

A Perfect Christmas Gift

by Donita K. Paul, author of *Dragons of the Watch*

'Tis the season to ponder your budget in time and money for a blowout, sensational, colossal, I-appreciate-you-more-than-you-can-fathom gift exchange. . . . Or not.

I love shopping for the perfect gift for someone I love. And I have a few tips for getting it right.

My son is a self-proclaimed, academic elitist. And at the other end of the spectrum, a role-playing gamer with a collection of fantasy and science fiction that should be bequeathed to a library in his will. My son-in-law has several hidden talents, and I always look for something to nurture those abilities that lurk under the surface. My daughter wears funky clothes. No problem there. My daughter-in-law likes quirky jewelry.

My advice: Identify the inner interests and cater to those. Or, identify an obvious, surface trait and cater to that.

But there is one gift to give that outshines all the others. The gift of forgiveness. Identify what has hurt, harmed, or laid you low, and forgive the person who hammered your pride with an unintentional slight or a mean twist of a knife. Forgive. This gift given to the trespasser ends up being a freeing gift given to yourself.