



LIFEWOR^K Coaching

NEWSLETTER

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BREAKING Tradition

For busy professional women and small business owners wanting more success and fulfillment in their careers and more time, balance, and joy in their personal lives.

BREAKING Tradition

I know you're busy at this time of the year. With that in mind, I've designed this newsletter to be read in less than two minutes! The ideas it contains can save you HOURS during this holiday season.

I'd like to start with a story.

It all started with Thanksgiving. My daughter, her new husband, my boyfriend, and his mother would all be gathered at my home. When I thought of cooking the traditional Thanksgiving dinner, I was filled with DREAD. Not my usual reaction. Mostly, I've loved fussing over the holidays... setting the traditional stage for my daughter to come home to.

This year has been a flurry of activity. My business is booming. Opportunities abound. Tom and I had a wonderful two-week vacation in Europe and I came home to complete the final preparations for my daughter's wedding. I'd barely recovered from the wedding and all it entailed when the holidays were upon us.

With Tom's encouragement, I decided we'd eat Thanksgiving dinner at a lovely restaurant on the Biltmore Estate (a world famous castle) here in Asheville. *When I gave myself the freedom to choose that, relief flooded over me confirming I'd made the right decision.* No major excursions to the grocery store, two-day cooking binge, or pile of dishes.

So, now Christmas is approaching and I'm not feeling any more enthusiastic about cooking, cleaning, and generally running myself ragged. And I don't want to put up a tree.

Not put up a tree?!! But I HAVE to put up a tree! I can't not put up a tree. What would people think? Guilt, obligation, shoulds, and have-to's swarmed all around me.

I've been sitting with this for a couple of weeks now... looking at all the feelings that show up for me as I consider this possibility. I'm amazed by how *insidious* our obligations and expectations are surrounding the holidays.

Yesterday, I was walking into an art show with my daughter. Two women followed closely behind us. One woman said to her friend, "I'm not putting up a tree this year!" My ears perked up. Her friend answered, "If it wasn't for Madeleine (her child, I assumed) I wouldn't do it either!" Hmmm... confirmation that I'm not the only one that feels this way.

I had to turn around and share my feelings with these women. As we were commiserating, my daughter piped in with a burst of emotion, "You HAVE to put up a tree! You just have to!"

And I thought, "No. Actually, I don't."

I'm sharing this with you because I know there's something you just don't feel inspired to do this holiday season. And I bet you're feeling guilty about it.

Allow yourself some freedom... be honest... What could you let go of? What could you delegate to someone else or dump altogether?

Look at what you're really *committed to*, what's really important, separate and apart from what you feel *obligated to do*. I'd rather spend extra time with my family and friends or cuddle on the couch with Tom, listening to holiday music then spend all the hours it takes to put the tree up, decorate the house, and then take it all down again.

Take a moment to look at the obligations and expectations that may be causing you grief. Give yourself permission to let go of what doesn't really need to be done. *Make that your gift to yourself this year.*

As for me, that tree isn't going up unless I get inspired – truly inspired – to do it!

Have a wonderful holiday season with those you love,
Denise

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