Would Charlie buy himself this?

What makes a good gift? Something you like or an item you think would appeal to the recipient?

It's a subconscious question Christmas shoppers ponder every year as they wade through aisles of merchandise trying to locate that clusive "perfect" gift for someone on their list.

Often they arrive at the wrong answer, judging by an informal survey of local merchants

They offer as supporting evidence the fact that millions of doltars worth of gifts are exchanged annually in the harried days following Christmas.

Often the gifts are returned not because they're the wrong size or the recipient already has the item, but because the beneficiary simply doesn't like the gift and would rather have something else instead.

The gift-giver, oblivious to the wants or needs of the recipient, usually never realizes that the gift he spent so much time and energy pursuing has been exchanged.

The gift-receiver, embarrassed to admit the item has been ex-

changed, will often lie when asked about it.

The solution to this annual dilemma is to understand the psychology of gift buying and receiv-

First, the answer to the question posed at the onset of this story must be. Try to find a gift that will appeal to the person receiving it.

That may seem obvious and overly simplistic, but its a basic premise many shoppers ignore or forget when embarking on their purchasing excursions.

The proprietor of a fasionable local men's shop put it this way lit's the same way every year. People come in and agonize over what gift to buy. They're relieved when they finally think they've made the right choice. But a few days after. Christmas, the same item is returned or exchanged for something else."

The trouble is that the person buying the gift was really shopping for himself, not the person for whom the gift was intended.

"People should learn to reverse roles," the proprietor advised "They should preterid they're the person the gift is intended for and

he or she has gone shopping to buy something for themselves."

In other words, before plunking down the charge card or opening up the waffet or checkbook, take a nionient to consider the following question. Would the recipient purchase the gift you're about to buy, if he were shopping for himself?"

If the answer to that question is attirmative, then chances are you've made a wise selection. If the answer is "Probably not," or "I really don't know," then you might want to reconsider the selection.

The subconscious tendency when gift buying to please one-self rather than the gift recipion is what has to be overcome

Personal taste has to be put aside to prevent it from interfering with the selection process.

Some tips may be helpful

- Avoid, when possible, buying gifts that you need or want. That bulky sweater that looks so appealing to you may be the last thing in the world the recipient wants.
- V-hen uncertain, seek the advice of someone familiar with the

tastes of the person you are shopping for A quick phone call to a friend or relative may save needless washing of time and effort milling through seemingly countees stores.

- Avoid last-minute shopping.
 When pressed for time you're more likely to be drawn to something that appeals to you because it's the first thing that comes to
- Spend a few minutes at home, away from the frantic at mosphere of the stores, to think about the person you will be shopping for Consider his tastes, interests, hobbies and lifestyle. If a certain item of clothing popinto mind, make sure if would little with the recipient's wardrobe and that it's not merely something that would complement the last out't you bought.
- Above all, avoid items that you would like to receive or cries you received in recent years that especially pleased you. Chances are you'd be shopping for yourself or reinforcing, your own proferences.

-JOE MARTUCCI



