

By Dr Goh Yau Hong

How to Choose the Right Christmas Gift



Nothing quite beats the joy of ripping open the wrappers of all your presents on Christmas Eve or morning, and even more so to find a gift that is what you have always wanted but your parents refused to oblige. In our children's case, that is usually a decadent computer game. But what if the gift is something 'crappy' as the kids would call it?

SOME TIPS FOR CHOOSING THE RIGHT GIFT

Some people in our home like to give gifts which are usually something which they like and they assume the receiver would also appreciate. Sound familiar? Well, the easiest way to find out is simply to ask. However, in order to keep the element of surprise, the secret is to know your family or friends. If you know what is happening in their lives, chances are that you will also know what they need or would like.

For men shopping for their wives, a diamond ring is always a welcome gift, but keep the receipt and make sure it is exchangeable just in case the design you choose is not right. The ladies also

never have enough bags and shoes, but do get the right size.

If you are really not sure what an appropriate gift would be, especially for children, check with another child of the same sex and age. Most children now have this herd mentality and are all into the same 'in' things. According to my son, books are never a good gift for any occasion. "Who wants to receive books for his birthday or Christmas," he would protest, "children love toys." Since this is coming from a kid, I have followed his advice and hope to have made many children happier with their gifts.

HOW DO WE AVOID EXCESSIVE GIFTS?

There is no gift too excessive for that important woman in your life. To the husbands, your wife is your greatest asset (maybe some think a liability?). Take this Christmas to express your love and appreciation for her, especially for those who have chosen to give up their careers for family. For the wives, do not expect too much from your husbands so whatever gift you receive (if any) will be a bonus! (Haha!!!)

Dr Goh Yau Hong,
MBBS (S),
FRCS (Glas),
FAMS (ORL),
is a specialist in
private practice.

◀ Page 8 – How to Choose the Right Christmas Gift

My son wanted a bag from this brand called Crumpler. If you have not heard of it, then you are not in the happening crowd, but then, neither am I! My first reaction was, “Bag, ya sure, why not?” After all, bags are useful things that can be carried to school, church, outings and travels. I was kindly informed that Crumpler outlets were in Paragon and Wheelock Place. To my shock and horror, a canvas sling bag costs a three-digit sum! Is my son going to get his Christmas present? Yes and no. A bag, yes – but the brand is Converse, and not Crumpler.

What do you do if your son receives another Lego Bionicle which he already has? If it is as good as new, give it away; no sense having twin bionicles. The Salvation Army is easily accessible. Once our children reached their pre-teen years of around 11 or 12, we told our relatives not to buy them any more Christmas gifts as it was getting increasingly difficult and costly to buy them something they liked.

Talking about the Salvation Army or any charity for that matter, do give away things that are ‘too good to be thrown’, as its motto goes. Did you hear about the tsunami disaster relief collection where they received lots of old and used lingerie? That might be too good to be thrown but are they good enough for reuse? It is good to be green but some things may not be recyclable.

HOW DO WE GET CHILDREN THESE DAYS TO APPRECIATE THAT THEY ARE MUCH BETTER OFF THAN MANY OTHERS AROUND THE WORLD?

We packed ours off to Northern Thailand to visit orphanages for the last two consecutive Decembers. They survived and had fun too, but it was also funny to see how they adapted. One said he tried to eat as little as possible – less digestion meant less waste which translated to fewer visits to the toilet. The other took less baths as the well water was icy cold! They loved to eat bamboo worms though, and even packed bottles home to make their friends squirm.

This Christmas, we told them to think about someone less privileged and to try to do something special for them. How, they asked. We suggested a few simple things, like buying a gift they would really like. “Computer game,” says my son. But do they have a computer at home in the first place? How about going for a movie and lunch together or inviting them home? It is a very small step but the idea is to start them thinking about someone else other than themselves, instead of haggling over what they want for Christmas.

Have a Blessed Christmas! ■



Dr and Mrs Goh Yau Hong celebrating Christmas in Mauritius 2004 – the day before the tsunami.

