

HOLIDAY GIFTING SUGGESTIONS

By Marge Brown

The holiday season is here and we all wrestle with what kind of gifts to give our loved ones. Almost always they are products of our mega commercialism economy. Might there be a way to avoid this? With less than 5% of the world's population, Americans consume far more resources than people in other countries.

It's the time of year we look forward to the gatherings with our friends and families, perhaps being with the people we love the most. Our joy filled hearts wrestle with what gifts to give them, as a symbolical gesture recognizing how much they mean to us. Might there be other ways to show our love to our friends, family, and to our Earth without growing the mega commercialism of December holidays? We make decisions with every dollar we spend. "Americans consume far more resources than people in other countries. With less than 5 percent of world population, the U.S. uses a third of the world's paper, a quarter of the oil, coal, and aluminum, and 19 percent of the copper. The U.S. ranks highest by a considerable margin in most consumer categories as well.

"It is well known that Americans consume far more natural resources and live much less sustainably than people from any other large country of the world. **'A child born in the United States will create thirteen times as much ecological damage over the course of his or her lifetime than a child born in Brazil,'** reports the Sierra Club's Dave Tilford, adding that the average American will drain as many resources as 35 natives of India and consume 53 times more goods and services than someone from China."—United States Consumption - Blue Ridge Outdoors Magazine.

The stereotypes we see in toy marketing connect with the inequalities we see in adult life. By late primary age, research ... shows that children already have very clear ideas about the jobs that are suitable for boys and girls; ideas that are very hard to shake later on.— "While only 2% of the world's children reside in the U.S., those kids consume almost 50% of the world's toys."—[funtoyworld.com/toy-industry Children Toys](http://funtoyworld.com/toy-industry-children-toys) can help stimulate learning and development. Choose wisely. Let us not perpetuate the gender stereotypes.

This is an excellent time of year to teach your children and grandkids to choose a few toys out of their collections to give away so other children can enjoy them. What about buying them a hen that produces eggs from Heifer International so other children can eat? Teens, Young Adults Think about giving experiences if you are wanting to bond and deepen your relationship. Experiences certainly last longer than the five seconds it takes to rip open a new gadget. For teens and young adults, choose what they would want, not what you want to enjoy. Your enjoyment is the being with them, especially if their devices can be left home or at least in the car for the experience. We know as a culture they appreciate meaningful experiences, and they want to make a positive impact on our world. Would they appreciate your making a donation in their name to a charity or to feeding people? Here are 26 excellent suggestions for gift giving consumables. Parents with Young Children Can you give them time without their children? Even a few hours are a treasured breather. Can you do something for them—cook a meal, shop for them, give them an evening out together?

Middle-Aged People What do they need/want/enjoy?

What have you noticed they have been putting off or stalling on because they may need some help with? Can you volunteer an act of service? Clearing clutter? Helping them fix something in their home or paying someone to do so? What about spending time with them to show them features on their gadgets they may not know of that would help them. Write out or print out a gift certificate for what you come up with. Wrap it up just like a present. For gifts of classes, crafts, and indulgences, give experiences instead of gifts. Our Elders What do they need or enjoy? Would they enjoy your taking them to a show? What about gifting them with services? Window washing? House cleaning? A book of car wash certificates? Do they have their final papers in order? Can you help them with that or hire someone or do so? Do they need help simplifying and can you help them or hire someone to help them? Would they enjoy your buying or making them a few meals?

For gifts of necessity, rest, and knowledge, see five alternatives to gift giving. Employees Not all your employees celebrate the December holidays, yet every one of us likes to feel and be appreciated. For gifts for your employees, Yuup.com boasts 350 experiences to give your employees.

For Those Who Have Everything Donate in their name to their favorite charity, plant a tree, clean the ocean, fund a well of water in Africa, or give to an orphanage. Have them over for dinner or take them to an event. As we make decisions on gifts, let's remember what it takes to produce them: oil, water, electricity, computer chips (made from the Earth's white sand beaches), labor (where that comes from could be a positive or perhaps trees, etc. As we make conscious decisions about giving meaningful presents, we are positively impacting our world by respecting our Earth and her resources. The days ahead will be brighter, the air cleaner, the world purer. It is up to you and me.

Rev. Marge Brown wrote this for the EarthCare Team in the hopes that churches will share it in their newsletters. She has served three Unity churches. As a gifted healer and certified Soul Realignment® practitioner, she works with individuals wanting to live from their fullest divinity. Understanding what your primary energy center is and learning your unique soul attributes allows you to be in flow and make your greatest contributions to our world. For a list of Earth friendly gift ideas to people of all ages: children, teens/young adults, middle aged people, elders or employees, please read *HOLIDAY GIFTING CONSIDERATIONS* by Marge Brown (unityatmargebrown2020.org) or by going to www.unityworldwideministries.org/earthcare.