

# FUNCTIONAL FASHIONABLE 8



## No-Clutter Gift Giving

Before you set out on your holiday shopping trip, take a moment to think about the best gifts you've received over the years. This shouldn't be too difficult a task because the best gifts will be the most memorable. I'll go first...

My favorite gifts fall into at least one of three categories: exciting, lasting and experiential. Exciting gifts are wonderful for the overwhelming reaction we feel when we open them. My parents primed me to experience excitement about presents by moderating the number of possessions in my life. A new toy or doll, whether for a special occasion or just on a rare whim, was always a thrill because I was not jaded by a regular inundation of "stuff."

I still recall the sheer surprise and

and Dad surprised us with Nintendo. We could not believe that they had finally decided to allow this amazing game into our home and we were more than happy to comply with the time limitations that came with the deal. I smile now just remembering the wonder of those moments.

Parents have more power to make their kids happy when they carefully bestow special gifts than when they satisfy their children's every passing desire. Especially when shopping for kids' presents, think about purchasing one really special item rather than a cart-full of trinkets. Your child will light up when he sees you've granted him something he truly wants and, like me, he'll probably cherish that memory even as an adult.

Lasting gifts are great because they make us feel sentimental, both at

only to work every so often. It's pretty much impossible to find a gift that's meaningful and enduring every year. I find it's best not to force a lasting gift and risk having it miss the mark. A customized pen, for instance, might be a thoughtful gift to someone who has recently earned a master's degree in English, but it's not necessarily meaningful for your average recipient. Consider lasting gifts — of jewelry, china, photo frames or engraved or personalized items, for example — when someone is marking a life moment. Otherwise, skip the sentimentality and go for something more ephemeral but fun.

These days, the gifts I give most often are experiential gifts because they're fun and non-cluttering, and the memories last beyond Christmas day. For several years when my brother and

stay with us all forever.

Understandably, major travel is not a viable option for everyone every time. And for many families, the tradition of exchanging wrapped parcels is very dear. Not to worry! There are many options for experiential gifts that can keep you home for the holidays and within your budget. The best thing about this type of present is that it's consumable, meaning it doesn't create clutter for the recipient. I've listed a few ideas here.

Movie passes

Theme park or arcade passes (for kids!)

Theatre, concert or sport event tickets (Ticketmaster sells gift cards!)

A class card to a yoga or dance studio

Gift certificates for lessons (music, horseback riding... whatever you like)

Coffee house gift card



delight I felt when my parents finally bought me a Cabbage Patch Kids doll. Most of my friends had already tired of their three or four Cabbage Patch Kids but I treasured my one and only "Gilder" (we purchased her at the airport in Amsterdam). Years later, my brother and I nearly exploded with excitement when Mom

the time of receipt and forever after. One such gift I received when I was about 15 years old. My mother had her beautiful gold signet ring re-engraved with my initials. I still love and wear that ring, and plan to pass it on to a 15-year-old who's important in my life some day. Lasting gifts are tricky, though, because they tend



I were children, my parents took us for a beach vacation over winter break. Rather than unwrapping presents at home, the four of us would enjoy a beautiful vacation together, exploring and spending quality time with one another. Recently, we celebrated all of our birthdays with a fantastic adventure in Portugal, the memory of which will

Restaurant gift certificate  
Spa or manicure gift certificate  
Fruit- or flower-of the month club subscription

One or more sessions from a cleaning (or professional organizing!) service

Take a few minutes to make a nice presentation of your gift, even if it's an experiential one, and especially if it's



# ADD/ADHD SEMINAR

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2012: 6:30  
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If your child is suffering from ADD/ADHD  
Call for your Child's sake!

## TOPIC DISCUSSIONS:

- Drugless Non-Invasive Therapy
- Brain Base Therapy Protocol
- Nutrition for the Brain



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for a child. People of all ages appreciate an attractive present and it's undeniably fun to unwrap. For example, tie some colorful ribbon around a candy assortment to accompany a movie pass. Include a yoga block with your gift of a class card, a bottle of nail polish with your pedicure certificate or a high-quality apple corer with your fruit-of-the-month club subscription.

Of course, you'll want to tailor your gift to each recipient. A gym membership is a great idea for someone who loves to exercise but might offend someone who doesn't usually work out. A spa certificate is a treat for the average working mom but won't be very much fun for someone who has a standing massage appointment. The best way to choose something appropriate for a particular recipient is to think about what he/she might enjoy if it was free. In other words, think

about indulging your friend with a special treat that he/she normally wouldn't buy for him/herself. I



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love receiving Starbucks cards because, although I do enjoy the occasional tall, decaf, soy, one-pump vanilla latte (no whip!), I don't often feel like spending money on one.

The golden rule for gift giving is to remember its purpose, which is to bring pleasure to the recipient. Convenience alone is not a valid reason for choosing a gift. So don't

dole out socks to everyone you know just because you happen to receive an employee discount at the sock emporium. Similarly, don't buy things for others that you wouldn't want yourself. How many candles, bath soaps and body lotions have you received over the years? Would you mention any of them in your list of favorite gifts? If the answer is no, then don't give these impersonal, cliché items to others. You'd better believe your child's preschool teacher would prefer a simple bottle of wine to yet another hand-made apple-themed Christmas tree ornament. If you're looking to include your child in the gift-giving process, then cooking a homemade consumable together is a better bet. Think outside the "baked goods" box and consider gifting a homemade jam or sauce.

When all else fails and you can't think of a gift that your loved one would

really enjoy, give them a card instead. Write from the heart about what this person means to you — and maybe offer to

treat them to lunch one day soon.

The best gifts we can give one another are appreciation and respect. They never go out of style and they don't take up space in your closet. Even children will enjoy a heartfelt note from you, as long as it's attached to something shiny.