onto the accelerator.

Route. Plan the shortest route. When stopped for a minute, turn off the engine.

Some Tech Tips for the Average Joe - or Jane

Some clear answers on technology:

You don't have to type <http://www> each time you enter a website address. You can skip to the rest of the address.

What the heck is airplane mode? It prevents your cell phone from sending and receiving calls or text

messages and may also prevent Internet browsing.

Generally avoid using your camera's flash indoors, as it can wash out your subjects.

If a web page is too hard to read, make the text bigger. On Windows, press Control and the plus key. On Macs, press Command and the plus key.

Ask the Agent: This Month's Question

Should I let the buyers of my home take possession before closing?

While it may be convenient for you and a relief for them, there are many reasons why you should think twice about renting to your buyers.

1. The deal might fall through. Then you're stuck with tenants who might be hard to remove.

2. Buyers might want to make changes. If the deal collapses, you may be stuck trying to sell a home with a black bedroom or pass-through from the kitchen.

3. Living in the home, your buyers might start a list of repairs they hadn't noticed previously and ask you to pay for them. Win or lose, neither party will be happy.

4. You are still liable for insuring the structure and any items that are sold with the house. If they trash the place or steal the dishwasher, it's your responsibility.

NEWS YOU CAN USE

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Sudoku instructions: Complete the 9x9 grid so that each row, each column and each of the nine 3x3 boxes contains the digits 1 through 9. Contact me for the solution!

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World's Best Turkey (really)

1 turkey
 ½ lb butter, softened
 2 tbsp fresh sage, chopped
 2 tbsp fresh rosemary, chopped
 2 tbsp fresh thyme, chopped

Brine turkey in brining bag overnight. This is an important step – brining moistens and tenderizes meat.

Gently lift skin on breast and stuff butter under skin. Take two whole sage stalks and stuff inside with butter.

Rub olive oil all over bird so seasonings stick. Sprinkle with liberal amounts of salt, pepper and seasoning salt.

Sprinkle herbs over turkey. Line bottom of roaster with chopped large white onion, baby carrots, baby potatoes and celery. Add more butter, ½ cup of water, 1 tsp salt, several twigs of fresh herbs and cook as usual. Strain the cooked veggies through mesh strainer to make gravy base.

Make stuffing as usual. Once removed, add whole almonds and dehydrated cranberries.

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