

In a blink of an eye, we're approaching the end of 2009.

It seems just like yesterday when I held a small party at home for a few close friends and kids, painting the town red with swinging singles before the clock struck twelve. Same time last year, I even turned down a date just to set up my X'mas tree which probably got the man thinking about his worth...



Christmas is my favourite holiday of the year. My best of moods seems to last the entire month along with the carols, weather, spirit of giving and sharing. The feeling must be mutual amongst many road users. Drivers are most patient and have no qualms about giving way.

Just the other day, I drove past Tanglin Mall. I could see the smiles on the parents' face as they watched their little darlings covering themselves with man-made snow(which is actually foam). The children's excitement and joy, and the regular glances at their doting parents, sets me thinking.

As most of us crack our brains and comb the malls for the most appropriate gifts for our love ones, have we ever wondered what is it that these kids really want? Is it the latest gaming gadget? Is it the most powerful water gun? Or is it the bicycle that he's been eyeing all year?

For our spouses and partners, is it the Prada wallet or handbag? Will the Panerai watch make them squeal with joy? Or is it the sparkling best friend of all girls?

Whatever happened to the simple card, a kiss, and a hug to say "I Love You"? I remember those days when I used to make my own cards, and hibernate to surprise my guy with every stitch that seals my love in that piece of cross-stitch.

These days, it seems a gift is measured by the value in dollar and cents. Where is the thought that counts?

Career-minded parents are so busy these days that the housekeeper cum nanny has taken over the role of parenting. To compensate for their absence, most of them willingly allocate a part of their big salary on lavish gifts for the kids. These may buy them happiness and joy for that moment, but I guess they would be most happy when their parents could show them more attention, affection, and spend more time with them.

Likewise, being exceptionally nice to your loved ones during X'mas alone does not do the job. If you have been loving, sweet, caring, understanding and supportive for the entire year, I'm sure your other half would trade the romantic dinner and expensive present for it. Everyday can be Christmas.

A self sufficient 40 year old friend who has received countless gifts his lifetime told me he could never forget this thoughtful gift from his ex-girlfriend. Knowing that he's got high cholesterol, high blood pressure and not really in the pink of health, she painstakingly did research and drew up a list of suitable food and menus, compiled nicely in a notebook, and sealed with a kiss. How sweet. This is what I call a thoughtful gift that touches the heart.



My lovely sister and I during our 1st Singapore F1. View from Pan Pacific

My best X'mas gift this year came early. My dear little sister is the one that brought me this joy. She's done well and graduating this year with a degree. I'm elated and very proud of her. I'm sure many parents with kids could identify with my joy.

This year, most of my friends are not quite in the mood to merry make. Maybe it's due to the economic situation this year, or maybe 2009 is just not too good a year for many. Some are laden with financial woes and job loss, and the stress to make it all right is taking a toll on them. However bad it is, there is always a place we can find simple joy and warmth. That is, friends, family and home.

Here, I wish everyone a Merry Christmas. Good luck in finding the ideal gift for your family and loved ones. And to a better 2010...

