

Present tense?



If you're fresh out of ideas for a decent gift, 360 has your back: Here's a slew of fun finds for most everyone on your list

Just to get this out there, I'm a great gift giver. I'm the one my siblings go to first to steal ideas for our parents' birthdays or Christmas. I usually allow it because I have lots of ideas up my sleeve. If you're stuck on what to get important people in your life and don't want to fall back on impersonal gift cards, here are a few ideas.

For the newly married couple, unusual, personalized items abound:

- Custom return address stamps — Etsy has hundreds to choose from and are very reasonably priced.
- Hand-painted wedding portrait



of the new couple — I've ordered custom family portraits from several different artists, and they've all turned out beautifully.

Many artists are willing to work with you on clothing (wedding dress and tux, for example). Lady Noel Designs, Sophie and Lili, and Ashley Hoiland are a few possibilities.

● If you're sentimental, there's a chance you still have invitations, a piece of bouquet, and various other favors and mementoes from their ceremony. Pair those items with a picture from the wedding to put together a small shadowbox.

Your best friend:

● For a girl-friend, put together a small cosmetic bag filled with everything one might need for a fun night out. Think lip-gloss alongside Tylenol, amazing false lashes and a mini bottle of Jagermeister. Tuck in a gift certificate for your favorite local hangout to finish it off. This can easily be done without alcohol, too.

● For family friends, fill a basket to create a fun night in. Gourmet popcorn, Redbox gift cards, a couple of games, candy and a cozy blanket.

● Make your own grown-up coloring book.

Make black-and-white prints of you and your friend together (dark clothing doesn't work well, so pick photos where you're dressed in light colors). Get it bound at an office supply store and tuck some crayons or colored pencils into the front cover.

● A small lemon or lime tree in a beautiful pot is the gift that keeps on giving.

● For friends who have moved away, remind them where home really is. Do an Etsy search for "state home tees" and if Idaho is the one you're



GIFT GURU
Ruthie Prasil

after, Wild and Free Designs has the perfect hand stamped image (www.etsy.com/shop/WildFreeIdaho).



The grandparents: "Oh, you don't have to get me anything," seems to be what grandparents say, but you don't want Christmas to pass without showing how much you love and appreciate them.

● Schedule a photo session for them and all their grandchildren. Once the photos are taken, make a photo book for them to keep on their table or in a purse or bag.

● Customized jewelry is so easy to find, from thumb print pendants to names engraved on solid bars that dangle from a chain. Etsy holds the motherload of artists who can create whatever you can dream up.

● Snag a farmers market bag from Wild and Free and fill it with veggies along with a certificate for three months' membership to a local co-op or community supported agriculture (CSA) organization.

● Prepay for a month's worth of house cleaning, take a car to get detailed or say the next visit to the barber or hairdresser is on you. Add an extra service as a surprise (head



massage, shave, blow out or manicure).

The siblings: Giving siblings the gift of your presence should be enough but they're always wanting more.

● Matching bracelets for sisters is a sweet and thoughtful gift. They don't have to say "best friend" or "sisters" but might instead be a simple heart or an engraved bar with your last (maiden) name or an inside joke sentiment. For a different look, get matching crystal designs from Disco Gems, a local artist (www.etsy.com/shop/discogems).

● Bacon of the month club. Substitute bacon with wine, cheese, T-shirt, you name it. I think you can even get a lobster of the month subscription believe it or not.

● Temporary tattoos aren't just for kids. Tattly is a temporary tattoo company that caters to adults, appealing to the creative minds. They're inexpensive and fun and put a smile on every face.

● Greeting cards might sound like the most boring gift on the planet, but if you find an assortment of 10 perfect greeting cards for any and every occasion, you've struck gold. Bonus points if they make you laugh so hard you snort.

● You can find cool and trendy designs for almost any hobby. Poler is a company that designs and sells camping equipment. Their designs aren't just basic black and green, they're super hip and cool, and for only \$12 you can get an awesome enamel mug. If you have someone who is a photographer, find a really unusual camera strap. Writers love pens and cool notebooks. If the hobby is drinking, find a set of pilsner glasses and pair it with a growler full of craft beer.

● Money is never an unwanted gift. To

make it fun, pre-order books of \$2 bills from your bank and make money origami out of each bill.

The new parents:

● Nose Frida is simultaneously the grossest and most amazing invention for new parents. It is used to clear your infant's nose of snot and mucus which isn't that weird, right? What makes this so strange is that you suck out the snot. That's right, there's a tube connected with a mouthpiece and you physically suck the snot right out. It's incredibly efficient and super clean. There's a filter to ensure you don't actually suck any snot through the tube attached to the mouthpiece, and it comes apart for easy cleaning.

● Personalized baby books are perfect for new parents who don't want to forget every little thing their baby does from rolling over to saying, "Mama."

● I'm not sure why this happens after a new baby arrives, but all of a sudden moms love matching their little ones. Matching T-shirts, scarves, headbands or shoes are all big hits.

● Custom board books are a new spin on a classic. At

Pinholepress, images can be uploaded into a template to create a "Book of Faces" from your own photos.

● Bottle of champagne or wine. Enough said.

Other small, random-but-fun ideas:

Socks from Stance, anything from Ban.do, games, flowers delivered by Farmgirl Flowers, herb wreaths, gourmet cocktail bitters and syrups, specialty candies from Sugarfina, or a cookbook and all the ingredients for the best-looking recipe.

Thanks to sites like Etsy and Instagram, it's easy to find unusual and fun gifts to complement any personality. Gift-giving can sometimes seem like a chore, but when you know the recipient is going to love what they open, it becomes more like a treat. Happy shopping.

👉 Prasil is a Clarkston mom of 6 who survives on stale goldfish crackers, spontaneous adventures, hip-hop and happy hour. She can be reached via email at ruthieprasil@gmail.com.

