

CAN YOU REGIFT? YES!

By Diane Gottsman

We have all received gifts that just weren't the right fit – literally and figuratively. When given a gift that you know you have no use for, it is OK to think about giving it to someone who might want it. But you have to be careful about how to handle the re-gift, so you don't insult your gift recipients while trying to spread holiday cheer. Here are some tips to help you regift with style.

Do re-gift with caution. It is no longer taboo to give a perfectly lovely or useful gift to someone you know will enjoy it. You may not be able to eat the expensive box of chocolate toffee you were given, but you know your elderly neighbor would go wild to receive it. Go for it, but make certain you aren't giving a gift to someone who may be socializing in the same circle of friends.

Don't wait too long if the gift is perishable. If it's something that you can put away, like a pretty frame that is a duplicate, wait for the right moment to give the gift, such as a birthday or anniversary, rather than during the same holiday season. But if it is a food item, time is of the essence.

Do give the gift in the original package. Attempting a bait and switch by changing department store labels or bags, leading the receiver to think it came from a different source, is a shifty move. They may try and return the item, only to find it was not purchased at that particular store. Don't give away anything that was a free gift with purchase or has been used and put back in the box.

Don't re-gift an heirloom. While you may not appreciate the set of bone-handled steak knives that have seen better days, your great-aunt thinks she is giving you a treasure. Accept the gift graciously and pull them out the next time she comes to visit. It's the gift of courtesy you are giving back in return by remembering the thought behind her gesture.

Do donate to a charity. Instead of risking getting caught giving away something you received from a friend or family member, donate unwanted gifts to a charity where someone will be able to use it. This is where your gifts with purchase and multiple samples of travel-size toiletries can be put to good use.

Don't hide it. Own your actions. Rather than re-gifting discreetly, consider letting the other person know you received a gift that you cannot use, but you know it's their favorite brand, color or scent. Don't wrap it like a gift but offer them the item in a nice bag that looks like it has been waiting just for them.

By following these re-gifting rules this holiday season, you will be able to happily find a good home for your unwanted gifts. Once the wrapping paper of an unwanted gift is torn apart, you can pass the gifts on without tearing apart any friendships or relationships.

Diane Gottsman is a national etiquette expert, author and the owner of The Protocol School of Texas, a company specializing in corporate etiquette training.

For more information, visit
protocolschooloftexas.com