

Gift vs. Clutter: Let's Rethink Gift Giving

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Let's face it. Everyone loves gifts. We are touched that someone thought enough of us to purchase a gift. That beautifully wrapped box. Such anticipation. What could it be? It seems when we were younger we loved just about anything, but now how do you feel? Are there gifts you've recently received that you wish you hadn't?

In my profession I encounter many people with a lot of "stuff". That "stuff" accumulates over the years and starts to feel overwhelming. I always inevitably hear "that was a gift from my mother, my friend, my whomever". They feel like they have to keep it because it was a gift. Yet they never use it and many times, I dare to say, don't even like the gift.

No one should ever feel that way. We truly do appreciate the thoughtfulness of the person who gave it to us. The memory of how much fun it was to receive the gift is something we can always cherish. I try to help my clients through the guilt phase by asking "do you go into people's homes looking for every gift you gave them". I know I don't. Our interests change and our tastes change. Life would get pretty boring if you

always kept the same décor or theme in your home right? Therefore you can't hang on to everything anyone has ever given you as a gift. I am here to tell you it is ok to let go and say "thank you for thinking of me".

That has really gotten me thinking about the gifts I give. I recently helped my parents move after being in a home for 40 years. You guessed it; they had a lot of "stuff". I am happy to announce they were easily convinced to let go. I was so proud of them! But in seeing all they had I was also able to see they don't need anything. It is silly to shop and shop trying to find something they don't have. What I now do is give them a card stating we will take you out to dinner at the restaurant of your choice. They enjoy that much more than a gift certificate seeing as they could go out to eat any time they want. With us joining them for dinner we get to spend an enjoyable time together as a family. That is priceless to them as well as us.

Now I'm not saying you will never give anyone another gift. But think about it. Just because someone collects plates for instance, doesn't mean they need or want every plate ever made. Collections can easily

get out of control. Speaking of that, CRY UNCLE. Let people know when you don't want any more.

Be creative. If someone loves to plant new flowers every spring that can get costly. How about a garden gift certificate or even offer your time to help them shop or plant. Bottom line is do not rush out to buy a gift just to have something to give for the occasion. Think ahead for something unique that may have more meaning and truly be appreciated. Gifts do not need to cost a lot to have special meaning.

Now let go of something you've been holding on to for too long. Until next time remember, meaning vs. clutter!

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