

# Plan a Sane Holiday

## A mini-guide to keeping your sanity and getting it done

The holidays are approaching. Your To Do list is a mile long.  
Or, maybe it's not, and it's because you've been avoiding listing it all.

***I know. Me too!***

While pondering my desire to ruuunnn awaaaayyy from all the planning, I realized that I was making it hard and painful.

**Was there any way this could be fun?**

Yes, if I made it public and I made myself accountable.

And maybe, *just maybe*, if I wrote and talked a bit about what I KNOW will make the holiday season better, I would actually DO it.

And thus was born my quest for [Holiday Sanity](#).

It's a *totally sneaky* way of getting myself to do what I need to do.

And it's my hope that sharing it with you will bring you a little sanity and peace.

So, let's get started.

### Step One

**Don't panic!**

### Step Two

Pour yourself something nice and calming.

*(hot chocolate is my favorite, but bourbon will do)*

**Ok, then, are you calm and feeling slightly merry?**

Let's get going.

**My theory:** things get done when you know when they need to be done. When you look clear-eyed at what lies before you, you stand a chance of navigating it.

In this mini-guide we're going to cover just one method of navigating: **setting deadlines**.

Oh, but I hate the word deadlines, so let's call them....*lifelines*. Ok?

And because I'm a big fan of baking (mmmm....cookies), we're going to talk about this in terms of getting all set up for a Cookie Party.

(What? You don't have Cookie Parties? Well, then, let me explain: A Cookie Party is when you invite over all your friends and your roll out sugar cookie dough and you all cut them into funny shapes and paint them with egg whites and cover them in sprinkles. It's great fun.)

Here's why we'll talk about Cookie Parties:

1. They're **fun**.
2. They take a lot of planning. But it's not scary planning, because it's so exciting! A party!
3. They require a grocery list. Which is one of the few kinds of list hardly anyone is afraid of. You never hear about a Grocery List of Doom.

So, Cookie Party is our metaphor for anything that you need to do this holiday season.

Like a Cookie Party, you'll need to plan.

You'll maybe need to send out invitations (ie, tell other people, like marketing).

You'll maybe need to make a few grocery lists (ie. all the steps of a task).

For our Cookie Parties (anything you need/want to do this season), we won't just make endless lists, we'll set *dates*, we'll give ourselves *lifelines*.

Lifeline for inviting people, lifeline for grocery shopping, lifeline for getting the dough made.

All the little lifelines make the big lifeline (Cookie Party Day) a little less BIG and much more manageable.

### But a list is where we'll start.

A list of absolutely everything.

Events, dinners, craft shows, gift buying, traveling to see family.

Then, we're going to dig deeper.

Let's start with the big stuff. What will you be doing in November and December?

Write down every event, every party, every general task (like: send cards or buy gifts or bake cookies) that you'd like to do, on the next page

### ***Now's the time to dream.***

What would you like as part of your holidays? A spa day? Launching a new thing? Writing a book?

Include absolutely everything that you *think you might* want to do.

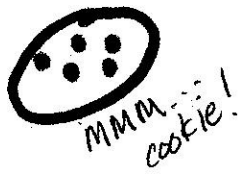
Everything.

Nothing is too big or small or silly.

Put it all on there.

Write it all down on the next page.

(On future pages we're going to refer to these things as...Cookie Parties. Imagine that!)



# Grand List of ~~DEAD~~ Cookie Parties!

extra fun stuff:

Send Tara cookies

Hug something

**Now, you have all your Cookie Parties.**

**It's time to come up with Grocery Lists.**

Pick one Cookie Party from that list that you feel you **MUST** do.  
The stuff that really *needs* to happen.

And let's break it down into smaller parts.

**What has to happen before THAT can happen?**

On the next page, put your one Thing at the top of a column, then fill in the steps below.  
They don't have to be in any kind of order at all.

*Let's have an example!*

I want to make my little brother two wrestling amigurumis before Christmas.

The Grocery List for this:

Find pattern

See if I have the right color yarn (if not, buy yarn)

Find crochet hook

Find out when we're having Christmas with that family

Crochet the things

Wrap

Something like getting a massage would be:  
call masseuse + schedule appointment

See?

Now, you probably have a pretty big list of Cookie Parties and the thought of breaking them all down might be a little overwhelming.

*I know! I totally know!*

**But here's the good news:** you don't have to do this all in one day.

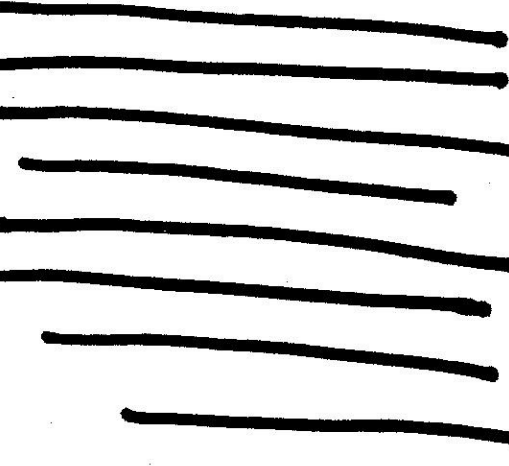
**Today, pick the first big five Cookie Parties.**

The Things that you really *really* want to happen.

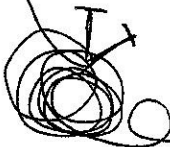
And write out all the Steps for that Thing.

Before you've finished stepping out (ha!) all your Things, you can move on to the next stage.

steps:



If your Thing or any of the Steps has a Date, put that Down too!



In fact, I think it'll help to start doing the next stage as you figure out the Grocery Lists.

### Put it on the calendar.

I've attached handdrawn calendars that have two weeks per page.

Print out as many as you need to take you through the end of the season, before we go any further. Oh, and go on and date them.

*(you can totally use your own calendar if you promise to actually PUT the stuff on them. Really, this is the special sauce, the magic fairy dust. DO IT.)*

Now put your each of your Cookie Parties on the calendar, if they have hard, set-in-stone times. Some of your Cookie Parties won't have hard times yet, because they haven't been scheduled. Add in anything else that will take up time for that day. Dr. appointments, meetings, etc. We're not making an hour by hour schedule (if you really want to do that, you can, I won't stop you, but it'll take a heckava lot longer)

### Did that? Excellent!

Now, consult your Grocery List.

Looking at your calendar, figure out where you might set yourself some soft lifelines.

Wait, let's talk about hard vs. soft first:

### Hard vs. Soft Lifelines

Some things are going to have "hard" ~~dead~~ lifelines. If you give Christmas gifts on 12/25, than you're going to want your shopping + wrapping + gift making done before then.

So 12/25 is your hard deadline.

But what soft lifelines could you set for yourself before then?

A soft lifeline for crafting all the gifts.

A soft lifeline for finishing ONE specific gift.

A soft lifeline for having all the materials to even start the gift.

**You start from the DOOM of a hard deadline and work backwards until you have some guidance for what to do this very week.**

I like to write soft lifelines in a different color (or even pencil) because they are utterly changeable. If you think that shawl will only take you a week to knit, but it takes you 2 weeks, you'll need to move the soft lifelines related to it.

This is why we're only filling your calendar with some of the steps for your Things.

Add in soft deadlines for the Grocery Lists that you've stepped out.

And then put it away.

*Really.*

# PLAN for HOLIDAY SANITY

Print as many as  
you need.  
Fill all weeks out  
at once.

Monday	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Weekend
DATE:					

## ① Hard deadlines:

- events
- shipping deadline
- stuff you must do

## ② Soft deadlines

- Done shopping?
- Done wrapping?
- stuff you'd like to do.

## ③ Production Schedule

x items / day? / week?

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	WEEKEND!
DATE:					

Don't forget to include some fun stuff: bake cookies, walk in the woods, snow ball fights...



Go have another drink.

And a few hours later (or tomorrow morning), come back and step out a few more Cookie Parties. Make soft lifelines for each of those steps and add them to the calendar. Keep going until all of your Cookie Parties are stepped out and have happy soft lifelines on the calendar.  
That's it!

**Have a Happy Happy Sane Holiday!**

And if you want to talk some more about making good soft lifelines for your business, or you just need some accountability, you can join us for [Holiday Sanity](#), before 11/9.