

Holiday Gift Guide 2002

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Gift ideas for the guys

By DAN ASPELL

As more and more guys freeze up when they approach either the jewelry, clothing or purse/shoes/accessories counters during the holidays, something must be done. A formula needs to be invented to thaw these gentlemen's brains, to allow them to purchase reasonable, thoughtful gifts this December. A quick course in buying for the special woman is definitely in order.

One of the first steps is listening, an area where guys frequently get low marks. This doesn't mean just listening, an area where guys frequently get low marks. This doesn't mean just listening to her response when you ask what she'd like to receive this holiday, but picking up on her needs and desires in ordinary conversation. She may talk about things that would make her work at home or the office easier, or how much she admires a friend's new purse or running shoes. Keep a list tucked away and write down these subtle hints whenever you hear them.

Most people aren't terribly honest when you ask them flat out what they'd like to receive. They're more likely to tell you what they think you should buy, rather than what they really want. They factor in costs, time of shopping, etc., and often just want to make it easy for you. Of course, you can always ask her friends or family if she's mentioned something she'd love to own.

If you are still clueless after asking her and picking up on her material desires from other sources, stick with the tried

and true. But don't just walk into a store unprepared; that's where brain freeze sets in. Know what you're going into each store for, and how much you're willing to spend.

Take jewelry for example. Let's say you want to purchase a pair of earrings for her ... sounds easy, right? Well, try asking a jewelry salesperson to "see some earrings;" you'll be lucky to get out of the store in time for more shopping.

Decide first whether the earrings you want to buy are gold, silver or two-tone, if they contain gemstones and whether she would prefer something close to the ear or a pair that dangles. Gold hoops are a classic look, and she'd probably love a pair. Diamond solitaires look terrific on any woman, and prices for a decent pair start around \$100 in department stores. Likewise, solitaire earrings of her birthstone are usually a hit (particularly if her stone is ruby or sapphire), and if you don't know her birthstone, jewelry store personnel certainly will.

Another "wow" gift that will have her bragging to friends is a top-of-the-line purse, though be prepared to send at least a couple hundred dollars.

Tell that busy woman you love her with a new cellular phone. A new phone with hundreds of hours of pre-paid minutes says more than "I love you" ... it says, "I love hearing your voice."

This year gift buying doesn't have to be a chore. Keep your eyes and ears open and listen.

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Wishing you a beautiful Holiday Season

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