

The Gift of Giving

By Nan Hayes for Caring Transitions®

The holiday season represents so many things; a time for giving, for entertaining and spending time with family and friends. For some, the holidays may even be a time to [address household clutter](#). It's true! Right now, you may be trying to figure out where to stash all the "stuff" that has slowly filled the guest bedroom over the course of the year; or maybe you need to clear piles of paperwork off the dining room table in order to add the extra leaf. Perhaps you have even decided this is the year to buy new lights and a fresh Christmas tree because your artificial tree and old light sets are stored in the far recesses of your basement or attic and your holiday schedule just doesn't include the time it takes to remove all the boxes from storage, locate the items you need and then replace everything once again.

Most of us hold onto the possessions that fill our homes because we don't regularly take the time to evaluate the functionality or personal meaning of each item and discard those that are no longer useful. Instead, as we buy new items, we just set the old aside to be dealt with at some future point in time. Most of us never find that time and eventually, clutter accumulates. Houses that suffer symptoms of "over-accumulation" can cause stress as is evidenced by the recent TV shows about "Hoarding. Yet, even on a smaller scale, too many things in one place may just make us uncomfortable or becomes another source of day- to- day anxiety as we let the growing piles of outdated electronics, broken cooking gadgets and worn out shoes and handbags go unresolved and unaddressed.

If you or anyone you know is suffering from a bout of holiday household stress due to an over-abundance of household possessions, we at [Caring Transitions](#) suggest you give yourself the gift of giving this season.

We are not suggesting you choose December as the month to do all of your spring cleaning. It is perfectly ok to make larger household projects part of your 2013 resolutions. However, as you encounter small projects while preparing for the holidays, why not use this opportunity to give some things to those who will need and appreciate them? At the same time, you can accomplish some of your decluttering goals. For example:

Gifting Holiday Décor:

In most counties, there are a number of organizations who provide shelter, housing and group homes for [individuals and families in need](#). Early December is a perfect time to donate excess holiday themed décor. Please only donate items in good condition. Keep in mind that many of these organizations also need cash donations, furniture, small appliances, linens and other household goods. Decorations and

accessories that are no longer in good condition may be gifted to a craft club or hobbyists who may use the items as raw materials. Holiday items that have sentimental value, but no longer suit your home, may also be gifted to family members.

Gifting Heirlooms:

The holiday season is the perfect time to add to your family legacy by passing on heirlooms to next generations. And you don't have to be in your eighties or nineties to begin this kind of gifting. Make it part of your annual tradition. Give at least one meaningful or sentimental item to another family member. If you have concerns the other party may not understand or appreciate the item, include a card or note that explains why it has special meaning or value. Describe how or why it is part of family history. It is not always easy to choose the right recipient for family heirlooms and certainly no one wants to start an argument between jealous siblings as gifts are unwrapped. Consider who will most appreciate or use an items and look for family members or friends who have at some point, expressed an interest in the item. As you consider your many sentimental possessions, it may also be the time to ask yourself if *anyone* in the family will ever appreciate Aunt Rose's spoon collection. It may fare better if [sold](#) or donated to a dedicated collector.

Give and Get

As you stop by your favorite retailer this season to replace your old office supplies and electronics with new ones, bring the old ones along. The following is a short list of national retailers who provide recycle services. Please visit retailer websites for more information, applicable fees and restrictions. Also, in the spirit of "giving" don't forget to ask a housebound or elderly neighbor if you can drop off some of their stuff too!

[Best Buy](#): everything from TVs to refrigerators, games, stands, cell phones, rechargeable batteries and printer cartridges

[Staples](#): ink and toner cartridges, desktops, laptops, printers and peripherals like keyboards, mice and speakers

[Apple Store](#): cell phones, Apple products, computers, displays, and peripherals. Cables, mice, keyboards, speakers, printers, scanners and hard drives,

[Verizon](#): wireless phones, batteries and accessories

Other Gifts:

The short list below may also help you find the perfect gift for others who need a little help with their own holiday organization.

- [The Neat Desk or Neat Receipts](#) scanner organizers
- Tupperware [Modular Mates](#) for kitchen organizing

- [Container Store](#) gift certificate for a variety of useful products
- A personal Gift Certificate to be used for [local Caring Transitions® services](#)
- A Waste Management “[Bagster](#)” plus removal fees
- A gift certificate for [Scan Digital](#) photo, slide and film management services

Regardless of how you choose to handle your own home and property, make choices that provide value to you personally while improving someone’ else’s at the same time. Giving to others has always been the best gift we give ourselves and we wish you many “giving moments” this season!

From all of us at Caring Transitions,

Happy Holidays!

Visit us online at www.CaringTransitions.com.

Call Caring Transitions For A Consultation – (800) 647-0766
Christopher Seman, President of Caring Transitions
10700 Montgomery Road, Suite 300
Cincinnati, OH 45242