



The greatest gift

Forget that fancy wrapped gift box. The chance to spend time with loved ones can be more valuable than the most expensive gift, says Sheri Bridges, professor of marketing at Wake Forest University.

Memories of the occasion will live on long after the contents of a ribbon-wrapped box have been forgotten or discarded.

How to give the gift of memories this holiday? Bridges offers a few ideas.

- **Take a day trip.** Go to the zoo, a favorite restaurant in a nearby city or visit a town with quaint shops. Follow-up by giving the gift of a photo book of the trip, and as the years pass, the pictures become reminders of the feelings and fun of time spent together.
- **Offer tickets to a football or basketball game,** a play or a musical performance — anything that isn't part of the recipient's normal routine.
- **Do chores.** Baking cookies, wrapping gifts, taking down decorations, straightening up the garage, cleaning out closets—any task that seems hard when performed alone can become fun when shared.
- **Relax and recharge.** Take a relative or friend to get a massage, pedicure or facial. Spend time together while getting pampered.
- **Time alone, together.** Unless you make a special effort, it can be hard to find time to spend with family and friends. Watching a favorite movie, sipping hot chocolate in front of a fire, playing Scrabble—these are things that require a real time commitment and focus, and say, “I am putting you first now.”