GIVE THE GIFT OF YOU THIS YEAR

BY JODI RALL
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Dearest Readers,

It is hard for me to believe that once again I am sitting here working on the Holiday Gift Guide. It is something that gives me such joy. It also makes me proud of how many local businesses we have in our community. Meeting shop owners, talking with staff and hearing their excitement over the products they offer is an incredible opportunity.

Now that my own four children are grown and have flown, the gift giving has taken on new meaning. While I do try to get them something from their wish list, each year I take the opportunity to get creative.

In years past I wrote about making a cookbook for each of the children including recipes from both sides of our family and generations of grandparents all the way back to my own grandmother in Ireland. I included their favorite meals, Sunday dinners and even a recipe from our church on how to build a loving home.

While it was practical, it meant a lot to each of my children. Our youngest son loves to cook, and his reaction was priceless.

Photo books have been another hit with the children — capturing memories from the year, our travels, and our milestones.

This year I am giving each child gifts that I hope will be treasured.

Every year I try to choose a word of intension to live by. For this Christmas, I asked each child to give me five words of intension for 2023. Then I formatted the words, printed on thick cardstock and framed. Now they can place it at home, or on their desk at work, and visually see their words. It was not an expensive project, but I do hope they find meaning and value in living purpose-filled lives.

The second handmade gift is art that they will treasure. Photography is something I love to do and occasionally, one certain picture becomes a work of art. So much so that a friend who is an artist asked for my photo to paint it.

My husband grew up in Sarasota, Florida, at Siesta Key. It is our family's happy place. We are beach loving people. This summer during our vacation I was out on a dock just after a horrible storm had blown through. A pelican was sitting on the edge, just about to take flight, and in that moment I captured the bird in all its glory.

I found a company that could take my photo and put it on canvas.

Each of the children will now have my art and one day when I am gone, hope they will look fondly at it and remember me.

My word for 2022 has been grateful. My heart is full of gratitude for my family, friends and especially for those who read my columns and stories.

Give those you love the best gift you can ever give them this year, your presence.



Jodi and Eric Rall

