

## A time to keep and a time to toss

Written by Deb Egenberger  
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One friend calls it a pitching blitz and another says it's a throwing frenzy.

I like to refer to my annual January ritual as a purge surge.

Santa doesn't consider where I will put all of the new things when he drops them off on Christmas Eve.

That means I am inevitably forced to part ways with some old stuff to make room for the new.

Good thing I don't mind turning my junk into someone else's treasure.

Clutter causes me stress so I do what I can on a day-to-day basis to avoid it.

Unfortunately, that often means filling a drawer for the sake of a tidy counter or stuffing a closet to keep the top of the dresser neat.

Despite being out of sight and out of mind, those overflowing spaces eventually get to me. Usually, it happens about the same time that I'm looking for a place to put away Christmas gifts.

So I do a clean sweep.

There are folks who have a difficult time tossing things that hold some sentimental value.

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I've learned it's the memory, not the item, that I'm attached to. Throwing away the macaroni necklace my 20-year-old son made me for Christmas when he was in preschool does not take anything from my visual image of his chubby cheeks and those darling little construction paper antlers he wore while singing about Rudolph.

Tossing out two or three of the 10 clear glass vases that once held a single velvet rose will not erase the joy of an anniversary remembered.

And the skillet we received as a wedding gift is just the right size, still has a lid that fits and reminds me of those early years in the kitchen.

But it's missing most of its non-stick coating and it wobbles on the burner. I think the new one will fit nicely in its place.

As I haul one big, black trash bag to the dumpster and another to my car headed for Goodwill, I realize I'm not just making room for new things.

I'm making room for new memories.