



*Natural Order, LLC*  
sustainable organizing solutions

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## *Holiday Gift Giving ~ Think outside the BOX*

*By Darci Lee, Professional Organizer*

Think back – WAY back to when you were a kid. If you were like me, you wanted to join in and give gifts like the adults. If I had saved my allowance I may have been able to buy a few small gifts, but I wasn't a saver at that time. Instead I had to get creative. I loved crafts and making everything from needle point creations to a handmade coupon book for such things as raking leaves or folding towels. Years later, it isn't the iPod I bought for my Dad or the set of dishes I bought for my Mom that they remember – it's the handmade, thoughtful needlepoint Christmas ornaments they love.

Remember back when you couldn't afford the luxury of running to the big box store to grab a gift card. Oftentimes the best gifts are those that are thoughtful and take a little more imagination. With my family spread throughout the country, the holidays are particularly special because we all get to spend time together. Sitting together, talking about what has happened since we last saw each other, playing with the new babies our family has been blessed with and looking at old photo albums.

This year as you think about what to give, think about what would mean most to that person. Do they love sports? Instead of buying them another team sweatshirt consider presenting them with tickets to the local college football game or maybe the major league baseball season opener. If you love sports, consider taking them yourself!

If you have children it is difficult in this time of highly animated commercials and advertising, but think about what they want most from you. For a younger child, maybe a gift of spending the day at the Zoo or a making puppets and putting on a puppet show. For a slightly older child, maybe a spa day for the girls or a day hiking or indoor rock climbing for boys. Give the most valuable gift – your time.

Below are a few ideas to get you thinking.

1. Tickets to a sporting event, movies or concert
2. Consumable Items: baskets with foods they love or bath/body products they use. Maybe a picnic basket with all the fixings. If you want to make it even more special, make the treats yourself.

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3. A personalized recipe booklet with all of your favorites.
4. Frame a custom piece of art (made by your child) and give to a grandparent.
5. Gift Certificate for a service they already use or maybe one that they have always wanted but wouldn't purchase for themselves – like a massage or facial. Are they always saying, “I just don't have enough storage” or “I can't find anything!”? If so, maybe the gift of organization is the perfect gift.
6. Donate to a charity that is close to the recipient's heart. Do they love animals – donate to a local shelter or humane society. Donate locally if possible. For a list of possible charities go to [www.justgive.org](http://www.justgive.org). You can also search thousands of organizations at [www.alternativegift.org](http://www.alternativegift.org).
7. Schedule a monthly lunch date with an elderly neighbor or relative. They'll love the company and the opportunity to catch up.

As far as how to present your gift ~ instead of using the typical gift wrap, use Sunday comics, old maps, decorated brown grocery bags or scrap fabric. Do your kids have any artwork that could double as a personal wrapping.

Above all, bear in mind it is not the gifts we remember, but the spirit and love with which they are given.

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*Darci Lee is a successful Vancouver, WA-based Professional Organizer, coach, and speaker. Through hands-on organizing and coaching clients, Darci helps busy homeowners and entrepreneurs organize their space and time. For free home and business organizing tips and resources, visit her web site at [www.NaturalOrderllc.com](http://www.NaturalOrderllc.com), or email her at [Darci@NaturalOrderllc.com](mailto:Darci@NaturalOrderllc.com).*