



Gift-giving Made Clutter-free!

The purpose of a gift is to think of what the receiver would really want. It's especially hard for someone who doesn't want or need "stuff". Clutter-free gifts could be gifts of time, experiences, memories, health, consumables, classes, or memberships. You could also donate to a charity in honor of the receiver. Choose the one that best matches your recipient. Let's break it down:

Clutter-free gifts

- art or science museum memberships
- concert, movie, Broadway tickets
- dance/yoga/tai chi/kick boxing lessons (milestone birthdays?)
- gym, golf, swimming pool memberships
- museum, symphony, community theatre membership
- painting, cooking, baking lessons
- pottery, swimming, glass-making classes
- public television/radio membership
- Savings Bonds (purchase online at treasurydirect.gov) and 529 plan contributions
- self-defense classes (graduating seniors)
- sporting events tickets
- tattoo in honor of someone
- zoo, State or National Park memberships

Consumables

- chocolates, local food, wine basket
- fruit, snack, flower basket

Gift cards

- car wash, garden nurseries, home improvement stores, and bookstores
- gas stations, grocery stores, and convenience stores
- iTunes, eMusic, and Ticketmaster
- manicure or pedicure
- professional organizer or cleaning service
- restaurants, coffee shops, and fast-food restaurants
- spa, facial, and massages

Gifts of time

- Babysitting coupons for nieces, nephews, and grandchildren
- "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, switch jobs for a week (making dinner, doing dishes, put kids to bed) do grocery shopping, clean the cat box, etc.
- Join a friend (instead of exchanging gifts): local art studio classes, yoga, book club, film club, scrapbooking classes

- Take a child: to lunch, on a day trip, the museum, a local college for a sports event or theatre, the zoo, or bowling.

Non-profit gift-giving

- donate to disease research charities for which your recipient has a personal stake
- donate to a charity in your community on behalf of the recipient
- give a gift certificate so they can choose the charity:
justgive.wordpress.com
- International Rescue Committee: help.rescue.org/donate
- gifts that support humanitarian and environmental causes:
alternativegifts.org
- donate an animal in honor of someone: heifer.org or donate.worldvision.org
- plant a tree in honor of someone: newgrowth.com or alivingtribute.org
- donate health education guides for international needs:
hesperian.org
- charities supporting women entrepreneurs globally:
iwecfoundation.org
- designate the victims of recent disasters:
redcross.org/donate/donation.html/

Can't go clutter-free? Choose a gift that donates all or a portion of its profit to a non-profit agency. Verify the charity at give.org.

- fair trade items in stores and on-line:
tenthousandvillages.com
- buy Christmas, Hanukkah, or general cards that donate profits to your favorite charity
- greatergood.com—gifts that protect people, pets and the planet
- sustainable, ethical, slow fashion brands:
mygreencloset.com

Gift-giving on a budget

- Set a budget and stick to it. Celebrate the holidays without creating a financial hardship.
- During the holidays, pick a name from a hat with all the adults in your family.
- Set a cost limit on gifts for children under age 16.
- Make a list of your gift decisions before you shop. First, look at the gifts you bought ahead of time.
- Try not to shop to get ideas or buy gifts for future gift-giving.

“The greatest gift is a portion of thyself.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

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