



Buy Less Christmas Shopping Guide for All Ages

The key to buying less at Christmas is to ask yourself what *you* have to offer the people you love. We often rely on presents to communicate who we are and how we feel about our family and friends, but how can you can build closer connections with your loved ones by spending time with them or offering acts of service?

While suggestions have been made for specific age groups, the ideas are all interchangeable. Take a kid to a play! Send a care package to a senior! Feel free to mix and match ideas according to the people in your life.

Don't be afraid of a Buy Less Christmas. Some people may be offended by a re-gift or a box of cookies, but that's their choice. Most people will be delighted by the amount of time you spent thinking of them and preparing your gift.

Think of this idea as a spiritual practice, getting you ready for the Christmas event. If you can shrug off some of the frenzy and return to the values of community and simplicity, you will find this Christmas to be rich and full of surprises!

KIDS

Anyone giving Christmas gifts to children wants that big WOW when the wrapping comes off, but often the wow gifts end up in the landfill or thrift store within six months. Try to think about what will last or make memories for the kids in your life.

What About

- Collecting your favourite books from when you were their age, either re-gifted or found at a second-hand store.
- Assembling a kit that enables them to participate at home: a basket of baking gear, a toolbox, their own bucket of cleaning supplies, a small snow shovel, or a gardening kit. Children want to be involved and often just need someone to include them and help them see what they have to give. You could do these activities together.
- Creating a photo album: Kids rarely have regular access to photos of themselves and their lives, so use an online scrapbooking service, go old school and print photos, or make a clothesline they can hang in their room and clip photos to.

TEENS

Teens are discovering who they are in the context of the culture around them, and they are distinguishing themselves from family and friends. Learn more about the teens in your life and what they are into, and then meet them where they're at. This can be hard if you don't share interests, but making the effort will show that you value the relationship.

What About

- Going on a date: Maybe go on one that involves doing something you wouldn't ordinarily do. It could be a sports game, concert, comic convention, or movie.
- Going to a restaurant or specialty café of the teen's choosing.
- Finding a unique item in a vintage shop that would be something only your teen would have.

YOUNG ADULTS

People in early adulthood are busy juggling school, work (or the stress of underemployment), relationships, and family. They are often not taking care of themselves and are living far from family and support systems.

What About

- Creating a care package of food you have made.
- Making a booklet of your favourite recipes and including ingredients.
- Assembling dry soup mixes or cookie mixes in jars.
- Offering to make and deliver food the next time they are having friends over, or promising a homemade pie for a special occasion

MIDDLE-AGERS

People in middle age have a to-do list a mile long. Coming up with a gift requires thinking about what you're good at and what services you could offer. This idea can be tricky because some people are too proud to accept help, but it could nudge them into being more gracious as they receive. What are your passions, hobbies, or skills?

What About

- Offering childminding, yardwork, cleaning, repair, painting.
- Creating a book of coupons for services your loved one could redeem at any time.
- Allowing them to get away for a weekend while you take care of whatever/whomever is left at home.

RETIRED PEOPLE AND SENIORS

Folks of retirement age often have every material thing they want or need. They recognize that true value rests in relationships and time spent together. Some are keen to spend time acquiring new skills in this stage of life, all of which makes them the best candidates for receiving a Buy Less Christmas gift.

What About

Try doing these things together:

- Go to a show, gallery, play, or music festival.
- Volunteer somewhere as a way of giving back to the community.
- Register for some classes: painting, woodworking, a new language, or yoga.



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