

To gift or not to gift

By Darren Gallagher

Don't you just love Christmas? By now you all would have already decided which gifts are heading straight to the 'Re-Gift' cupboard at home. Oh I know, I shouldn't talk about re-gifting. It's a bit like standing in a lift and copping a whiff of a mysterious odour, and not asking what you already know to be true, *'Did someone just ...'*

Re-Gifting is the unsaid practice that has gone on for centuries. People like to think that nobody that they know does it too. *'Oh my friends don't re-gift – do they?'* I sense you thinking from the comfort of your easy chair that was a gift to you for your 21st from your dodgy uncle who insisted it was new but couldn't explain the cigar burn on the right arm.

But this happens. I think the biggest re-gifted item must be the 'Fondue Set' (FS) – I know you will be reading this, Aunt Ange, and, yep, we re-gifted that sucker straight after Christmas.

It's funny how we have a double standard when it comes to Christmas paper and ribbon. I remember watching one of my other relatives swooping on paper when I was a small boy. She would collect it all to re-use the next year. I remember finding this a little disturbing and as such when I sensed her stalking my present opening, I would ensure that the correct *'tear and destroy'* drills were applied to ensure nothing remained. But I was about six, so I have moved on from that paper paranoia episode of my life.

Back to the FS: I love the commentary that comes with the receipt of this gift. *'Oh this is great!'* you exclaim, not really knowing what the heck it is and a little disappointed that you didn't get that *'Kiss The Cook'* apron that you dropped hints for. Then you try to pretend that you know what it is and say, *'I love Japanese food, this is tops'*. Then the present giver takes the time to tell you how much fun they are (and you know they are lying because even the people in the pictures on the box aren't having any fun). Then you are obliged to say, *'We*

will have to get you guys over and have a Fondue night at our place after Chrissy'.

Hah!, as though that was ever going to happen. That kind of standing invite is the same one you give to old friends whose names you can't really remember that you bump into in the dog food aisle of the local supermarket. *'Yeah, we'll have to catch up soon for drinks.'* What a great exchange that is. Neither party actually have the contact details of the other, and they are careful to *'forget'* to do this during the exchange in the dog food aisle. Which is a nice coincidence because the dog food and the conversation are about as appetising as each other.

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But, I digress. Back to the FS. Christmas has passed (by only a matter of days, or even hours if your visitors aren't staying) and you have this *'fun'* present sitting in the middle of the kitchen table as you and your partner try to figure out to whom you're going to handball this one. This can be a tough time for a couple. Immediately, you have to rule out anyone who may come into contact with the people that gave it to you, plus the people who were there when you got it. I tell you my re-gifted readers, there is a science to effectively executing a well-planned and timely re-gift. Which brings me to my next point.

Now pay attention because this bit is important.

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