



Tax Time The Lazy Way

By Bridget Fonger

The phrase “the Ides of March” – that common metaphor for impending doom – should have been slightly altered in 1913 when the Federal Income Tax was invented. It’s not the 15th of March that looms in our hearts; it’s the “Ides of **April**” that spark the most ominous feelings.

I found myself a few weeks ago dealing for the first time with some stress around my taxes because of the fun and interesting projects I did last year. I became newly committed to better preparation for 2008. I am committed to 1) better record keeping and 2) a better attitude!

One key to easing stress in most areas is taking a little time to prepare. In the case of tax preparation, it’s good to set up systems that work for you. Notice I say “that work for *you!*” Organization and preparation are for you to design and choose for yourself. Here are some possible things you could do to make tax time easier:

- a. Take a second to jot a note on receipts with the source of the expense, so when it’s time to do your taxes, you are crystal clear.
- b. Set up a filing system that works year round. Some people set them up by category, some by month. Some use both: categories by month. Require yourself to put receipts into the proper file regularly (daily, weekly, or whatever works for you). Buy a file that you love to go to, that makes you feel good. Don’t use a broken down, old file: have it be a happy vessel for your records!
- c. If inclined, set up QuickBooks, or another program that works for you, that’s easy for you, and that makes you want to do it. Again, require yourself to maintain it regularly. Don’t create pressure, create relief: be realistic with yourself, while also taking care of your records.

Once you do all that you can do to prepare and organize yourself, let it go! Imagine yourself waving a magic wand and declare the amount of preparation you have done as “perfect.” Worry is a waste of time, and is certainly not *lazy*.

The *lazy* way to deal with tax time is to take care of yourself, your money, and your feelings around the Ides of April, and then let it go... so that the April showers you experience are of love and happiness.

Bridget Fonger is co-author of The Lazy Woman’s Guide to Just About Everything. Send questions you would like to have this Lazy Woman answer in this column to Bridget@LazyWoman.com.