

TAKING TIME

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For Lehigh County



For the first time ever (I think) I had my Christmas gifts all purchased before Thanksgiving. Of course, I had an ulterior motive — save on shipping costs by delivering to family members in person. That was one stress out of the way, but now the rest are flooding me.

In the next few days I want to accomplish many things: write and mail cards; bake cookies; host a caroling party; get the tree,

lights, wreaths, candles, and garland up. Of course, I also "need to" fit in office festivities, friends' open houses, a Messiah Sing-a-Long, an evening horse-drawn carriage ride, and more! My scheduling has been complicated by the fact that my husband is out-of-town for eight days this month. I'm starting to panic. He wants all the "atmosphere" in place early so he can enjoy it before he leaves.

Are you panicking, too? In the midst of all this holiday hubbub, I uncovered an excellent article written by Jerri Wolfe, a family life educator in Seattle, Washington. Her thoughts helped me regain a healthier attitude. Maybe they will help you. She suggests reflecting on these 12 thoughts.

1. I can choose with my family how to spend the holiday season.
2. I can discard old traditions that are no longer meaningful and create new ones that fit my family and our needs and personality.
3. I don't have to compete with others.
4. I will treat myself with respect and get plenty of rest.
5. I need to enjoy the process of preparing for the holidays, rather than fret about the deadlines.
6. I can discard my "overly" adult attitudes and behaviors and look at the holidays from a child's perspective.

7. I am not responsible for orchestrating everyone else's holiday experience. I can incorporate those around me in planning meaningful activities.

8. I will allow myself to enjoy the season, rather than focus on just one or two special days.

9. I can ignore attitudes and behaviors I find objectionable.

10. I will remember that there are no "perfect" families, where meals are all wonderful, children are all well behaved and everyone gets along.

11. I will find the thoughtful-

ness in each gift regardless of how bizarre it may seem.

12. I will give the gift of experiences.

I encourage you to read these statements often over the next few weeks. Pick ones that are particularly difficult for you. Write them on a card and post them in a prominent place. No matter what the holiday or the occasion, you have choices to make. Take time this month to actually enjoy the real beauty and warmth of the winter holidays.

Calcium Connection To Lower Blood Pressure

COLUMBUS, Ohio — High blood pressure, which is also known as hypertension, affects more than 50 million Americans or one in every four adults. High blood pressure can lead to heart disease, stroke and several types of kidney disease. Almost half of all people with high blood pressure do not even realize they have it.

Following advice for reducing the risk of high blood pressure means making lifestyle changes: lose weight if you are overweight, exercise regularly, reduce sodium intake, don't smoke and limit alcohol consumption. The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) stresses the importance of diet in the prevention and treatment of high blood pressure.

Mounting evidence suggests dietary changes may have a positive impact on reducing risk for high blood pressure for those who

consume adequate calcium, magnesium and potassium in their diets. Evidence accumulated in more than 300 studies conducted since the early 1980s has shown that individuals at risk for or already diagnosed with high blood pressure were consuming less than the RDA of 800 milligrams of calcium per day—or, for example, the equivalent of three eight-ounce glasses of milk. Calcium, magnesium and potassium are found in many foods. However, they are found together in significant quantities in one natural food source—dairy foods. Dairy foods, including milk, cheese, and yogurt, offer the combined nutrient package of calcium, magnesium and potassium. More than 50 percent of adults do not consume enough calcium. Adults need two to four servings of dairy products each day to meet their RDA for calcium.

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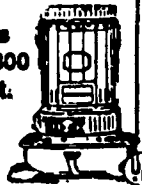
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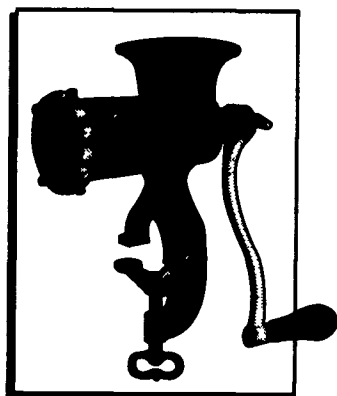
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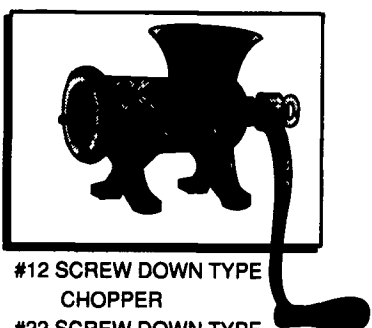


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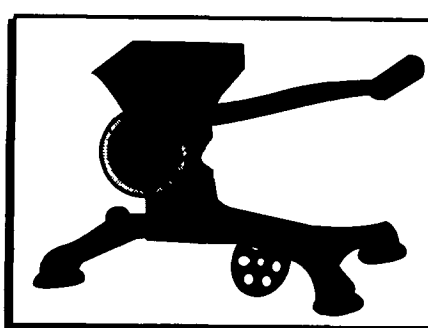
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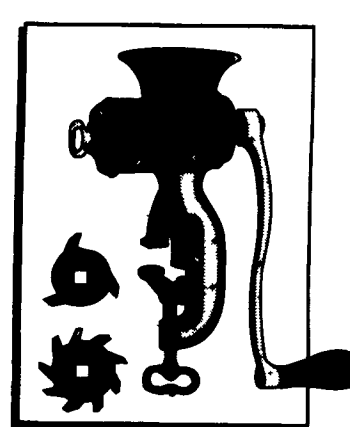
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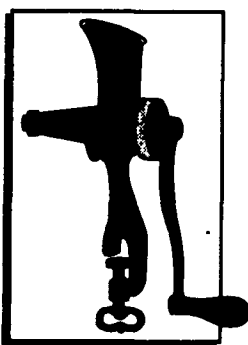
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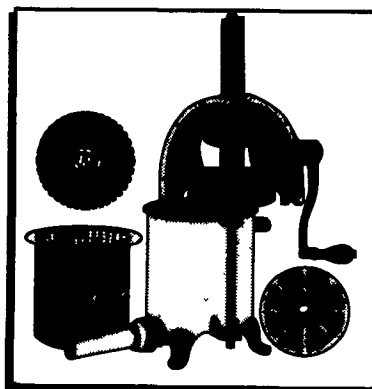
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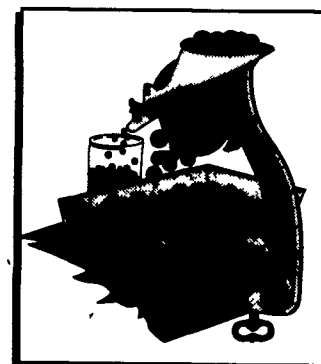
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