



## Gift-giving made Clutter-free!

The purpose of a gift is to think of what the receiver would want. Anyone who has tried to choose a gift for someone special knows how frustrating it can be especially for someone who doesn't want or need 'stuff'. Clutter-free gifts are a gift of time, of memories, of an experience, of health, or that helps others who have needs beyond our imagination. Let those you love know how much you care by giving gifts that are clutter-free. Let's break it down:

- Clutter-free gifts
  - Car wash coupons
  - Cooking lessons
  - Dance/Yoga lessons (milestone birthdays)
  - Gym membership
  - Movie tickets
  - Museum membership
  - Pottery/glass-making classes
  - Savings Bonds (purchase online at [www.treasurydirect.gov](http://www.treasurydirect.gov)) and 529 plan contributions
  - Self-defense classes (graduating seniors)
  - Tattoo in honor of someone
  - Tickets to the symphony or the theatre
  
- Gift cards (not entirely clutter-free)
  - Garden nurseries, home improvement stores, and bookstores
  - Gas stations, grocery stores, and convenience stores
  - iTunes, eMusic, and Ticketmaster
  - Restaurants, coffee shops, and fast food restaurants
  - Spa, facial, and massages
  
- Non-profit gift-giving
  - Cash donation to a charity in honor of the recipient. Let the recipient know via a card.
  - Give a gift certificate so they can choose what charity to donate to: [www.justgive.org](http://www.justgive.org).
  - International Relief Fund: [www.oxfamamericaunwrapped.com](http://www.oxfamamericaunwrapped.com)
  - Green gifts for global impact: [www.thegreenguide.com](http://www.thegreenguide.com).
  - Life-sustaining gifts to help abolish global poverty or renew our planet's environment: [www.altgifts.org](http://www.altgifts.org).
  - Donate an animal in honor of someone: [donate.worldvision.org](http://donate.worldvision.org) or [www.heifer.org](http://www.heifer.org).

- Give a tree in honor of someone: [www.newgrowth.com](http://www.newgrowth.com).
  - Donate a book on health information to communities all over the world at [www.hesperian.org](http://www.hesperian.org).
- Gifts of time
- Join a friend (instead of exchanging gifts): local art studio classes, yoga, book club, film club, scrapbooking classes
  - Babysitting coupons for nieces, nephews and grandchildren
  - Take a child: to lunch, on a day trip, the museum, a local college for a sports event or theatre, the zoo, or bowling.
  - “First Christmas Together” (or other name) coupon book: Make a list of the things you know your partner would enjoy and include practical and fun things: for example, a backrub, do the dishes for a week, make a candlelight dinner, do grocery shopping, clean the cat box, etc.
- Can’t go clutter-free? Choose a gift that donates a portion of its profit to a non-profit agency. Verify the charity at [www.give.org](http://www.give.org).
- 10,000 Villages store—fair trade items in stores and on-line
  - Buy Christmas, Hanukkah, or general cards that donate profits to your favorite charity
  - Gifts that support disease research for which you have a personal stake
  - [www.CafePress.com](http://www.CafePress.com)—charity T-shirts and gifts
  - [www.greatergood.com](http://www.greatergood.com)—fair trade gifts
  - [www.ugandangold.com](http://www.ugandangold.com)—supports coffee farm in Uganda
  - [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)—designate the victims of recent disasters
- Gift-giving on a budget
- During the holidays, pick a name from a hat with all the adults in your family. Family members with limited budgets will be relieved.
  - Set a limit on gifts for children under age 16.
  - Set a budget and stick to it. Celebrate the holidays without creating a financial hardship.
  - Make a list of your gift decisions before you shop.
  - Don’t shop to get ideas or buy gifts for future gift-giving.
  - Limit the number of shopping trips you make or better yet, shop online!!

Finally, if you have a gift closet, box, or drawer in which you keep gifts that you have bought ahead of time, don’t forget to shop there first before you shop for more gifts.

“The greatest gift is a portion of thyself.”  
Ralph Waldo Emerson



