

The Last Minute Shopper

One of our oldest Xmas customs is the last minute gift. Perhaps not the noblest of customs but certainly common enough to elicit a comment or two from anyone who has had to endure the check out counter of any commercial enterprise.

As long as we've been buying presents for family and friends, there are some among us who just can't seem to get any actual Christmas shopping over with until the last possible minute.

In fact, I would wager that the commercial side of Seasonal counts on the last minute present buying free-for-all for a large percentage of their sales. As for me, It's obviously my brother's fault...

You see, my brother promoted last minute Xmas shopping to an art form. To look at my brother weave his way through the throngs was pure poetry in motion. It was truly a thing to behold. And as he's my older brother, I revered him in every way.

If that is how he did it then that is how it must be done. All the same, not all of us are 6'4"and 225lbs so here a few hints to help you produce your own last minute miracle:

Get organized. You're going to be waiting in line in a short while so fight back the urge to rush out the house. Make a list, don't worry how simplistic or short.

Understand precisely whom you are going to be purchasing for. There's hardly any time left and you might just have to prune your list. If you must make the choice to shorten your list, you can give them a New's Year gift as an alternative. It will still be appreciated.

The larger question, of course, is what to get. Let's commence with where not to go. Without doubt, avoid the "Big Box" superstores. By now, they'll be ravished and full of exasperated Shoppers.

By snubbing the superstores, you must now move outside what might be your comfort zone. Think of the likes and dislikes of whomever you're buying for. If

that fails, consider their friends and the activities they have in common between them. If that doesn't make an idea or two, think of the work they do. And last but not least, you can always count on old faithful. That is, you can go with male or female.

Hold on for a just a sec right here. If you've not started a list, start over! If you do, awesome! You're on your way. Take your list, which should include names, gifts and possible stores. You can safely leave knowing you've done most of the hard work already!

One last stop before you hit the stores. Get some hard cash! You can count on credit card machines and ATM terminals not working at the most inopportune times. And besides, there's nothing like real green to speed-up check-out.

Once you're in the store, don't browse. Understand, you're on a mission and the clock is ticking! Either it's there or not. Your list should be fresh in your mind so if you see something that is close to something on the list, go for it! Of course, some practice goes a long way. By the time you're in your second or third store, you'll have it all figured out.

The best part of grabbing a last minute present is the experience itself.

There's not much of a story in buying a Seasonal gift in August! However you'll meet up with all kinds of characters if you venture forth sometime following December 21st. Oh, the tales you'll be able to tell!

And what better gift can you give than a smile?

Be brave my fellow procrastinators! There's no need to panic - You've still got time...

About the Author

Halley Jacks is a senior writer for Christmas Craft Guides and a chronic eleventh-hour shopaholic.