

Gift-Giving Without Environmental Damage

By Ann Gerhardt, MD

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Black Friday and Cyber Monday have passed. Many more opportunities to purchase gifts will come. Gift purchases support the economy and Amazon, but do we really need more stuff? After all, whether the giftee likes it or not, most stuff eventually ends up in a landfill. And, after all, the gifts we most need are Companionship, Connection and Consumables.

Consider these options for health- and environment-preserving, “consumable” gifts.

Classes:

- Art
- Dance
- Music
- Writing
- History
- Self-help
- Boat or musical instrument building
- Learning a skill

Experiences:

- Travel
- Tickets: Theater, Concert, Sports
- A camping trip or commercial one with a purpose
- Guided bicycle or hiking tour
- A ski day, ropes course, water park day, river raft trip
- Spa day, massage

Food:

- Nuts, except perhaps almonds which deplete CA’s water supply
- Spice mixes, like masala, BBQ, Greek, creole, jerk, mole, pumpkin, poultry or Italian.
- Fruit, dried or fresh.
- Olives, pickles and pickled vegetables
- Special tea, coffee, hot chocolate
- Flavored olive oil, nut oil, vinegar
- A brunch or dinner cooked at or delivered to the giftee’s house?

If you must give a non-consumable thing, how about something that makes physical activity more entertaining or at least helps to reduce the excuses to not do it, like these:

- Umbrella and/or boots
- Pedometer, sports watch or heart-rate monitor
- Earpieces for listening to podcasts or music on a walk or riding a stationary bicycle.
- Exercise logbook
- Sports socks or fun socks with your picture on them (get them online)

Rain cape/poncho for riding a bike in the rain
Walking poles
Book of hikes in the giftee's geographic area
Home gym equipment
Unlimited access to your swimming pool?

With some imagination, I'm sure you can come up with more. We CAN make the holidays caring, healthy and fun, with less damage to the environment. ¶