

The gentle art of giving gifts

By: Asha Deshpande

It is that time of the year, when “Gifts” are on almost everyone’s mind. Giving gifts is not restricted to this season, however it is the season when it is heavily observed. Gift giving is like an Equal Opportunity Employer. It has no bias toward gender, age, religion or region. The wealthy probably get an easier pass, but it is not denied to the non-wealthy. All indulge in this act. The common denominator is the question, “What should I gift?”

Some choices for gift giving are made easier. Take wedding gifts, for example. The new couple to be, makes a list of their wants, and posts it in a wedding registry. Herein is listed every article they would want in their wedded life. Detailed information about this wedding registry is sent out along with the invitations. Mercenary as this may seem, it is a good idea. It takes out the guesswork and stress of shopping for a gift. It can be customized to meet the guest’s budget and their relationship to the couple. Everyone ends up happy, including the store where the registry was done! This idea of Gift registry has proliferated to include Baby registries, House warming registries, etc.

Gift giving includes many other reasons too. Birthdays and Anniversaries, Graduation, New Job, Promotion, and Retirement, Special days like Valentine’s Day, Mothers Day, Fathers Day, Boss’s Day, Secretary Day, the list goes on. But what sets this season apart is the magnitude of volume and variety of gift giving.

So, faced with such a monumental task, it is well worth a moment to pause and ask oneself, “What gift should I give to him or her?” This question, however, should not be the first question, but the last question of a series of steps, which are the planning steps to gift giving.

To begin, ask yourself:

1. Who is this person that I am giving this gift? How close am I to this person? How often do I interact with this person on a regular basis?

Depending upon the answer, the gift chosen should be an expression of how much they mean to you. How much, is not a monetary measurement, but a measurement of what the gift is. A personalized CD of their favorite songs, or a collage of their favorite pictures may mean a lot more than a store bought gift.

2. What are their tastes? Does he/she like practical gifts or non-practical gifts?

Practical gifts could be a collection of his favorite flavors of coffee, or a year’s subscription to his favorite magazine. If she is someone who enjoys cooking, get her something from Pampered chef. If it someone who enjoys eating good food, give them a year’s subscription to the gourmet club or the dessert club. Non-practical gifts could be a collector’s item of his favorite football team, which could sit on his desk or hang on the wall, just for him to show off. If she likes jewelry, get it, but include a gift receipt, unless you are absolutely sure of her taste. For people who like to go out, dinner and movie tickets, or tickets to a concert are always good.

3. What does she already have and can you add to the collection?

If she collects figurines of a certain kind, can you add to it? If she or he has been constantly harping on some subject, can you start them on a collection?

4. What does he want?

If this person is an athlete, a gift card to a sports store may serve in good stead. An avid reader would like a gift card to a bookstore. A movie watcher would love a subscription to Netflix.

5. What gift would stand out and make him truly appreciate it among the many gifts that he may receive? Is he or she someone who has everything?

Customized gifts are ideal for such people. Consider getting something that is of personal value to them and have it showcased as befits the person. Some people, who are blessed with a lot in their life, would appreciate something simple, like a bottle of their favorite drink with a note informing them that a contribution has been made to their favorite charity.

6. Finally consider a balance of both budget and time spent on a gift.

Depending on the extent of your relationship, both should be spent well. If you are shopping for an office party, where the budget is pre set, and the gift selected is by Chinese auction, it is not worth spending too much time, since you don’t know who will end up with the gift. Just pick up something appropriate.

Once you have answered all the above questions for a person, it will help you to decide on a gift. Always remember, it is the thought that counts.

- While all of the above is well and good for the recipient, do take care of some other things to make it easier on you.
- One of the most important things is to make a list. List it, check it and mark off on it.

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Break Ke Baad

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I would like to. I think it is something I would like to do with Shah Rukh because I debuted with him. I mean, we all know how successful all of his shows are, and some of my biggest songs are with him and *Om Shanti Om*. I would love to do a world tour. I love dancing and I like performing, but I want to make sure that I have a bank of songs before I do that. Also, because I am really passionate about dance I want to make sure that I have enough time to do my rehearsals and perfect it before we start performing.

How is Vishal-Shekar's music for *Break Ke Baad*?

It's nice. It's in a very nice indie-rock space. There are a couple of songs I like. There's a song called '*Dooriyan*' which actually talks about how space in a relationship is important. There is another track '*Dhoop Ke Makaan*' which is a slightly sad love song, which I really like, but at the same time it is not one of those typically slow love songs. It is the kind of music that I think everyone likes listening to these

days.

You have two films releasing almost back to back...

Yes, a week after *Break Ke Baad* I have *Khelein Hum Jee Jaan Sey* coming out on December 3rd, where I play a very different de-glam role.

We also hear that you are back in the UK next year for a shoot?

Yes. I have just started working on a new film called *Desi Boyz*. It's with **John** and **Akshay**. I have started the Bombay schedule already, and we will be shooting in London for a month in February I think.

There are also rumors that you have signed *Race 2*?

It is not a rumor anymore, I am doing it. I can't talk about the film right now, but yes I can confirm that I am a part of it and we start in the middle of next year.

***Break Ke Baad* releases November 26**

Quiz results

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Results:

If your score is 30 or above you are a true "techie." In fact, you love anything state-of-the-art and high-tech. When you see a new gadget, you can't wait to get your hands on it to not only see how it works, but learn more about what you can do with it. You are drawn to high-tech products that can simplify your life, and you enjoy learning how to integrate these items into your life. In fact, you often find yourself searching the Web for new high-tech gadgets. For this reason, you are a true lover of technology and adapt well to the high-tech world in which we live.

If you've scored 20 to 29 you are a technophobe. You are afraid of anything electronic, computerized or new in the world of technology. Because of your phobia of technology, you often rely on others to explain or show you how to use high-tech products. In fact, you are afraid you can't grasp any high-tech concepts on your own. A good way to "grow out of" being a technophobe is to research new products. Actively seek out new high-tech items and make an effort to learn about how they work and what they can do for your life.

If your score is 19 or below you are neither a techie nor a technophobe. You are attracted to some high-tech items. You adapt to changes in technology when it comes to new computer software for your job. But you are not the type of person to stand in line at the electronics store when a new iPod is released. You care little about fancy high-tech items; you are only interested in those gadgets that are needed to keep up with the level of technology that is considered the "norm" in society.

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- Listen to your family and friends and make note of things they say, wittingly or unwittingly! This will give you ideas as to what to get for them.
- Shop early. It will be less stressful.
- Get familiar with a few stores, so you know their products and layout. This will come in handy in an unexpected situation.
- Glance at the catalogs that come home, so you can look for new things.
- Consider online shopping.
- For generic gifts, try stores that do free gift-wrapping. This will save you a lot of time.

If all else fails, give something that is totally far fetched. The Queen was probably tickled pink when she received an iPod!

Happy Holidays!