

30 year olds break gift molds

If you are one of those people who approach Christmas feeling like a combination of Scrooge and an excited two-year old, it's certainly understandable.

The little kid in you thrills at the prospect of gift-giving and gift-receiving. There is genuine pleasure in both. However, the Scrooge part (c'mon, admit it) knows the pressures of Christmas shopping.

How many times have you said, "I just don't know what to get for my brother-in-law/sister/cousin. He/she is so difficult to buy for!" If you're like most, you've said it more times than you can remember, and the words are starting to form again this year.

Before you panic, consider a suggestion or two. Perhaps one of the reasons you suffer from buyers-block is that you are hung up in roles.

Psychologists tell us that both roles and needs change. You are not the same person you were 10 years ago, you have different needs.

Consider that in shopping for those hard-to-buy-for people in your life. Don't think of them as cousins/brothers/husbands. Think of them as people of a certain age, with certain age-related needs.

Granted that doesn't solve everything. Even after you define an age range, you still have to decide what to get. But it's a start.

Just for the sake of argument, say that you have an in-law in his or her mid-30s, and you have no idea of what to give as a gift.

Now, forget about their relation to you (role) and concentrate on the needs of a person in that age group. What would be a good gift for someone in their 30s?

"Well," said Diane Atkinson of Hudson's department stores, "a good gift idea for someone in that age range might be a replacement or an addition to a china collection."

"Many couples start a collection when they are married and are still working toward completing it at that age."



A gift in silver combines beauty and lasting value, but the right choice is sometimes hard to make.

Or if you like the idea of giving something that can be used and displayed, but china doesn't quite click, Ms. Atkinson offered the alternative of over-size wine glasses in either silver or pewter.

However, if your 30-year old is approaching middle age with a spread to match, you may want to opt for a more active gift. In that case there are a number of things to choose from.

"You have to remember that many people in their 30s haven't exercised regularly for a long time," commented Ms. Atkinson,

"so if you give that type of gift, it should be something that they can ease into."

With that in mind she suggested a jogging suit (his or hers), ice skates, racquetball equipment or a jump-rope.

"Since rope-jumping has become so popular, Hudson's is carrying a specially designed one this year. It has an automatic calculator in the handle that counts the number of jumps," she said.

—PATRICK TOUHEY

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