

EXPLORE YOUR ENTHUSIASM

EPISODE 184: 3 QUESTIONS FOR HOLIDAY SANITY

Welcome to your busiest and potentially your most profitable time of year! And...also potentially the LEAST sane time of year. If you are dreading the holiday season and busy-ness and scramble, I wanna help you get you ready to have a killer season and fantastic good time.

Today we're going to talk about the three ways to prepare for you to have a fantastic holiday season and keep your sanity. I have talked about this a LOT over the years so I have gathered up all those articles and links and resources on this week's show notes. You'll find them at TaraSwiger.com/podcast184

Before we dive it into, I wanted to share this, so you don't miss it.

This episode is coming out the day before American Thanksgiving and the day after (Friday the 25th) is Black Friday. last year students asked me to do a Black Friday Bundle of the best classes to help you get through season and it was sooo popular. So this year I'm going to do it again - a special Black Friday bundle of stuff you can't get in my shop and can only find in the Starship:

- ★ Holiday Sanity - this is a guidebook and e-course I created back in 2009 - it was the first way I ever helped other makers in their business and each year I've edited and improved it. I don't sell it alone anymore, and it's usually exclusive to members of the Starship.
- ★ Take a Break (without breaking your business) - I created this Guidebook with Stacey Trock, of FreshStitches, to walk you through all of the steps to taking time off of your business. Students have used it to prepare for surgery, take time off on the holidays, and to take a maternity break. I used it to take my own mental health break in 2016.
- ★ Map Your Business PDF + e-course - This is the digital version of my book Map Your Business. You can print it again and again, and be guided through each step with the e-course, which will begin after the December holidays, on December 27th.

Over \$100 of classes, for \$59. This will only be open to subscribers and *only* on Black Friday. Sign up at the big pink box at the top of any page at TaraSwiger.com. If you missed it, you're going to wanna keep your eye open for the Starship, which includes all of these classes and opens in December.

Now let's start getting your sanity secured:

For the busy creative entrepreneur, the holiday season is a time of joy (Peppermint mochas! Decorations! Candle light!) and stress (Holiday orders! The post office!). Sanity can be hard to hold on to between filling orders, fulfilling family obligations and standing in the dreaded post office line.

But sanity and profit are possible. It starts with knowing yourself, your business and what you want from the season and then setting expectations (and plans) for yourself and your community.

Know what your business needs from you.

Different businesses have different cycles of busy and slow. Service-based businesses might slow down now, while retail businesses ramp up, right until the day before Christmas, and wholesale-based businesses slow down a bit before that (as long as your retailers don't place a last-minute rush order!).

Know what to expect by taking a look at what your sales (and production) cycle looked like last year, before the holidays kick into high gear. Some things to look for:

- ★ Were you scrambling at the last minute last year? On what days? What can you do now to avoid that?
- ★ Do you have everything you need to fill the same demand you had last year? Do you need to make extra products now? Stock up on shipping supplies? Start printing your shipping labels at home (if you don't already), so you can avoid long post office lines?
- ★ What is the last possible day to ship? Check the USPS website (or whatever shipping company you use), and then decide what your own cushion needs to be. If it takes you six hours to fill an order, what would happen if you got three orders on the last possible shipping day? Build your cushion into your own "Last Day to Order" policy and then communicate it to your customers. Put it clearly on your website, product descriptions and email signature. Email past customers (if you have their permission) and remind them of the deadline, at least a week before.
- ★ What extras do you want to do for the holidays? A new line, a special craft show or just offering gift wrapping? Now is the time to decide and to communicate it.

Once you have a clear idea of what your business needs are, create a schedule for getting them done. Make those products, label everything and get ready to pop them in a box.

Know what your life needs from you.

Everyone celebrates the holidays differently, and you have the power to choose what kind of holiday you want to experience. Take a few minutes to consider what you loved (and loathed) in holidays past, and build it into your plan for this year.

Every holiday is packed with outside expectations: what the rest of the world (family, friends, even your own guilt) expects you to do to make merry. Stay sane by getting explicit about what matters to you. Here are some things to look for:

- ★ What do others expect from you? From family dinners to the New Year's party to giving a gift to your third cousin once removed, list it all so you know what to keep and what to ditch.

What makes the season special to you? What's a can't-miss?

(For me, it's dressing up for a live performance of the Nutcracker, hot chocolate with Charlie Brown + the (cartoon) Grinch, twinkle lights and decorating a zillion sugar cookies with my little brothers. The tree, the presents, the fancy wrapping, the endless parties could all fall away as long as I get to sing along with the Whos down in Whoville and bop to the Charlie Brown Christmas soundtrack.)

- ★ What are the can't-get-out-of-its? (This list is smaller than you think. You can say no to giving gifts, but you probably don't want to say no to your kid's first Christmas play.) Even if it's not your idea of merry-making, what are the things you are consciously keeping because they are significant to those around you?
- ★ What can you do now to make the season better? Are there expectations you can set or changes you can make? Tickets you can buy now? Movies you can queue on Netflix? Supplies you can buy?

Know what your body + spirit need.

With the constant commercials, jangly music and crazy traffic, the coming season can wear you out, even if you weren't juggling a business and a personal life. Build in extra fun time so that you can manage it all. If you're energized by alone time, make sure you've got a good book and a warm beverage on hand, and then schedule it. If you get your energy from spending time with friends, call 'em up now, before they get busy and schedule a date doing something special.

And finally: What do you want to feel this season? Pick a feeling (or three) and keep it front and center. Look for those qualities everywhere and build them in to everything you do. (Joy at the post office? Peace at the 3rd grade orchestra concert? You're creative, you can do it!)

Sit down, think this through and create a GREAT holiday season.

Don't forget to check out the links to a lot of other posts about Holiday Sanity at TaraSwiger.com/podcast184 and sign up in the big pink box, to get access to the Black Friday Bundle classes, guides and ebooks that can help you dive even deeper into a great holiday season.

Wishing you a sane and enthusiastic week.

As we leap into Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, and Christmas, I hope this collection saves a bit of your own sanity.

- ★ [How to deal with your family and maintain Holiday Sanity](#) {Video}
- ★ [How to Enjoy the Holidays as a Maker](#)
- ★ [How to Enjoy the Holidays as a Vegan](#)
- ★ [How to Stay Sane with too much to do](#)
- ★ [How to Survive Funerals, Travel, and the Holidays](#)
- ★ [The Sick + Tired Holiday Survival Guide](#)
- ★ [Confession: I Love Christmas](#)
- ★ [How I plan my own holidays](#)
- ★ [Plan for money](#)
- ★ [Just take one step](#)

On CraftyPod:

- ★ [How to Maximize Joy](#)

On Karina Dresses:

- ★ [How to balance work + life during the holidays](#)

I gather all my favorite sanity-saving posts on [this Pinterest board](#) (new articles are added all the time!).

Don't forget to sign up to get access to Holiday Sanity Guide in the Black Friday Bundle!