

## To Display or Not To Display

Dear Homekeeper,

Have you come across some family artifacts within your possession that you hadn't noticed before? It's an enjoyable revelation when you see them in this light, especially when it comes to deciding what to display as a vignette or still-life arrangement to create an ambiance in your home with the memories that are enveloping it. It can be small stuff (like a piece of your children's pottery done in school for example). Small stuff can hold big meanings.

I had a friend who really liked cats. She had only a couple of live ones so wasn't a cat lady per se but she collected cat things: ornaments, and figurines, spread throughout the rooms of her house. Once I overheard another person in her home observing under her breath "Well she certainly likes cats." That started me thinking about displays. How our treasures are displayed elevates them from a cluttered look that can take on a life of its own that borders on hoarding. Decluttering does not mean getting rid of things instead it is about parsing out your treasures shown in one place, complementing other items in that area.

You may have a monetarily valuable collection that needs to be insured. Photos are handy in this process to codify things. I have a memory problem with memory if I don't label or have designated zones for storage. I tend to forget things that I have stashed away particularly when inconsistent when storing all the while telling myself I will remember much less forgetting I have possession of something I haven't used for a while. I date the

back sides of family photos to keep track of the year it was taken. I change up my displays throughout the year to keep their visual appeal fresh and prevent them from becoming mundane. I even swap out framed decorative wall art in my home, moving them around because over time I ceased to see them.

A personal favorite piece of memorabilia is a large shadow box I put together of my dad's military medals and his burial flag. There is a government-issued letter associated with it taped to the backside giving more info on the history. This shadow box is carefully hung on the wall above the stair banister going upstairs and can be seen only from the second floor.

Grouping objects together can be fun. It can be themed by an era, event, color, or solely on about one person. One homekeeping decorator cleverly included within her very nicely framed art collection an occasional piece of family art framed equally as nice.

Don't hurry yourself in this task. It takes time to add this aesthetic to your home. Do try to keep the perspective of displaying in the back of your mind when events happen or a keepsake is held so as not to lose the moment.

A game I play is to try to discover who the owner is by meeting their home first. Collected seashells not bought, the kept interestingly shaped wooden limb or a quartz rock, things that look like they were found in little boys' pocket meant to be a gift, invitations to special events placed on a mantel, or a pair of glasses that once belonged to a grandparent or a special book. The significant pedigree of these things is the personal sentiment associated with it. I love to hear the backstory about an item or piece of gently loved furniture found in

a home. The human brain processes visual cues more rapidly than an oral or written story, making the display of your unique selection all the more interesting to share.

Keep in mind rooms have definite purposes in our home. The pleasant surprise of a placed sentimental item in an unexpected spot (all the while not disrupting the room's purpose) is a visual bonus for guests, and family, or a nudge of nostalgia for you.

Hope your May is a memory-making one! [Cathery.ch@gmail.com](mailto:Cathery.ch@gmail.com)

P.S. Life is a collection of moments