

6 Gifts You Should Never Give Your Girlfriend

It's your girlfriend's birthday or your first Christmas together, and you want to get her the best gift she's ever had. Gifts mean a lot to women. The right gift tells her you're thoughtful, observant, and you really understand her. The wrong one, however, can tell her just the opposite.



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Exercise equipment

Nothing says, "I think you could stand to lose weight" like a Stairmaster. The same goes for a set of barbells, a Pilates instructional video, or a gym membership. Even if she's talked about getting fit, this kind of gift will make her wonder whether you like her body the way it is.

If you really would like to see her exercising more, lead by example. Join the gym yourself. Chances are, when she sees how great you look and feel, she'll be inspired to join as well. You could also take up a physical activity you could do as a couple, such as cycling, jogging, or hiking. To increase the chances she'll get into it, pick an activity she's expressed interest in before. It should also be one you can do relatively easily. Don't decide to take up sea kayaking if you're two hours - drive from the ocean, for example, and don't pick one that you need a lot of expensive equipment to get started in.

Cookware

The subliminal message here is "Get in the kitchen and make me some supper, woman!" This is a bad gift even if she's expressed interest in cooking - or if you'd like her to. If you have a master chef for a girlfriend, it's especially important to pass on this kind of gift. It's likely she has everything she needs already, and most high-level cooks are picky about their equipment.

If you really would like to encourage her to cook more, start with some positive reinforcement. Praise the meals she does cook. If you tell her you see her as a great cook already, she's more likely to take more of an interest in the culinary arts.

A vacuum cleaner

The same goes for feather dusters, mops, bottles of Pine-Sol, oven cleaner, Lemon-Scented Joy, and any other household cleaning products. These gifts tell her that you see her as more of a maid than a girlfriend.

A puppy. Animal gifts are tricky. Sure, puppies and kittens are adorable - but they're also a lot of work. Food and vet bills can be expensive, and many pets require a change in lifestyle to take proper care of. For these reasons, it's best not to surprise your girlfriend with a new pet.

Part of the fun is choosing the pet yourself. If your girlfriend has told you she wants a dog or cat, offer to take her to the local animal rescue shelter instead and pay for the pet she picks.

Something you want for yourself. You know you've been tempted to buy her that subscription to Fly Fishing magazine, new set of golf clubs, or Playstation II. Don't do it! She'll see through it instantly.

Jewellery

Jewellery has a great deal more meaning for most women than other gifts. If you give the right one, she'll see it as a sign that you're the right guy for her. If you get it wrong, however, at best she'll laugh about it with her friends for ages. At worst, she could see it as grounds for doubt about the relationship. If you're going to give her jewellery, you'd better get it right the first time.

What makes giving jewellery so difficult is that every woman has distinct tastes. The jewellery you pick could be too chunky, too eccentric, too classic, too delicate, too cheap-looking or expensive-looking for her. Some women never wear gold, some never wear silver, and most women have a preference for certain precious stones over others. If you really do want to give her jewellery, casually take her into a few stores. See how she reacts to the merchandise. Make note of any pieces she especially likes. Then go back later to buy them.

Most women don't want practical gifts from their boyfriends. They want gifts that send a positive message about how you see them. A sparkling diamond bracelet tells her you see her as precious and beautiful. Elegant lingerie can tell her you see her as sexy and desirable. A book about something she finds fascinating tells her you take her interests seriously. However, it's important to take her unique tastes into account before buying her any present. If you do, and if you follow our tips, you should be able to find her the perfect gift.

Short note about the author

Janette Vince is managing director of <http://www.thanksdarling.com> a website full of great gift ideas whatever the occasion.

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