

Rethinking Your Holiday Shopping Strategy

Ever find yourself saying, "I don't know what to buy her. She already has everything." Rather than wandering around the mall looking for that perfect gift, listen to that voice. If he or she "already has everything," maybe its time for a different gift giving strategy.

Make a Donation in her Name

Does she have a favorite charity or cause? How would she feel if you made a gift in her name to an organization or charity she respects?

Use a Giving Registry

If you are the person who already has everything, consider using a "giving registry." Some charities maintain gift registries that work like a wedding registry. For example, at the Heifer Project Giving Registry, you enter some personal information and then choose animals that you would like your family or friends to donate for you. Sheep, chicks, heifers and other animals are sent to needy people around the world.

Give a Gift of Time

One of the most precious gifts we can give today is a gift of ourselves and our time. Is there someone who could use some help with holiday preparations? Could you help set up a Christmas tree, put up decorations, or do some holiday baking?

Give a Gift of Spiritual Encouragement

Is there a classic book, holiday performance or event that symbolizes the real spirit of Christmas for you? Share that message or gift with those whom you love.

Support Fair Trade

Consider spending some of your holiday shopping money supporting fair trade practices. Fair trade offers better pay to the farmers and local people who are growing and harvesting products. Many people appreciate getting quality coffee, chocolate, or tea that they can enjoy at their leisure.

Act Locally

Think about the people on your list. Have their lives been touched by a local organization? Would they appreciate it if you rang a bell to raise money for the Salvation Army? What about donating food to a local food pantry? If someone already has everything, maybe they have some extra things that they would love to donate to Goodwill so that they can help others during the holiday season.

Give a Favorite Baked Treat

Do you have favorite holiday recipes for special breads or decorated cookies? Many people are so busy during the holidays that they don't have time to bake the holiday treats that they'd like to make and eat. Your Saffron Bread or decorated cookies might be one of their favorite gifts of the holiday season.

Make a Favorite Holiday Meal

Food is often a big part of the holidays. What meal or food symbolizes the holidays for you? Is it oyster stew, potato leek soup, or maybe bread pudding? Consider making a traditional holiday meal and inviting that hard-to-shop-for person to join you.

Spend Thoughtfully

Think about each person on your list. Consider some "window shopping" for ideas before you actually hit the stores at 6 a.m. the day after Thanksgiving. Arm yourself with your well thought out shopping list, patience, and some ibuprofen. Throw in some good walking shoes, comfortable jeans, and coffee breaks.

Make sure your shopping list includes how much you want to spend and some ideas for each person on your list. If you have already decided to give an alternative gift like one of the above items, write that on your shopping list as well, so that you remember what you are buying or doing for everyone.

Enjoy the Holidays

What do you remember enjoying most from past holidays? If it is spending time with family and friends, don't focus so much on spending money at the mall. Spend your time with the people that matter to you.

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