



EXPECT SUCCESS

THE GIFTS THAT KEEP ON GIVING

As we prepare for the season of giving, this month's article is devoted to sharing suggestions for gifts that keep on giving long after the season has passed.



The Gift of Creativity

"I decided to be an inventor when I was five. My parents had given me a few various enrichment toys like erector sets, and for some reason I had the idea that if I put things together just the right way, I could create the intended effect." Ray Kurzweil

Ray Kurzweil, the Director of Engineering at Google, is an author, computer scientist, inventor and futurist. His assistive technology software inventions are used in schools to help students with dyslexia and dysgraphia. He has been referred to as the "ultimate thinking machine" by Forbes, Inc magazine. It started with his parents purchasing toys that developed his imagination and creativity.

This season consider giving elementary age children building toys or design kits such as:

- K'Nex, Legos, marble mazes, building blocks, race track sets
- Fashion design books with templates, jewelry design kits, crochet or knitting kits

For middle and high school children consider:

- Robotics kits, erector sets (yes, they still make these), battery powered vehicle kits, Lego Master Builder kits
- Sewing machine, DIY craft materials (check out diyready.com), art utensils (paper, pencils, markers)

The Gift of Curiosity

"I have no special talents. I am only passionately curious." Albert Einstein

That seems like a gross understatement coming from a man responsible for significant findings in the science world. Few people realize that Einstein was not an inventor of "things" but rather an inventor of "ideas." He is one of the greatest thinkers of all time which he attributes to his endless curiosity.

This season consider giving gifts that peak curiosity such as:

- Science kits (crystal growing kit, archaeology dig kit, introductory chemistry kit), telescope or microscope set, planetarium, young scientists sets for anatomy and biology or light and physics, ant farms, plant growing kits

The Gift of Time

"If you want your children to turn out well, spend twice as much time with them, and half as much money."
Abigail Van Buren

Abigail Van Buren, better known as "Dear Abby", had a knack for calling it like it is. Maybe in our holiday quest to find the perfect gifts, our kids might receive the greatest value in the gift of our time.

This season consider giving the gift of time together:

- Time to bake together-tie a coupon to a bag of chocolate chips and spatula good for 2 hours of baking
- Time to play board games together- board games are on sale now, add a coupon for 2 hours of play
- Time to watch a movie together-snuggling on the couch or going to the theater can be a special treat
- Time to shop together- a gift card with a "shopping day" coupon lets teens pick their own styles
- Time to "make" together-whether it's one hour of Lego building together or two hours of working on their first car in the garage, "make" time provides great opportunities for learning and listening

Here are a few online and retail stores that you may want to check out for more ideas:

- www.fatbraintoys.com
- www.mindware.com
- www.hearthsong.com
- Blain's Farm & Fleet-their annual Toyland features a large variety of imaginative kits and creative play toys at competitive prices and you can find great games there as well