

Published based on [My Grown Up Christmas List - Devotional](#)

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This was written by my wife, Mikki for her blog, [Mikki's Journey](#).

MY GROWN UP CHRISTMAS LIST

As I awakened this morning, I found myself thinking of a Christmas song entitled "My Grown-Up Christmas List". It is a beautiful song full of meaning. I began to think about what my list would look like this year. I am going to share a very personal "Grown-Up Christmas List".

As I imagine myself opening gifts on Christmas morning – untying the bows, ripping off the paper as one by one, these are the gifts I would like to open this year:

1. Words of kindness, love, care, encouragement, counsel, empathy, and hope. As I evaluate 2008, words were very important. It was a year filled with words. Words of encouragement. Words of empathy. Words of counsel. Words of counsel. Words of hate. Words of gossip. Words of destruction. Faithful words. Unfaithful words. Words intended to build up and words intended to tear down. Interestingly, the year led me to discover my own words. I began to write, and I found fulfillment in the expression of my heart. And certainly words are often meaningless unless they are accompanied by...

2. Actions which say "I care about you and my actions back up my words with kindness, love, care, encouragement, counsel, empathy, and hope."

3. Time. The gift of time spent with me.

4. Relationship. I discovered in 2008 that relationships are a beautiful treasure.

5. Value. I would unwrap the gift that says "I value who you are as a person."

6. Understanding. I need the gift of understanding. Understanding my heart. Understanding that I am a work in progress.

7. Commitment. This beautiful gift says "I am committed to you in fair and foul weather."

And there are some gifts I want to give myself. One of the most beautiful gifts I unwrapped in 2008 was the gift of my humanness. I found that I had deeply dishonored the gift of my humanness. Somehow along the way in an effort to be strong, I had despised the weakness of my humanness. I had not denied it, but I had despised it. My counselor this year said something that has deeply impacted me. I'm not sure if it was original to him or not but I find it is a thread that God is weaving into my life. He said, "We are all more deeply wounded than we dare to admit, and more glorious than we might ever imagine." That statement was quite challenging to me. I found I had been unwilling to admit my woundedness, present woundedness and woundedness from my childhood, and perhaps equally unwilling to admit the gloriousness in me as I embrace the image of God within me. So this year I would give to myself...

1. Kindness

2. Understanding

3. Value

4. Time

5. Honor

6. Personal growth

And sadly, as I think back throughout the years, I remember very few gifts which were significant. I remember disappointment in some gifts, not because I despised the gift, but because the gift spoke of a lack of understanding of my heart or an attitude which said, "I'm just buying you something in order to mark you off my list of requirements." Gifts like dishtowels. Dishtowels just don't say love to me.

I confess that I am more guilty than most. So many times I have rushed because the season demanded it. I have been more concerned about saving money than bringing joy. I have relegated my Christmas shopping to a science. In order to survive the rush and demands of the season, I have learned how to "pull it off" in amazing ways. Shopping early, shopping the sales, attacking the season as a job to be completed.

I realize there is nothing wrong with saving money and being prepared, but I find perhaps I have done it at the expense of love. I have put so many things onto my Christmas calendar, that I haven't had time to express love in my gifts and actions. Christmas has been an experience to conquer and move past – x-ing off all the requirements and being competent in my conquest of Christmas. In some ways, I have hated the requirements of time and money that I have allowed an American Christmas to dictate to me and failed to make Christmas an expression of my heart to others and to God.

I am going to try this year to make a better effort to give gifts which have an element of understanding and love in them. I know I won't get it all right, but I am human and I am growing. As I purposely revisit the meaning of Christmas this year, I pray that "Peace on earth; goodwill towards men" would be a real part of my celebration. I pray that somehow I would be able to celebrate Jesus in myself and in others. And may I be able to share him with those who have never known peace at all by giving of myself in words, actions, time, relationships, value, understanding, commitment, and honor.

Merry Christmas

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