

For Seniors A Gift From The Heart Is Sure To Please

Just because Grandma or Grandpa may be older doesn't mean they won't enjoy a gift that's hip.

Today's seniors are healthier, more active and more technologically savvy than ever, and gifts should reflect that changing attitude.

Here are a few ideas to get you started when holiday shopping for the favorite senior in your life, whether it be a parent, grandparent, next-door neighbor or friend.

Gifts From The Heart

* Anything involving the grandchildren is sure to be a winner. Have them draw a picture or write a note.

* Copy or restore old photo-

graphs and frame them.

* For crafty types, make your own afghan blanket, quilt or throw.

* Compile an updated family photo album, or have your family pose for portraits. Put the photos in frames decorated by the kids.

* Create a calendar using family photos. Most photo stores can create one for a moderate price.

* Put together a box or album with the family's favorite recipes.

Help At Home

* Installing a railing for outdoor steps can provide safety for the senior and peace of mind for you.

* An air-purifying system can be especially helpful for seniors with respiratory concerns.

* Gift certificates for a monthly maid service (to be done by you or a cleaning service) will help keep their house sparkling, even if they aren't fit enough to do so themselves.

* A bathtub railing can be a life-saving gift.

* Install a home alarm system for seniors living alone.

* A coupon book will last for many months after the holidays.

* A gift subscription to a newspaper or favorite magazine makes a good gift for readers.

If you're still having trouble deciding on an appropriate gift, do a little research on who you're buying for.

Chances are you already know

the person's likes and dislikes simply through everyday conversation.

Think about what interests them, their hobbies and what they enjoy. You may also have to consider physical limitations.

For instance, maybe Grandma

loves literature but has poor eyesight. A large-print book or an audio book can be just the gift to make her smile.

When in doubt, your best bet is to stay true to what the holidays are all about -- giving a gift from the heart.

Tips For Unique Gift Wrapping

Gift wrap heightens the sense of anticipation at any occasion by masking the identity of a gift until it's time to reveal the surprise. A well-presented gift can sometimes elicit as much excitement as unearthing what's stored within.

Too often people take the safe, and somewhat boring, route when gift wrapping, relying on preprinted papers or gift-wrap kits.

That can leave gifts looking like carbon-copies of the others. For those looking for interesting and crafty ideas for wrapping presents, here are some unique ways to wrap that you may have not considered.

1. Gift boxes come in a variety of colors, so why hide them under gift wrap? Use the box itself to create a personalized package.

Simply cut out patterns in the box, such as a snowflake, snowman, candle, etc., depending upon the occasion. Use a sharp cutting tool like an X-acto knife.

Line the box with colored tissue paper, and the color will show through the cutouts you've created.

2. Wallpaper can be used for much more than just home decor. With its varied color palettes and styles, creating one-of-a-kind gift wrap is easy.

While more expensive than paper gift wrap, wallpaper can lend a feeling of opulence to special gifts, such as jewelry, collectibles and more.

3. Fabric can also be put to use as gift wrap. It can cover awkward-shaped gifts not easily wrapped by paper.

For those who are especially handy, fabric can be sewn to form gift sacks, stockings or wine cozies.

Stock up on reduced-price novelty pattern fabric at a local craft

store at the end of the season, so the fabric will be on hand come next year.

Or browse the remnants bin for small pieces of fabric that can form a patchwork or wrap small gifts.

4. Other housewares items can also be used when wrapping. Use drapery tassels to tie up gifts in lieu of ribbon.

It can make the gift look elegant and expensive. With some drapery tassels costing about \$1.00 at a discount store, this can be an inexpensive touch that just looks like a lot was spent on it.

5. Make the wrapping part of the gift. Use decorative scarves, hair clips, towels and similar items.

6. Don't throw out all of those scraps of ribbon that often become left over. Weave them together so that they cover the lid and bottom of a gift box completely. The result will certainly be a unique gift wrap.

7. For those with a "Dollar Store" nearby, browse the aisles for other inexpensive trinkets or ideas into thoughtful and creative gift wrap.

8. Sometimes simple materials have the most impact. Brown postal paper stamped with a pattern and tied off with raffia will set gifts apart.

9. Creativity should not only lie in the gift wrap. Think of clever ways to present the gift to heighten the sense of anticipation.

Have the gift recipient follow a set of clues on a "treasure hunt." Or hide the gift inside something else.

For example, a ring set inside of a rosebud that has not yet opened will yield a wonderful surprise when the flower blooms.

Don't underestimate your own sense of creativity when wrapping gifts.

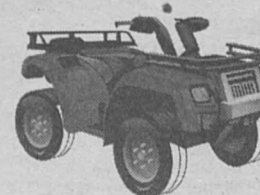


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