

# 24 Fun, Free, MEANINGFUL GIFT IDEAS

AS FEATURED ON



**HOW TO HAVE PLENTY OF PRESENTS UNDER  
THE TREE WITHOUT SPENDING A CENT!**

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One particularly tough year, my family realized buying presents would put an extra strain on our finances, causing stress and anxiety. Rather than add an unnecessary burden during what should be a joyful time, we found ways to still have gifts to exchange without feeling the need to spend. This actually ended up being a much more meaningful, memorable experience and we still incorporate these concepts every year.

Agree on a new tradition! Here are 24 unique ideas that won't cost a dime and are sure to bring your loved ones closer, giving more meaning to this special time of year.

Open your mind up to a completely new perspective! And of course it's still fun to see a pile of presents to open so wrap 'em up and have fun with it! You might just be surprised how fun and fulfilling this can be.

## 1. Memory Gifts

Go shopping in your own home! Find old treasures, souvenirs from a trip you took, perhaps a gift that was once given to you! Anything that sparks a memory will do. Wrap it up and when the receiver opens it, share the memory of what it means to you.

Another twist on this gift idea is using PHOTOS!! We have so many photos in our phones, perhaps old photo albums covered in dust! Wrap them up and share the memories.







## 2. The Way To Your Heart Gifts

They say the way to someone's heart is through their stomach! Find an old family recipe that sparks a memory and wrap it up! You can even include some of the ingredients from the cupboard! Make the recipe together, sharing the memories this dish brings to mind.

One year my sister gave me a photo album filled with photos and recipes. Next to photos of family members she put their favorite recipe. Next to the photos from each special occasion she put the traditional family recipes from that particular event. I treasure it and still use it to this day!

## 3. It's The Thought That Counts Gifts

The thought behind the gift is often more meaningful than the gift itself. Wrap up an ad or picture of the gift you'd *like* to give your loved one. When they open it, share why you thought of that for them. If you want, you can even start saving for it and give yourselves something to look forward to! This seems like a stretch, but trust me, this one still is fun and has deeper meaning.





## 4. Special Secret Santa Gifts

Instead of drawing names from a hat and buying something for that person, try this twist! Everyone write down an act of kindness and put them into random gift boxes or in the stockings hanging by the fireplace. Everyone takes a turn opening or drawing one out and reads it out loud. They have until New Year's Eve to carry it out.

Check out my free list of creative acts of kindness as ideas. [DOWNLOAD PDF HERE!](#)



## 5. Spirit of Adventure Gifts

If you have a globe, maps or travel magazines, wrap them up! Or print out pictures of maps of various parts of the world. When the receiver opens, have them pick out their top 3 places they would like to travel to. Spend some time sharing about various places you'd like to visit together and why. Start planning and saving!

You can also share about the various places you've each been and what you loved best.



## 6. Christmas Craft Gifts

Make a special ornament or centerpiece using fun family photos, small souvenirs from special occasions or various crafty holiday items like candles, holly, pinecones, glitter, glass bulbs, ribbons or bows.

If you are like me and NOT crafty, make it simple - cut a family photo into a heart shape and stick an ornament hook at the top or wrap a little ribbon around a small souvenir from a trip and viola, a special memento ornament!





## 7. Inspired Gifts

Write down your favorite inspirational quote or bookmark a passage in your favorite book and wrap it up! When the receiver opens, read it together and share what it means to you.

## 8. Backyard Gifts

What gifts from Mother Nature do you have right in your own back yard?

We have a lime tree and send limes to our friends with a recipe for key lime pie, margaritas, or street tacos! Yum!

## 9. Gifts for a Cause

Write down a charity or cause that's important to you or find something in your home that represents it and wrap it up. When it's opened, explain why that cause has meaning for you.

Then brainstorm ways to volunteer or support it and go do it!

## 10. Gift of Song

Pick the perfect song to dedicate to your loved one, write it down and wrap it up! When they open it, share why you chose that song for them, then play it! Sing along or dance along or both! Music is magic!

## 11. Movie-time Gifts

Pick a favorite movie you have on DVD or saved on your DVR or other movie channel. Wrap it up and give it to your loved one along with some popcorn!!

Make some cocoa, light a fire and have a cozy movie night!

## 12. Game-Time Gifts

Wrap up a fun game that's been sitting in the closet and play it together! Turn your living room into a game show set! Visit [TheDoctorofFun.com](http://TheDoctorofFun.com) for ready-made templates and game packs!



### 13. Gifts of Gratitude

Take some blank pages from a scrapbook or journal and wrap them up with a pen. When they are opened, everyone has to write down at least 10 things they are grateful for.

Compile all the pages together into a gratitude book and read it together.



### 14. Grocery Gifts

Next time you go grocery shopping, pick a few favorites to wrap up instead of just putting them in the cupboard! Perhaps your favorite cereal, can of soup, or refill on your bath soap.

Label it from Santa to yourself or your loved one and enjoy!

### 15. Gift of Laughter

Laughter has so many benefits, not only mentally and emotionally but also physically! Laughter will boost your immune system, release natural mood-enhancing chemicals into your brain, lower your blood pressure, reduce the stress hormone cortisol by a whopping 23% and so much more!

Find some funny jokes, memes, video clips, stories, and share a good laugh!

### 16. Gift of Savings

Celebrate that you managed to SAVE this Christmas instead of spending! Get out a jar, put your extra change in it and decide what you'd like to start saving for next. Each day, add to it.

### 17. Gift of Giving

There is nothing more rewarding than brightening someone else's day! Bake some cookies or a warm meal and bring to someone in need.

Go through your closet and donate clothes to a local shelter.

Donate your time at a school, shelter, hospital, or veteran's hall. Collect Toys for Tots, ring the bell for The Salvation Army, there are many ways to give and make a difference.





## 18. Good Neighbor Gifts

Decide on a neighborly deed like shoveling their driveway or spreading cheer by caroling to them! Wrap up a shovel or a songlist that your family unwraps together to declare what your good deed will be and do it together!

## 19. Troubles to Triumphs Gifts

This is a powerful activity! Write down a challenge or difficulty you are experiencing and wrap it in a beautiful box. When it's opened, everyone brainstorm ways to be grateful for it. Find the silver lining! Maybe there is a lesson to be found or it will lead to something even better. You literally turn your challenge into a gift. Gratitude simply melts your troubles away. This might seem odd at first but when you realize things don't happen TO you, but FOR you, your whole world suddenly gets better!

## 20. Gift of Childhood

Give yourselves permission to be kids again! Build a blanket fort, play hide and seek, finger-paint! Wrap up a representation of the activity you will PLAY out!

## 21. Gift of Connection

Spark meaningful connection with your loved one asking questions to learn things you may not have known! For ready-made questions try [36 Questions to Fall in Love](#), [A Match Made in Heaven](#), or even [The Frying Pan Game](#) for a fast-paced silly twist! Available at [TheDoctorofFun.com](http://TheDoctorofFun.com).

## 22. Gift of Nature

Find a small representation of nature and wrap it up. When it's opened, share why it has meaning for you. Take a walk to return the gift back to nature and enjoy the scenery along the way.





## 23. Gift of Dance

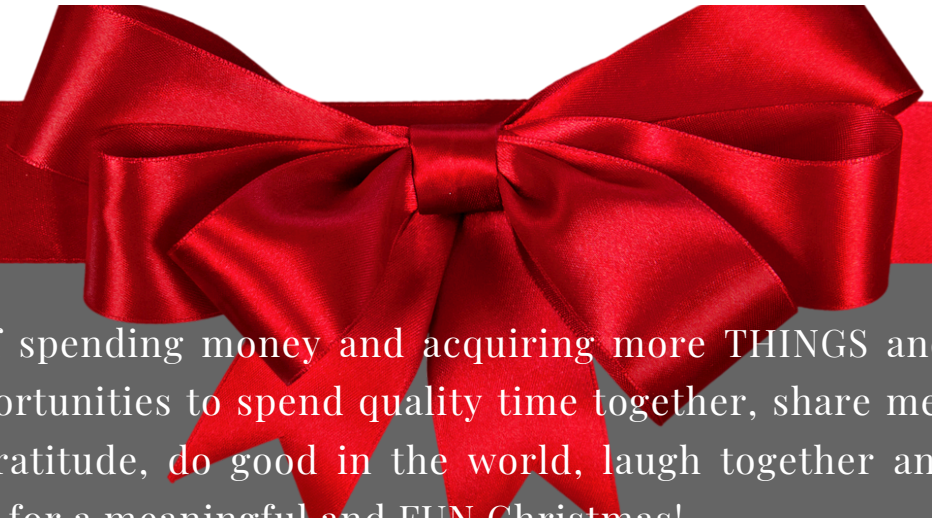
Create a fun playlist and then wrap up a speaker. When it's opened, start up the music and have a dance party!

Dancing releases so many feel-good chemicals in your brain and body! This is a fun easy way to generate energy, have spontaneous fun with your loved one, and burn off those extra cookies you ate!

## 24. Gift of Love

Love is the greatest gift of all and you can never give too much. Come up with fun ways to spread love and a fun way to package it, then make it happen.

For example, wrap up a stuffed dog toy and go visit a shelter and give love to the pets in need. Or write a love letter to your loved one, expressing all the things you love about them!



Remove the pressure of spending money and acquiring more THINGS and focus instead on creating opportunities to spend quality time together, share memories and dreams, practice gratitude, do good in the world, laugh together and truly connect! This is a recipe for a meaningful and FUN Christmas!

At TheDoctorofFun.com, our mission is to help people inject more fun into life! We promote unique, out-of-the-box ideas, tactics, and experiences to find the joy in unexpected places! When you create small moments of joy and happiness even among the things that weigh on us, life becomes lighter and more fun!

We hope this list helps you find new ways to experience joy and reduce stress during a special time of year. It's a very different approach and may be met with resistance especially from younger ones, but it's an incredible opportunity to teach about what truly matters and create a ripple of goodness to last generations.

Follow TheDoctorofFun for more ways to live a happy, joy-filled life!







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