



Sunday November 26, 2006

Make It Personal

By Julie E. Greene

Trying to figure out what to get someone for Christmas?

Instead of quizzing loved ones about what they want, use what you know about them to give them something of interest, said Sarah Weidman, author of "Gifted: 1,000 Gift Ideas for Everyone in Your Life."

In her book, released in October through Perigee Trade, Weidman suggests gift ideas based on a person's personality and events. There are chapters for "The Mommy-Any-Minute," "The Restless Retiree" and "The Know-It-All."

Deconstruct the person by thinking about his or her lifestyle, personality, hobbies, and interests, Weidman said in a recent phone interview from Los Angeles.

Does the person collect something or have a favorite sports team?

If the person likes to cook, get them a cooking class, Weidman said. "That's something they probably wouldn't buy themselves and something you know they'll truly enjoy."

If you're worried about whether the class will clash with the person's schedule, get them a gift certificate for the class.

Try a cooking class. For a more particular experience, gourmet cooking classes are available through www.excitations.com in cities such as Bethesda, Md.

Treat people to indulgences they wouldn't get themselves, such as a handsome tennis racket bag, she said. If the receiver is a frequent traveler, give a nice cashmere travel blanket or travel set with an eye mask.

Fun gifts also can come from thinking about where a person is from.

A Chicago native might appreciate an authentic Chicago pizza shipped from the Windy City's most famous pizza place, Gino's East (www.featuredfoods.com), Weidman said.

"That's really thoughtful. The most important thing is to show them you pay attention. You know them on a personal level," Weidman said.