

10 Holiday Gift Ideas Your Special Someone Will Love Just in Time for Date Night



By Linda Guma and Kayla Garritano

The start of the holiday season means the inevitability of shopping for the perfect gifts for all of your loved ones. And with the holidays comes the romance. If you get to spend the holidays with that special someone, make sure it's one to remember. The more consideration you put into your present, the more meaningful it'll be. So, when you're on [date night](#) with your partner for a special holiday treat, make sure they open a present they'll be sure to love.

If you're looking for gift ideas that don't involve the usual or traditional ugly Christmas sweater for your partner this year, Cupid is here with some relationship advice and ideas:

1. Personalized compilation: Make a personalized CD or playlist for your partner by putting together his or her favorite tracks. Don't forget to include any romantic tunes that remind you of special moments you experienced together, such as your first slow dance. And, of course, mix it up with some holiday numbers, to celebrate with the joyous spirit.

2. Customized calendar: Nothing says "I care about you" more than something home made. With a new year fast approaching, a calendar can come in handy. Select 12 photos of you and your partner and paste them on the pages for each month. Circle important dates, and write headers for your anniversary, among other special occasions.

3. Matching wrist watches: This is a great way to punch up your style, as well as a guilt-free way of pampering yourself with a present. Buy matching watches and ask your jeweler to engrave a message on the back, such as your names and the words "forever" and "always."

Related Link: [Relationship Advice: 10 Holiday Date Ideas For Long Time Couples](#)

4. Tickets to your favorite show: If you're really not into personalized gifts, you can always find a thoughtful way to experience something together. Buy two tickets to a show that you and your partner both love, whether it's a movie, a

concert or a ballet performance of *The Nutcracker*. Surprise your partner to a dinner at a [famous restaurant](#), followed by their favorite show.

5. Photo frame collection: It's a simple idea, but a classic way to keep the loved ones close at hand. Buy your significant other a silver-plated frame, and insert a photo of the two of you. To make it extra mushy, inscribe "I love you," or a love sonnet by your partner's favorite poet.

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6. Massage coupons: A thoughtful way to express your love this holiday season is to create some free massage coupons. Your partner will surely appreciate them after a stressful day and finally get the chance to relax a little with you.

7. Breakfast-in-bed tray: You don't have to rise and shine for this celebration. Treat yourselves to a bed tray and the luxury of having breakfast in bed together. Maybe pop in a movie and just cuddle under the covers!

8. Vacation getaway: Be spontaneous! Organize a weekend trip for two. Choose a tropical place to escape the winter chill or simply tour a neighboring town you've never visited. Your partner will appreciate your effort to plan the holiday trip. It's a great way to get away from your daily routines and reconnect with your honey.

Related Link: [The Holiday Gift Guide For New Couples](#)

9. Get-out-of-chores passes: Get your arts-and-crafts on by making some paper passes to let your partner skip out on their chores. You'll have to take over the cooking or cleaning probably, but it's a great way to show your love, and it can be a fun, goofy way to get out of something, all in good fun!

10. Lovers pillowcases: Get some personalized pillowcases to

touch up your bed. For instance, you can get some signs embroidered that say “His” and “Her,” or “Mr. Right” and “Mrs. Right.” If you want to keep with the holiday theme, decorate it with some snowflakes and mistletoe. It’s a different take on putting your face on a mug or a t-shirt. Make it your own!

Got any creative ideas for what to get your partner this Christmas? Share your ideas below.

Product Review: Express Your Love With a Chalk Me UP! T-Shirt





This post is sponsored by Chalk Me Up!

By [Cortney Moore](#)

In search of a unique gift for the art lovers in your life? Look no further! Our [product review](#) of [Chalk Me Up!](#) t-shirts are the statement pieces you didn't even know you were missing. This creative line of t-shirts features a chalkboard backdrop that allows wearers to customize their look with drawings and sayings.

Product Review: Get Your Message Across

Chalk Me Up! t-shirts are simplicity at its best. Each t-shirt displays a chalkboard on its front, which can be written on, erased, and rewritten on with chalk. These t-shirts scream fun and encourage creativity, not to mention it can also have educational uses. Bring individuality back to fashion and EXPRESS yourself.

Chalk Me Up! offers six different styled chalkboards to write

on, including: a train, heart, flower, Brontosaurus, T-Rex and a talk bubble. Seasonal chalkboards are also available during different times in the year, such as their football helmet chalkboard t-shirt during football season and a shark chalkboard for summer.

Additionally, Chalk Me Up! is capable of creating customized chalkboard t-shirts upon request. Just imagine your sweetheart's surprise when you propose on a chalkboard t-shirt! Or, make an adventurous birthday or anniversary [date night](#) more fun with a t-shirt that announces your special day! Why buy 10 different "saying" shirts when you only need one with Chalk Me Up!

Whether it's a special occasion or you're taking part in a fundraiser, birthday party, family reunion, or corporate event, Chalk Me Up! has you covered.

And of course, each t-shirt purchase comes with a FREE 12-pack of Crayola Multi-Colored Chalk!

It's a chalkboard on a t-shirt, so style it your own way, another way, everyday!

For more information, visit ChalkMeUp.com.

Product Review: Never Forget a Special Day with 'Not Just Any Old Day' Jewelry



This post is sponsored by Not Just Any Old Day.

By [Cortney Moore](#)

In need of a timeless piece of statement jewelry to commemorate special dates and occasions? Then, our [product review](#) of [Not Just Any Old Day](#) jewelry is perfect for you! This line of customized jewelry is a great way to eternalize significant moments and milestones, and it's a lovely gift to give to the special people in your life.

Product Review: Make Memories Last a Lifetime

Not Just Any Old Day jewelry pieces are one-of-a-kind keepsakes that can be cherished for a lifetime. They're an eye-catching and unique way to keep a special day, like an anniversary or birthday, close to your heart at all times.

Each Datesake piece is inscribed with a signature calendar featuring a Swarovski crystal as a mark on the date. Loved by celebrities and fashionistas, the calendar Datesake collection is handcrafted from recycled lead-free pewter in the USA.

Other top picks of Not Just Any Old Day are the Key To My Heart Key Calendar Necklace with Swarovski Crystal, the just-released “Your Special Day” Mini Calendar Charm Expandable Bangle Bracelet, and the “Your Special Day” Key Calendar Necklace.

Notable celebrity fans include Kym Whitley, Kelly Preston, Janina Gavankar, Carolyn Hennesy, Jason George, Tracey Heggins, Scott and Renee Baio, Marilu Henner, [Antonio Sabato, Jr.](#), and Courteney Cox.

It’s easy to see why stars are going gaga for Not Just Any Old Day: Their pieces are all about being sentimental in style! The elegant and chic calendar charms are statement pieces that can be worn all year long.

If you enjoy being up-to-date on the latest [celebrity fashion](#) trends, adding these Datesakes to your list of jewelry splurges is a must. Be prepared to have others fawn over and ask where you got your beautiful calendar charm and what the meaning behind your Datesake is!

To learn more about the company or how to purchase Datesake jewelry from Not Just Any Old Day, visit NotJustAnyOldDay.com.

10 Most Outrageous Celebrity

Valentine's Day Gifts



By Michelle Danzig

With the most romantic day just around the corner, you may find yourself pressured to find the perfect gift to surprise your sweetie. In today's economy, it's hard not to find yourself in the cards, candy and flowers section of the department store, looming over the inevitable three-hour wait for dinner reservations this Valentine's Day. But what would your holiday be like with some extra, disposable income? Look no further than these 10 celebrities who emptied their pockets and went over-the-top with these outrageous Valentine's Day gifts for their significant others:

1. Courteney Cox: Before their recent split, Cox once purchased her then-husband, **David Arquette**, an antique

Carousel horse. The estimated cost of an antique can range anywhere from \$3,500 to \$45,000.

2. Jay Z: With an estimated cost of \$24,000, the rapper and record producer bought his now-wife, **Beyonce** a Platinum covered mobile phone. I wonder if she picked that up while she was dancing in the club with Lady Gaga?

3. George Clooney: Even though it seemed like a fling, in 2008 Clooney splurged \$40,000 for girlfriend **Sarah Larson** on a hotel suite at the Hugh Hefner Sky Village in Las Vegas's Playboy Tower at the Palms Casino Resort. Not only that, but the two had dinner at the exclusive Nove restaurant while watching the Cirque Du Soleil tribute show to the Beatles at the Mirage Hotel and Casino.

Related: [Extravagant Celebrity Gifts Within Reach of Your Budget.](#)

4. Angelina Jolie: If you were anticipating another adoption, think again. Jolie bought hubby **Brad Pitt** a 200-year-old olive tree for £12,000—a little over \$19,000—for Valentine's Day last year. The olive tree was planted at the couple's chateau in France and is said to be a symbol of peace and longevity.

5. David Beckham: The sexy soccer star bought wife **Victoria Beckham** an \$8 million Bvlgari necklace and flew chefs in from her favorite restaurant in London to Spain to prepare dinner.

6. Justin Bieber: Although sadly the teen power couple is no longer involved, the 18-year-old pop star spent \$2000 on singer and Disney Channel star, **Selena Gomez** by buying out an entire florist of his roses, tulips and daisies. Talk about being Justin's girlfriend...

Related: [Valentine's Day Advice: How Successful Women Can Ditch Dating Duds](#)

7. Jerry O'Connell: The *Stand By Me* star once planted over 800

grapevines in the home he shares with fellow actress and [wife](#), **Rebecca Romijn**. The estimated cost of this fruitful investment is \$52,000.

8. Howard Stern: The over-the-top radio personality designed and gave his now-wife, **Beth Ostrosky** a 5.2 carat emerald-cut engagement ring valued at over \$250,000 on Valentine's Day in 2007.

9. Katy Perry: Before filing for divorce in 2012, the singer purchased hubby **Russell Brand** a lilac-colored Bentley Brooklands. Interested in buying this for your sweetie? The base price for a 2009 model is nearly \$341,000.

10. Mike Tyson: Known for some previously extravagant gifts, the former undisputed heavyweight champion purchased a \$2 million bathtub for ex-wife **Robin Givens**.

Get a crazy gift for Valentine's Day? Share your story below!

The Perfect Holiday Gift: 5 Celebrities That Need To Go Away Forever





By Joshua Pompey

Some people want a new I-Pad for the holidays. Others want nothing more than a relaxing spa retreat. Me, I'm a little easier than your average receiver of gifts. This holiday season, I just want one present; for the following five celebrities to disappear forever! So please Santa, if you are out there, make this five people go away forever...

1. Justin Beiber.

I know you are a just a kid. I know you have grown up under the spotlight. But I can't for the life of me understand your popularity, nor do I want to. Please fade into the light forever with your fake picture scams and your on again, off again Disney girlfriend like all the other childhood heartthrobs, so that I never have to see a whiny teenage girl screaming your name again. It's been nice to know you, but see ya later kid.

Related Link: [How to Get Over a Broken Heart During the Holidays](#)

2. Kim Kardashian.

Is America finally coming to its senses, or are the Kardashians just between seasons. It seems the world has finally reached a point where the Kardashians are no longer an inexplicable obsession. We've watched you strut how much talent you don't have on television for years, enjoyed your self-released sex tape, and those of us that managed not to blink for a few days, even witnessed your "fairy tale wedding." Even being with Kanye West is no longer making you relevant. Your time is done, so please, fade away as ungracefully as you came in. However, feel free to give Scott Stap his own reality show in Vegas. Now that is television I'd watch (pending he dumps the world's most awful girlfriend).

Related Link: [How to Communicate with Your Ex Over the Holidays](#)

3. Lindsey Lohan.

Lindsey, I know you need help, and I hope you find it. But one thing is for sure, you could ride an ambulance backwards on a highway, while sniffing cocaine off the dashboard, and nobody will be surprised, or care. Your antics are tired, and more importantly, frustrating to a public that actually has to follow laws with consequences. You had your last shot with a Lifetime movie (has it really come to that?), and it debuted with a lackluster 3 million views. Its time to retire into a permanent rehab home with your mother of the year.

4. Madonna.

It amazes me that I can still turn on a news channel and see her irrelevant antics. Your self-righteousness is delusional at best, and you are too old to act the way you act. It's time to check into that nursing home, but on your way, please take Lady Gaga with you.

5. The cast of The Jersey Shore.

Ok, I know this is technically more than one person, but I'm going to cheat a little bit. Now that your show is officially ending, please, no more shows, spin offs, or fake and scripted television. You were all cute and funny when you were unaware of how ridiculous you all looked in season one. Now it's just annoying. Please spend the remainder of your days performing public services to Italian groups, attempting to undo the decades of damage you have done to their reputation, not to mention, the entire state of New Jersey.

Joshua Pompey provides online dating advice for men around the world. Check out [GetREALDates Online Dating Advice](#) for plenty of free information. Or check out [GetREALDates Online Dating Profiles](#), for the best online dating profiles.

A Present is Worth a Thousand Words: What a Gift Says About Your Relationship





By Rachel Seliger

The holiday season has finally arrived, and with it comes festive parties (hello, candy cane cocktails!), delicious fare (potato latkes, anyone?) and glee-filled gift-giving (who doesn't love a white elephant party?). Yet, while giving gifts can fill your heart with warmth and joy as you watch your loved ones tear open those carefully-wrapped presents, it can also bring anxiety as you try to decipher what to give everyone on your list. And it only gets harder when it comes to giving a gift to a new love interest!

Rachel Seliger, Community Manager for JDate.com, the leading online community for Jewish singles, is here to help with advice on what gifts *really* mean when they're coming from a significant other. Check out the gifting-pedia below for definitions of what certain gift choices may say about your relationship:

Related Link: [What Gifts Say About Your Relationship](#)

A Jacket = "You'd look much better in this cut." While giving

clothing is fun, it may come off as though you're saying, "You'd look much better in this cut/color." If you don't give your new mate clothing that matches their personal style, you're saying you want to see them in something different, which may signal that you're trying to change them. Whether there's any truth to it or not, it's best to stick to nondescript accessories when giving gifts. Perhaps something like...

Mittens = "You warm my heart." Mittens are a sweet and thoughtful way to say, "I like you... a lot!" Unlike jackets, sweaters or boots, mittens typically come in just a few styles (meaning you can't screw up and get your hipster boyfriend a pair that looks like it belongs on an investment banker). And if you are lucky enough to receive a pair, it means the object of your affection wants to warm your fingers like you've warmed their heart.

Related Link: [10 Holiday Gift Ideas for That Special Someone](#)

Candles = "I know nothing about you." I once got a wrought iron candle holder from my college boyfriend. I opened it and wondered "What about me screams candles?" Unless you're some kind of candle-maven, this gift basically screams unoriginal and may mean you don't know each other well enough to pick out something more personal.

Concert Tickets = "You make my heart sing." If your mate surprises you with a pair of concert tickets for a big show they knew you would love, you've found a keeper! Not only did they think about what you would actually like, but they're also making fun plans with you in the future, so you can be sure they're in this for the long-term)!

Gift Cards = "I didn't care enough to actually go out and buy you a present." The gift card is the relationship kiss-off. Giving this gift basically says you are either lazy or just didn't care enough to put any thought into your present. Do

not give this gift! You can do better.

A Box of Chocolates = “You’re the sweetest thing I’ve ever laid eyes on.” Giving sweets to your sweet signals your relationship is so yummy that your mate’s love is about to give you a sugar rush! If your partner is associating you with the deliciousness that can only be found in a box of chocolates, then you have certainly found a satisfying relationship. But just as eating the entire box of candies in one weekend will make you crash, moving too fast in your relationship may leave you with a similar result!

Basketball Season Tickets = “I’ll pretend to like anything you like.” As a huge University of Kansas basketball fan, I would personally love it if someone bought me season tickets. However, if the person you’re dating suddenly becomes obsessed with your hobbies, going as far as to buy you tickets to a sporting event they previously didn’t even know existed, then you may be dating a people-pleaser with no hobbies of their own. Take it as a compliment, but suggest your partner join a book club, karate class or writing program to get a handle on who they really are!

A Homemade Gift Certificate = “I’m broke, but you mean the world to me.” Let’s be real, homemade gifts have become a lot more popular since the recession hit. Drafting a “Free Home-cooked Meal” certificate is a sweet and inexpensive way to show you care. If you’re going to give this gift, make sure you follow through with your promise or your partner may think you are unreliable.

Expensive Jewelry = “I want to impress you.” Ah, every girl’s dream! While we usually love anything that sparkles, this gift can also say, “I want to impress you,” or worse, “I messed up – please forgive me!” Give this gift with caution – once you’ve given something expensive, you can’t go back! After receiving a Tiffany’s bracelet, no one wants to follow up with an 80s-throwback snap bracelet.

An Engagement Ring = “I’m madly in love with you.” So you wake up on a magnificent Saturday morning to find Mr. Right has made you breakfast in bed, and at the bottom of your mimosa is the most brilliant diamond ring you’ve ever seen! If you’re madly in love and have been waiting for this moment, then a mazel tov is in order! Congratulations – you’ve just discovered the gift of true love.

Rachel is JDate’s Community Manager. She’s here to break down the rules of dating, share first date tips and offer words of encouragement when dating gets tough. Hit up her Tumblr page at www.Jdating.tumblr.com for more insightful advice. Or, learn what makes Rachel tick by visiting her JDate profile!

10 Rules for Couples Gifts





By Johanna Lyman for GalTime.com

Do you love the season but not the shopping?

I love the holidays, but I'm not a fan of buying gifts. I'm one of those rare women who don't like to shop. I agonize over buying the perfect gift, but I'm not great with paying attention to details, so I never know what the perfect gift might be. This year, I decided to think outside the gift-giving box and come up with my best tips for making it all easier.

1. Be blunt when you talk to your Santa. If there's something special you want from your man, ask for it directly. I know, I know, it's uncomfortable to ask for what you want. But don't you think you deserve it? Your man is not a mind reader, even if he loves you beyond all reason. He won't think you're being pushy if you give him a few ideas, in fact he'll love you for it. Trust me on this one.

2. Splurge on yourself. Give yourself the gift of a makeover or splurge on an outfit that makes you feel like a million

bucks. The holidays can be a difficult time for people with self-esteem issues (in other words, most of us). One way to keep from getting the holiday blues is to do something that tell you "I'm worth it." Because it's true: you are worth it.

3. Your time and talents and donations count as gifts. Another great way to get happy during the holidays is to give the gift of your time, talents and treasures to those in need. Donate toys to the Marines, pick a couple of tags off a Christmas tree at the bank and buy the requested item for a needy child, and/or volunteer with your sweetie at the local soup kitchen. Maybe Christmas, as the Grinch discovered, isn't about "things, after all." Short on time? Make a donation to the local food bank so families in need can have a happy holiday meal.

4. Give him something he loves even if you don't love it. Now onto some actual gift ideas. If your man is into video games, go to a gaming store and ask the sales associate what the most popular new games are then buy one of those for him. I know you probably hate his Xbox, but that's not the point. The gift is for him, not you. He'll love you even more for getting him a game when he knows you're not a fan of gaming.

5. Help him cheer on his team. If he's into watching professional sports, get him tickets to the next home game. If those are too pricey, opt for an officially sanctioned jersey. The non-sanctioned jerseys and t-shirts are usually pretty cheesy and he'll love you for knowing the difference, especially if you don't care about his team.

6. Turn TV into a great gift. Does he have a favorite television series, or is he a history buff? There are plenty of boxed DVD sets that make great gifts. The History of World War II in an 8-DVD set will keep him entertained for hours. The side benefit of this gift is that while he's watching the DVDs, you can have a guilt-free girls' night out.

7. Spice it up with a gift you'll both enjoy. If you want to get him something you'll both enjoy, opt for a weekend getaway. Inside the gift box, include some lingerie for yourself, with details of the trip folded on top. Remember, this is a gift for him. If you're going to enjoy it as well, it's nice to make it special for him.

8. Turn up the volume. For music lovers, there are plenty of options. Satellite radio for his car, a boxed CD/DVD set of his favorite band complete with never before seen live concert footage, or even an iTunes gift card. Concert tickets are a great idea too; get him two and tell him to take his buddy. Then you can have another guilt-free girls' night out.

9. Skip the chore-related gifts. Whatever you do, do not buy him something that you want. Also, do not buy him a tool that he needs to complete a project you want him to work on. That's selfish and transparent; it's like him buying you a vacuum cleaner.

10. Stay focused on the two of you. You may have noticed that only one of my gift suggestions was something that you would enjoy together. There are two reasons for that. First of all, gifts are supposed to be for the receiver, not the giver. Second, as important as it is to spend quality time together, it's equally important to spend time apart. That's why getting him a gift that gives you time to yourself or time with your girlfriends is a double win. Healthy relationships develop between healthy individuals, and knowing how to spend time alone is one way to cultivate being a healthy individual.

Happy shopping!

How to Pick a Perfect Gift for Your High School Sweetheart



By Jon Dawson

Finding the perfect gift for your sweetheart is a challenge. You want to give her something that shows her how much you care, without emptying your wallet. If you need a little guidance on how to find a great affordable gift, you can't go wrong with these ideas:

Related Link: [Nine Gift Ideas for the Frugalista](#)

Jewelry

Jewelry does not have to be an expensive pair of diamond earrings. You can purchase a charm bracelet, stud earrings or a similar item at a local retailer for less than \$20. Without spending a lot of money, you can give your girlfriend a gift that complements her style and makes her smile.

Related Link: [Engagement Rings of the Rich and Famous](#)

Personalized Playlist

Does your special someone have an MP3 player? Consider creating a personalized playlist of songs that mean something to you as a couple. Because songs are just a dollar or so apiece to download, you can make this gift fit your budget, yet it will be meaningful as your sweetheart will have something to remember you by every time he or she turns on some tunes.

Moonlit Walk in the Park

Many high schoolers dismiss parks as unexciting places filled with playground equipment that they have long since outgrown, but nothing says romance like strolling in the moonlight, hand in hand. Take a turn on the swings to show your sweetie your playful side, or just lie side-by-side on the ground and look at the stars.

Write a Letter or Poem

Written mementos of your affection are something your boyfriend or girlfriend will treasure forever. While writing a love letter may not seem overly important to you, it will mean the world to the recipient. Of course, the best part about this gift is the cost – unless you need to buy stationary, it's free! All it takes is a little effort and creativity, and you have a winning gift.

Lotion or Body Spray

Do you know your honey's favorite scent? If you do, pick up

some lotion or body spray in that scent when the next gift-giving opportunity arises. If you have the money for the fancy stuff, then that's nice, but the great thing about giving the gift of lotion or body spray is that the generic, store brand stuff usually smells pretty good, too.

It may be the thought that counts, but when you are buying something for your sweetheart, you need to make sure it is meaningful and conveys your feelings well. Gift giving is not an exact science. You have to know the person you are buying for to find the perfect gift, but each of these options is a good choice if your funds are limited, but you still want a meaningful gift.

Jon knows what it's like to try and find just the perfect gift. He's always on the lookout, and shares his findings and musings over the web. His most recent find was <http://www.birchbox.com/>, a great venue for unique men's and women's gifts.

Valentine's Day Advice: Nine Gift Ideas for the Frugalista





By Vicky Oliver

According to Wikipedia, Valentine's Day didn't become associated with romantic love until the High Middle Ages when the tradition of courtly love flourished. Ever since, the day has been fraught with symbolism tinged with traces of anxiety.

We all want our gifts to communicate the appropriate amount of love, but we're sometimes unsure how to accomplish that. Questions abound. Should you buy him a sexy card or tickets to a basketball game? Should you present her with costly French perfume, and if so, what brand? What, if anything, will he "read into" that scented soap-on-a-rope? Will she take those teardrop earrings to mean more than you intend—or quite a bit less? And then, on the other end of the love spectrum, what if you simply can't afford to shower your loved one with the gifts that he or she deserves?

If you're watching your money (and these days, who isn't?), the good news is that we live in an era when the grand gesture can be more meaningful than a present costing hundreds of dollars. And with a little forethought, yours will convey

just the right amount of love. Here are nine gift ideas for the frugalista with a heart of gold, but a wallet running on empty:

Related: [4 Great Valentine's Day Gift Ideas for Her](#)

1. Invent a signature drink for your sweetheart. Is he of Russian descent? Perhaps the drink should contain Russian vodka in his honor. Does she hail from Florida? Maybe the drink should be made with fresh-squeezed oranges instead. Are you dating a redhead? Consider adding ginger as one of the prominent drink flavors. For added fun and hijinks, print up the recipe on cardstock so that your loved one can order the libation with ease at restaurants and bars. Be sure to put some personality into that recipe card.

Related: [What Does Your Date's Drink Say About Him?](#)

2. Get inventive with the I.O.U.s. These ingenious notes can save you a small fortune ... or even a large one. Instead of running around trying to find the perfect present for your paramour, take half of an afternoon to design a pretty I.O.U. certificate on your computer for "one free home-cooked meal." Then fill in his name, print out the document, wrap it with a ribbon (that came straight from another gift), and you're done. Cupid will attest, the quickest way to a man's heart is (still) through his stomach.

3. Name a star. It's a symbolic gesture that has little to do with science, but much to do with love and affection. Plus, it can add a real bright spot to your relationship. Call a star after a girlfriend, boyfriend, or even "just a friend" for under \$15. Every time that special person in your life stares up at the heavens, he or she will be sure to think of you fondly.

4. Shop your closet. "Love consists of desiring to give what is our own to another and feeling his delight as our own," Emanuel Swedenborg wrote. Passing on something that was yours

to someone you cherish is not merely about the value of the item itself. Hopefully, the gesture will strike an emotion, and you'll have a chance to see your own joy reflected back in the recipient's face. Please note: Never relinquish something that you can't live without should the relationship combust.

5. The gift that shows what you *would* give if money were no object. Five years into your relationship is your dream of spending "April in Paris" together *still* just a dream? Show her that you haven't forgotten with a destination charm. A company called latitude longitude^{â„†} charms and jewelry will print out the exact coordinates of your fantasy location on a sterling silver stamped tag. You'll get all the credit for taking her there—at a fraction of the cost.

6. Say it with music. When love is in the air, why not pretend that you're an on-air personality and burn a CD of the tunes that remind you of your sweetheart? If you have been dating for over a year, the songs might harken back to the night you met. Or the CD might include the melody that played when you first kissed. Sweet dreams are made of this.

7. Something, anything, in her or his color. Some women look dashing in pink. Some guys look fetching in emerald green. When you know your lover's favorite color and then buy a present in the precise shade, it shows an extra degree of thought. These gifts needn't be costly. Scarves, hats, and gloves in every color of the rainbow can be purchased for under \$10 at your local street vendors. Even something as frivolous as a pink pen can bring a smile to the right face—hers.

8. A message in a bottle. Do you feel like Shakespeare in love, but just need a little help writing the poetry? For about \$100 less than a bottle of perfume you can give your love interest something permanent, creative, and emotionally stirring. An online company called Timeless Message will help you select a limited edition antique bottle and even craft a

message for you if need be. What if you actually *are* the next Shakespeare or the second coming of Hallmark? Have no fear! It's easy to write your own sentiment (and not be dependent on the sentimentality of others).

9. Something a tiny bit Bohemian. I once ate chocolate spaghetti. It wasn't the finest meal I had ever sampled, but it was so over-the-top that I savored it anyway. (If you're giving chocolate pasta as a gift, be sure to find a recipe that you actually *want* to try. There are several online.)

If you have just started dating, Valentine's Day is a built-in opportunity to move your relationship forward by mutually exploring a new level of intimacy. On the other hand, if you have been dating or married for a while, Valentine's Day presents the perfect chance to rekindle the romance and remember why you fell in love in the first place. No matter what you spend on your significant other this Valentine's Day, don't forget to say, "I love you."

Vicky Oliver is the award-winning author of The Millionaire's Handbook: How to Look and Act Like a Millionaire, Even If You're Not (Skyhorse Publishing, November 2011) plus four books on career development, including the bestselling 301 Smart Answers to Tough Interview Questions (Sourcebooks, 2005) and 301 Smart Answers to Tough Business Etiquette Questions (Skyhorse Publishing, 2010). She lives in New York City, where she helps people turn around their careers and their lives.

Valentine's Day Giveaway:

Glamorous Count Me Healthy Bracelets



This post is sponsored by Count Me Healthy Jewelry.

By Jeannine Drenchek-Scavo

If you're looking for a great Valentine's Day gift for your loved one, Count Me Healthy Bracelets are the hottest new trend. The bracelet is designed to help you achieve a healthy goal with style. You simply turn your daily target into a bead count.

Celebrities like Selena Gomez and Cameron Diaz love their Count Me Healthy bangles, and have been seen rocking them out in public. They are a perfect gift for Valentine's Day. The Wild at Heart style (Selena's style of choice) is available in

gold, rose gold and sterling and features 12 beads—each etched with a heart. They are less than \$100, making it a great piece of jewelry to give wives, girlfriends, sisters, moms—any woman that loves style and wearing the same jewelry as A-list celebs.

Quick tidbits about the glamorous bangles:

- Guiliana Rancic, Fergie, Kelly Osbourne and other fashion-forward celebs also love and wear them.
- Available in over 15 gorgeous styles
- Two styles dedicated to helping raise breast cancer awareness and women heart healthy initiatives.

To shop and for more info visit www.CMHJewelry.com

What Your Gifts Say About Your Relationship





By Amy Osmond Cook, Ph.D.

When it comes to gifts, I am an expert—at receiving them. I love gifts of any kind ... from other people. (No, I'm not going to buy myself a \$285,000 pink Bentley like Paris Hilton did last year.) The problem is, when it comes to giving gifts, I am a nervous wreck.

Gift giving represents two things: (1) that you care about a person enough to give a gift, and (2) that you know a person well enough to give something that he or she will like. Mess one of those up, and it does some damage to your relationship.

Related: [Valentine's Day Gift Ideas](#)

Take, for example, the gift I gave to my husband five years ago. We were newly married, and I wanted to get him something personal and meaningful. He loves golf, and he's a funny guy—so I thought the trick remote control golf ball (that you can move when your opponent is about to swing) was going to be a hit. I waited in anticipation as he opened the box and saw a momentary look of confusion before he masked it with a

smile. He thanked me and said that he loved it, but the damage was done. In that one look, I knew that my gift had tanked.

Fast forward five years. After watching him play golf (a lot!) and listening to his golfing adventures with his buddies (a lot more!), I would never give him a remote control golf ball. I now know that, for him, the rules of golf are sacred.

A serious golfer never tries to move an opponent's ball—especially for a laugh. It violates one of the cardinal rules of sportsmanship. (So does laughing at someone when he shanks his shot – I found out the hard way!) My gift bombed because I didn't know my husband well enough. I knew that he loved golf, but I missed the intricate details.

Stories like mine are a dime a dozen—a woman receives a vacuum cleaner from her husband, and she runs to her room and cries.

A man receives a toolbox and feels ashamed that he doesn't know how to use the tools inside. For better or worse, we attach special meaning to gifts, especially over the holidays.

So if you want to put some currency in your partner's emotional bank account this holiday season, buy . . .

Related: [10 Gift Ideas](#)

1. Something intimate. Take note if your partner voices his wish list for Christmas. If he cares enough to say what he actually wants, paying attention to that will make him feel valued and understood. If he doesn't have a Christmas wish, try to find something that will have special meaning between the two of you. Still have those Angels tickets from your first date? Frame them!

You can also make a gift meaningful by giving to something your partner cares about. For example, many celebrities, like Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie, care deeply about charitable causes and prefer donations to their favorite charities to extravagant gifts.

2. Something valuable. Take this relatively. If you want to take your relationship to the next level, give your partner something that says, “You are so valuable to me, I would sacrifice anything to have you in my life.” That’s what women hear when their boyfriends buy them expensive jewelry or spend all day helping them cook. It’s not the money or the time, exactly—it’s the fact that someone would sacrifice to give them something beautiful or meaningful. You don’t have to be like Nick Cannon and buy your significant other a \$400,000 Rolls-Royce Phantom or pull a Jude Law and buy your love a \$200,000 diamond-and-sapphire ring, but it should be better than the pack of bubble gum my friend got from her boyfriend one year.

If you’re like me, gift giving is a nail-biting phenomenon. That said, if you give your partner something meaningful and valuable, you can move that relationship dial to the next level. Then again, you could always take your chances and buy a pair of two-person mittens that Chelsea Handler and Chuy are sporting this year!

Amy Osmond Cook, Ph.D. is a faculty associate at Arizona State University, where she teaches Communication and English classes. She is the publisher of Sourced Media Books and co-author of Hope After Divorce and Full Bloom: Cultivating Success. Amy and her husband, Jeff, have five children and look forward to welcoming baby #6 in April 2012. For more information about Amy, please visit amyosmondcook.com.

Last Minute Holiday Shopping

Guide for Your Partner



By Thomas Doane

With the holidays just around the corner, some people are starting to panic as they worry about what to buy for everyone. Of particular concern for many is what to buy for their significant others. Whether you are newly attached or longtime lovers, everyone wants to find a gift under the tree.

Believe it or not, even celebrities have these worries. After all, behind the fame and glamour, they are flesh and blood humans. Just like us, they have similar worries and doubts.

In that spirit, here's a guide to holiday shopping for your significant others, whether you're famous or not:

Related: [10 Holiday Gift Ideas For That Someone Special](#)

If you've just started dating, think small.

Not only will your new love not expect a large gift, but it may freak them out a little, which is definitely not what you want or need at this time of year. Try to find something small and meaningful for under \$50. This could be something simple like an item of clothing, or you could be a little more personal and plan a candlelit dinner at home. Whatever you choose, be sure to look for deals, and don't feel pressured to overspend.

George Clooney and Stacy Keibler should take this advice! The pair has only been together for a couple of months and shouldn't worry about lavishing each other with expensive gifts. In fact, due to George's infamously skittish nature, Stacy may want to go the dinner-at-home route, in order to appear appropriately aloof.

Related: [Simple Ways To Please Your Man](#)

If you have crossed the one-year threshold, then you can splurge...a little.

Still keep spending to a reasonable amount, but try to find a gift that reflects your feelings for one another. Once you have reached the one-year mark, it is likely that you are in love, so go for something romantic, if all else fails, like a weekend getaway for two, or a small piece of jewelry.

This would be a good guide for Justin Bieber and Selena Gomez, who recently celebrated their first year together. While this pair is awfully young to be worrying about jewelry, they obviously like vacationing together, and should feel comfortable expressing their feelings for one another. In doing so, they can be assured of one another's affections, and their budding love will continue to bloom.

If you are in it for the long haul, then go all out.

Whether you are married or in a long-term relationship, the holidays are the perfect time to show your devotion and hope for a bright future together. Accordingly, buy your loved one something that shows how much they mean to you, and emphasizes your familiarity with their likes and dislikes.

Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie are preparing for yet another Christmas together, and despite repeated rumors of their demise, it looks like they are still going strong. Now would be a great time for them to travel to another country, away from their passel of children, and reaffirm their love to one another so that next year will be even better than the last.

Regardless of where you stand in your relationship, the thing to remember is that the holidays are *not* about who gives the best gift or how many you receive. The true reason for the season is spending time with your loved ones and preparing for a great new year. So, just relax and spend the day with your sweetie. Happy holidays!

Thomas Stone is a freelance writer and frequent contributor at the SprightlyShopper.

8 Alternative Wedding Trends for 2011





By Cara Davis

Today's brides and grooms aren't settling for what has always been done. They're infusing creativity, personality, cultural trends and most of all, they're having fun. They're creating memorable experiences not just for themselves, but for friends and family who contribute to their big days.

Author and marketing guru Seth Godin recently spoke at a Chick-fil-A Leadercast about how the new normal is not normal at all. People are questioning why we do things the way we do, thereby turning tradition on its head. It's affecting all industries, including the wedding industry.

Here's a look at eight alternative wedding trends that are popping up in 2011:

1. Mini Wedding Dresses: Whether it's glammed up, vintage or breezy casual, knee-length wedding dresses are more practical and personalized for today's bride. As more stores roll out wedding boutiques like J.Crew and White House Black Market, brides can pick up a wedding dress from their favorite retail

store. And let's not forget that for some, that's Etsy, where they can pick up a custom hand-made gown for as little as \$40.

2. Fun with Color: From black accents to bold color blocks, color is king this year and it's not limited to the bride!

Non-matching bridesmaids are coordinating in patterns or complementary color combinations like this crafty DIY wedding of mega-blogger Elsie Larson. In addition to bold color palettes, shades of gray and stripes continue to be the big color trend for the year.

3. Alternative Gift Registries: Many couples are registering for gifts that will help them in a practical way. Travel agencies are starting to offer honeymoon gift certificates and some auto dealers are offering gift certificates toward the purchase of a new vehicle. CardAvenue.com allows couples to create a gift card registry for national retailers. Couples can get as creative as they want; they can request gift cards to home improvement stores to offset costs of home renovation or register for local restaurants so they can continue dating as newlyweds on a budget.

4. Punchy Personalization: While the structure of the wedding remains the same, (you've got a bride and groom, an officiant, a group of family and friends, a ceremony and reception) the look is anything but. The time may be different (think brunch), the seating may be smarter (seated at tables & staying put for reception), the furniture may be funky (varying size and shape or non-traditional choices) and forget the wedding favors – today's couples are giving personalized takeaways, like souvenir photo booth picture strips.

5. Eco-friendly Finds: Outdoor spaces, reclaimed furniture, flea market finds and even wooden rings are helping eco-conscious brides and grooms celebrate in a big way without the environmental impact. Green weddings can feature locally grown food and seed-lined wedding invitations that can be planted.

CarbonFund and Terrapass offer wedding carbon footprint calculators, where air travel is most likely to be the big offender. Couples can purchase carbon offsets to lessen the impact, or request contributions as gifts.

6. The Rustic South: There's been a rise in rustic weddings in the past several years and it mirrors a growing hunger in popular culture for all things Southern (think The Civil Wars, J.Crew fashion, artisan jeans and home-brewed beer). Today's vintage and rustic weddings are all about embracing simplicity and infusing new life into old things. From location (barns or old warehouses) to furniture & decor (antiques and flea market favorites) to apparel (vintage clothes and even brooch bouquets), many couples are going for the nostalgic feel of the old South.

7. Cultural Cues: Couples who are looking to add levity to their big day are incorporating pop culture trends. Food cart fare is showing up in pre-wedding cocktail hour and the after-party. Culturally significant themes like retro Asian flavors and ethnic icons like sushi, ninjas, geisha girls and Chinese lanterns are being used in inventive ways. Vintage board games are showing up as Monopoly pieces in bouquets and Scrabble letter tiles as signs for the buffet.

8. Death of the Wedding Cake: The exorbitant cost of traditional tiered wedding cakes has given way to nontraditional desserts like square mini-cakes and cupcake tiers. Furthermore, dessert buffets may feature pies, macarons, Whoopie Pies, cake pops, color-coordinated candy and even ice cream sundae stations or cookies and milk bars.

Weddings expert Cara Davis is the author of Cheap Ways to Tie the Knot. She also blogs from her home in Orlando, FL about cheap ways to spend and save at CheapWaysTo.com.

4 Great Valentine's Day Gift Ideas for Her



By Gunter Jameson

Men, for 364 days of the year, get to do things like fix cars, hook up electronics, and be a general handyman for the women in our lives. One day a year, we are asked to do something else to show our love – something a little more romantic. On [Valentine's Day](#), it's our job to shave off our manly exterior and be the cute and cuddly teddy bears that our women want us to be. The time has come once again to buy gifts for our wives or girlfriends that tell them how much we love and appreciate them. This is not a time for utilitarian gifts,

like a mixer or a car stereo, so if you're stumped as to what you should buy for your special someone, here are a few ideas that should point you in the right direction:

1. Chocolates and flowers: It may be cliché, but flowers and chocolates are a really great gift on Valentine's Day. Even though they're not practical, that's the point! They don't serve any other purpose except to look pretty, smell good and taste delicious. If you bring a little beauty and a piece of chocolate goodness into the life of your woman, she will love you right back.

2. Hand-dipped strawberries: Chocolate-dipped strawberries are one of those rare treats that are so simple to make, but are very special and unique. The sweet chocolate and juicy strawberry combined make a flavorful and slightly sensual treat that will delight your woman's palette and tell her that you love her, both at the same time. And she won't want to eat them alone; get ready to snuggle up and share. Want to score bonus points? Suggest making chocolate-dipped strawberries together.

3. Heart-shaped jewelry: Yes, it might seem a little cheesy, but heart-shaped jewelry is a great way to get into your woman's heart. Pendants, earrings, bracelets, necklaces, rings and more; it almost doesn't matter, as long as it looks beautiful. Your mate will know that you love her and that you had to embarrass yourself by walking into a jewelry store – and of course, that's part of the present.

4. A weekend away: Clearly, if you have the money, a weekend away is one of the best gifts you can give to your special lady this Valentine's Day. All she wants to do is feel special by spending time with you without distractions, and doing things you both enjoy. Stay at a cozy bed and breakfast or at an upscale hotel. Get couples massages or spa treatments. As long as the two of you are together and

relaxing, she'll love it.

The most important thing about Valentine's Day is that you make your wife or girlfriend feel special – like she's the only woman in the world. If you can help her feel that, then she'll know you love her. Plus, you can then go back to doing manly things the other 364 days of the year.

Valentine's Day Special: Love the One You're With



By Sherry Richert Belul, founder of Simply Celebrate

Whether you're madly in love, still looking for love, or are in a snit with the one you love, these 14 tips below are surefire ways to jump start more luvin' feelings in your life, just in time for [Valentine's Day](#). Just choose one of these suggestions and try it out – on your spouse, your beau, yourself, or a friend. Or for those who crave a larger dose of feelin' good, try one a day for the next 14 days!

– Make a Love List full of silly, sweet, funny, poignant reasons why you love someone. When you're mad or disappointed, read this list! When you're happy and in love, add to this list. If you're sad or lonely, make a Love List for yourself, a relative, or a friend.

– Share the things on your Love List with the person for whom you wrote 'em. Mail 'em in a card. Send one text message every hour. Write them on notes and hide them in their shoes or coat pockets. Make a poster. Leave voice messages on their phone.

– Pretend you are meeting your spouse or beau for the first time. Choose someplace new, where neither of you have ever been. Arrive separately. Catch eyes across the restaurant or café. Introduce yourselves using names you just made up that suit your mood. See them (and yourself) anew.

– Surprise them on an any-ole-day. It's not his birthday. It's not your anniversary. It isn't Valentine's Day. It is Tuesday the nothingth. Make a candlelight dinner, buy him that gizmo he's been drooling over, or offer an hour-long massage and kissfest.

– Be the dashing, witty, sexy, romantic, fun person you have always longed to be in relationship with! Dress up in sexy clothes, tell funny jokes, focus on the positive, talk to strangers, be dynamic and magnetic.

– Listen. Focus all of your attention on them. Try

reflective listening, in which you actually repeat back verbatim each sentence they say. It's amazing how good it feels to the recipient to know someone hears every word!

- Try something new together that you've always wanted to do. Now.
- Find a way to transform your anger or snits into something fun. Buy and wear big puffy coats so you can smash into one another. Put on your favorite music and dance. Have a sword fight with foam swords. Speak in feigned accents. (When my beau says, "Hey Boo Boo" like Yogi Bear, it is impossible not to laugh!)
- Collect and print out your 10 favorite photos of the two of you in which you're both truly happy. Hang them someplace you'll see them often. Let yourself feel the joy again and again and again.
- Be vulnerable. Tell him or her something you wouldn't tell anyone else, or something you've been afraid to say.
- Choose connection over being right or proving a point. (Ooh, that is hard. But wow, does it pay off in spades!)
- Get those unmet needs met – someplace else. Don't expect anyone in your life to be everything to you.
- Be present. This is the number one best way to connect – and the very best gift you can give.
- If you don't have a partner – or even if you do – do all of these things for yourself. Loving the one you're with starts with YOU. If you love and enjoy yourself, you're well on your way to loving whatever wonderful and imperfect Valentine is in your life or about to show up in your life.

To help you get started on creating more love in your life, download the free Love List template at simplycreate.net and make one for yourself, your spouse, a friend, or relative.

Sherry Richert Belul is mom to a witty and wonderful 10-year-old boy. She is also founder of Simply Celebrate and author of Present Perfect: It Really is the Thought That Counts – an ebook that includes dozens of creative-not-crafty gifts that are fun to make and are full of love. Find her books or sign up for her free newsletter at www.SimplyCelebrate.net. Email Sherry to tell her your Love List experiences, ask questions, or learn about the one-of-a-kind tribute books she makes at celebrate@Madmoon.com. For more, follow her on Twitter: @simplycelebrate.

Valentine's Day Giveaway: Sweet and Sour Gifts from CafePress





This post is sponsored by CafePress.

Single on Valentine's Day? Don't worry – we have gifts for you, too! If you're one of the 44 million people who changed their relationship status to "single" in 2010 (according to Facebook), we have just what you need this holiday: "singles pride" products on CafePress, the go-to website to design whatever you want, on anything you please. In fact, there are more than 358,500 anti-Valentine's Day products on the site – a 12 percent increase from 2009. As for our happily attached readers, yes, there are all kinds of gifts for your sweetheart. From cute, matching shirts to make-you-laugh apparel, you'll find the perfect gift for your sweetheart.

~~To celebrate the holiday, Cupid's Pulse has teamed up with CafePress to offer **ONE VALENTINE'S DAY T-SHIRT** to **FIVE LUCKY READERS!** Simply tell us what your Valentine's Day slogan would read in a comment below. The most creative designs win! Please be sure to use your real email address so we have a way of contacting you if you've won – don't worry, your address won't be shown and we will *never* spam you. This giveaway will run until **11:59 PM EST on Monday, Feb. 14** –~~

~~Valentine's Day. Check back on Tuesday, Feb. 15 at 1 PM EST for a post announcing the winners. Good luck!~~

This giveaway is now closed.

In the meantime, visit CafePress.com to find a selection of budget-friendly pro- *and* anti-Valentine's Day gear, perfect for gifts or party décor. For more updates and information, follow them on Twitter: @cafepress.

Valentine's Day Giveaway: Pinkberry Introduces Swirly Grams





This post is sponsored by Pinkberry.

[Pinkberry](#), the original tart frozen yogurt brand, introduces the Pinkberry Swirly Gram, a unique Valentine's Day treat that can be delivered to the ones you love all over the country. These packages are Pinkberry frozen yogurts or gift cards that are specially wrapped and decorated with heart-shaped balloons, a hand-written note, and are hand-delivered to the home or office. Choose from Cupid's Swirl (one medium frozen yogurt with toppings for \$10), Take Me Home (five servings packed in a 25 oz. container with toppings on the side for \$20) or Swirly Spree (one gift card for any amount, plus an additional \$2 delivery and packaging fee). In addition, you can choose your Swirly Gram from these three flavors: original, chocolate, or blood orange, each with special Valentine's toppings.

Head over to your closest Pinkberry location and order a Swirly Gram for your loved one – or one for yourself! Swirly Grams are also available on [Pinkberry.com](#) for those who prefer to shop online. But do note that balloons will not be included for online orders. As Pinkberry says, make hearts

swirl this Valentine's Day!

~~To celebrate Valentine's Day, Cupid's Pulse has teamed up with Pinkberry to offer **ONE \$10 GIFT CARD** to **ONE LUCKY READER!** Simply tell us what flavor and toppings you would chose for your own Swirly Gram in a comment below. The most scrumptious combination wins! Please be sure to use your real email address so we have a way of contacting you if you've won—don't worry, your address won't be shown and we will *never* spam you. This giveaway will run until **11:59 PM EST on Monday, Feb. 14 – Valentine's Day.** Check back on **Tuesday, Feb. 15 at 1 PM EST** for a post announcing the winners. Good luck!~~

This giveaway is now closed.

Special Valentine's Day Giveaway: Pajama City PJs!





This post is sponsored by PajamaCity.

PajamaCity manufactures and distributes these PJs for both men and women. This line of pajamas is exactly like the ones we had when we were kids, but are now in adult sizes! Their creation stems from a deep desire to appease the inner-child within both men and women. Also, his and her PJs would be the perfect gift for Valentine's Day!

Features:

Sizes: 13 unisex sizes (to fit men and women from 4'4" to 7'0")

Widths: 3 extra-wide sizes (to fit men and women from 5'0" to 6'3")

Standard Features: **roomy cut**, zipper front and kangaroo pockets

Fabric styles: fleece, flannel, waffle knit, velvet, sweatshirt

Flap styles: dropseat or regular back

Foot styles: regular feet, convertible buttoned foot or cottony stocking foot – all with friction dots

Cost: \$34.95 to \$44.95.

As a special offer, Pajama City will give away a pair of their footie PJs! To be considered, comment* on this post below telling us why you want these childhood PJs. The most unique answer wins!

For more Cupid news, follow us on Twitter [@CupidsPulse](#). Thank you for reading **The Product Beat**! Visit us weekly for new products and offerings.

**Restricted to U.S. residents only.*