

The Mega Holiday Gift Guide

For Mindful, Inspirational Gifts
compliments of



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Season's Greetings!

Since 2015, I've been writing an annual "gift guide" blog post and sharing my recommendations for meaningful, heartfelt gifts with my community. Holiday gift giving can be really fun but it can also be stressful if you're not sure quite sure what to get your relative/friend/client/colleague. This year, I decided to compile my recommendations from the past five years into one easy to use document for you! We've organized the guide into four categories: Art, Gifts, Books and Services. I hope you find some great ideas here...

Art

Here are some of my favorite places for jewelry, unique greeting cards, inspirational sayings and small gifts:

Lori Portka. I had the pleasure of meeting Lori when visiting Asheville, North Carolina. I used a deck of Kris Carr's *Crazy, Sexy Love Notes* in a women's retreat and posted some photos online. A Facebook friend commented

"Oh, I just love Lori Portka's art!" So, I decided to look up her website and learned that she had been on Oprah's *Super Soul Sunday* a few years ago and had recently moved to Asheville and had a studio there. I spent my 20-year reunion

anniversary with my birth mom in Asheville a few weeks later, so we got in touch with Lori through Instagram and she invited us to swing by to see her studio. While there, I chose a piece of art for my best friend from high school whose mother died a few years ago. It had an orange sky (her favorite color) and a deer (which is how she feels her mom visits her from the other side) and I knew it was the perfect gift. When I told Lori why I had chosen that piece of art for my friend, she started crying and told me that she had painted that in honor of *her* mom who had recently died. Lori has a big heart and a bright spirit and it shines through in all of her creations. You can visit her Etsy shop [here](#).

Emily McDowell Studios. Chances are good you've seen her stuff. Funny, irreverent, and often with the perfect card for those difficult occasions (What do you send to a friend who's found out she has cancer? Emily's got the perfect cards!) She uses a bit of profanity (appropriately placed, IMHO) so if that's not your thing, you might want to skip this one.

Applied Insight. I found this site through one of my favorite artists, Mary Anne Radmacher. I first discovered her when I lived in Asheville more than 15 years ago and even gave my husband a piece of her art as a wedding gift. I adore her style, her lettering, and her inspirational sayings and within the past year, I became Facebook friends with her and was reminded of how much I adore her work. But when I started exploring this site, I realized they carry a variety of unique artists and I just know you're going to love it!

Whimsical art. I'm not usually one to buy street art, but when I passed [Katie Leese's](#) booth in New Orleans, I couldn't take my eyes off of her adorable birds. Bright, colorful, and with positive messages, these make great little gifts and the price is right!





Story People. I have loved Story People ever since they first came into existence 25 years ago! I have several magnets and prints in my home. I love the uplifting messages and whimsical art that goes along with it. How can you not love a company where every print has this message on the back of it:

*Imagine a world
where we listen to
everyone's stories
and learn we are
not as different
as we are the same.*

Gifts

Essential Journeys soap and personal care items. I've been a fan of Kimberly Master's Essential Journeys soaps for years. She used to attend my women's

business networking functions when I lived in Asheville, North Carolina. When I rebranded my business this past year, I have a new dragonfly logo so I went to her studio this summer while I was in the mountains and she custom designed a soap for me to give to my clients as gifts! Her designs are pretty and playful and the smells are divine. She also carries a line of lotions and other skin care items. Tell her I sent you!

Botanical perfume. Smell is one of those senses we don't pay enough attention to! While you may already be using essential oils, have you ever had a custom blend made to wear as perfume? I've been wearing [Shelley Henry's](#) "Dragonfly" essence and I adore it.

Mala beads. I saw an ad for a turquoise set and knew I had to own them! I

struggle with settling into meditation and using my gorgeous beads allows me to focus on my chosen mantra (often one word like “love” or “peace”) and achieve a deeper rest during my quiet time. (They also make pretty necklaces and I wear mine while I’m working at my computer. It makes me feel connected to my deeper wisdom and truth.) I bought mine from [Mala Prayer](#).

Chocolate. But of course! One of my favorites is [Divine Chocolate](#) because I pretend I’m a goddess when I’m eating it!

Inspirational card decks. I buy many of mine from [Hay House](#) and often they have them on sale for only \$5. They are small, fun and make great stocking stuffers!

Candles. It’s amazing how lighting a candle makes you slow down, take a deep breath and be in the present moment. You can find these anywhere but some of my favorites are the gorgeous, divinely inspired [Zena Moon](#) candles with very personalized sentiments (authenticity, prosperity, claim your power, rest, serenity).

Table Topics. These cubes are excellent hostess gifts and great conversation starters with open ended questions that lead to great story telling. Last Christmas, when answering the question “What was your first job?” we learned that Riley’s grandmother worked as a school bus driver. She grew up on a farm (with Eric’s mother) and because they lived so far out in the country, her stop was the “end of the line” so they simply hired her to be the bus driver and she parked the bus at the farm every night. Can you imagine being 16 years old and driving one of those big yellow school buses? They have many versions—family, teen, couples, etc.—but our favorite is the original.



Books

I buy books like a lot of women buy shoes. I read them, underline them, dog ear them, quote them, re-read them, give some away to my friends to read, and if they're really good, keep my own copy and buy them for friends to read! Here are some of the favorites that I've recommended over the years.

The Gifts of Imperfection. Brené Brown is pretty much one of my favorite authors of all-time. I've read most everything she's written but this is the book that I pull off of my shelf and thumb through again and again. In her preface, she states "...we cannot give our children what we don't have" and this is why I am so committed to doing my personal healing work. I want it to be different for my daughter. My mom, raised in an orphanage, was filled with

shame and feelings of unworthiness. Even when she died, she didn't think she was *enough* despite my repeated attempts to show her otherwise. I struggled with my self-esteem in my teens and twenties thinking that I, too, wasn't good enough. I intend to break the cycle with my kiddo and Brené Brown is a wonderful guide on the journey. If you haven't watched her [TED talk on vulnerability](#), it's worth your time. It's one of the top five most watched TED talks in the world.

Everything is Figureoutable. Marie Forleo is a powerhouse. If you're a business owner or entrepreneur, chances are good you've heard of her. She leads a popular B-School program, has her own show called MarieTV, and while she looks really shiny and glossy in her marketing, she's really quite down to Earth and hilarious (she is a Jersey girl, after all). I got hooked on her book by



standing in the bookstore one day and opening up to a random chapter. She shared a very funny story about the insane lengths she took to overcome a series of seemingly insurmountable obstacles to get on an airplane to a 4-day getaway in Spain. I bought her book and devoured it in two days. You don't have to be a business owner to appreciate her perspective and insights. She's all about taking inspired action and I guarantee you'll do that when you read this book!

Calm the Chaos Journal: A Daily Practice for a More Peaceful Life is my new favorite journal! My coaching client Nicola Ries Taggart is a life & leadership coach and she's created a simple but effective tool to help you review your current day and mindfully set intentions for the following day. It takes 5 minutes to fill out each evening and is a great way to keep the pulse on how you're doing with your self-care. Her journal is being carried by Anthropologie and Urban Outfitters or you can order online. ***Bonus: I love the fact that the dates are left blank and you fill in your own***—so if you skip a few days or even a week, you simply write in the next date and keep going.



No guilt for all those empty pages of missed days.

If you have a friend who is curious about the possible messages we can glean from our encounters with animals, look no further than Sarah Seidelmann's *The Book of Beasties: Your A-Z Guide to the Illuminating Wisdom of Spirit Animals*. I've done several coaching sessions with Sarah and I love how she weaves her life perspective as a former doctor, Martha Beck trained life coach and shamanic practitioner into her work. She's a hilarious writer (I've read all of her other books, too! *Swimming with Elephants*, her memoir, is my favorite) and ***helps us to see the magic that is all around us*** if we simply pause and take time to look and listen.

If you have a loved one who is into natural health and healing, you'll love herbalist Melanie St. Ours' *The Simple Guide to Natural Health: From Apple Cider Vinegar tonics to Coconut Oil Body Balm, 150+ Home Remedies for Health and Healing*. I worked with Melanie to support my health and healing for two years. She's an expert in her field and has a gentle way of introducing you to seemingly *new* ideas that really help you get back to the basics. *I imagine many of these suggestions were part of our great-grandmother's and grandmother's healing tool boxes* but have been lost through the generations. This is a lovely gift to give someone!

Patti Digh's *The Geography of Loss*. For anyone who's experienced loss, this is a stunningly gorgeous book helping us to create maps to navigate the journeys of our lives.

Sheryl Sandberg's *Option B*. I got to hear her speak in Houston and I was so inspired by how she faced the sudden death of her husband with such grit and grace. This book is about how to live life to the fullest, even when it doesn't turn out how you think it's going to.



Steven Pressfield's *The War of Art* and *Turning Pro* are excellent gifts for anyone in your life who is creative but gets blocked from time to time (um, that's all of us, right?!) They are small books with a BIG impact. If you buy these for a friend, be sure to buy some for yourself, too.

When Breath Becomes Air by Paul Kalanithi. Even though I had heard of the book and knew that the author dies at the end, I wasn't prepared for the depth of emotion I experienced as the book came to a close. Obviously, reading about someone dying from cancer when my own mom died from cancer made me a little rawer than your average reader, but the passion with which the author writes about both living and dying is truly a gorgeous piece of art.

Childhood Disrupted by Donna Jackson Nakazawa. A new friend told me about this book based on an article that she had read about a correlation between [childhood trauma and lifelong chronic illness](#). Having lived with and managed chronic illness for a few decades now, I knew immediately that I

had to read about this cutting-edge research based on the Adverse Childhood Experiences Survey. I find myself nodding my head and underlining a lot as I not only see myself reflected in the author's research but also see the stories of dozens of my clients and friends.

The Book of Joy by The Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. This book just makes me HAPPY! Of course, it should, it's a book about Joy! But what I love about it is being privy to the intimate friendship that two of our world's greatest spiritual leaders, a Christian and a Buddhist monk, as they tackle the immense subject of how to find joy in a world fraught with sorrow. This is a lovely read and I have given it as a gift to several friends and clients.

The Underground Railroad by Colson Whitehead-Oooof. This was a tough read. My book club read it together and it was deep, intense and hard to digest at moments. While it is a work of fiction (the author's reimagining of the underground railroad is really creative), it's obviously based in fact and on the atrocious history that the U.S. has with slavery. I'm glad I read it, although some



of the images will haunt me for years to come. An important read at this time in our country.



Sabbath: Finding Rest, Renewal, and Delight in our Busy Lives by Wayne Muller. This book is underlined and dog-eared more than any book in my collection. I pick it up at least once a week and open to a random page for his hard-hitting wisdom and down to earth inspiration. In the opening pages, he reminds us that even nature requires rest. If certain plants don't lie dormant in winter, they won't produce fruit in the spring. And if they continue to be deprived of rest, the entire species can

even die out. Think about that. (Now are you sure you can't fit in an hour or two just for you when you think about it in that context?!)

The Four Agreements by Don Miguel Ruiz. A class guide of Toltec wisdom. A must-have book on your personal development reading list, The Four Agreements are straightforward: Be impeccable with your word. Don't take anything personally. Don't make assumptions. Always do your best. Simple, powerful and truly transformational concepts if applied to your life daily. What I love best about these? *They apply in any and all situations in life—relationships, business, health, spirituality, self-care—you name it, it fits.*

Big Magic by Elizabeth Gilbert. Looking for creative inspiration? Look no further than this inspirational book with chapters on courage, enchantment, permission, persistence, trust and divinity. When I get a bit of writer's block when working on my own book, I'll open up to a page and see her directive "You do not need anyone's permission to live a creative life!" or "always remember that people's judgments of you are none of your

business” and I suddenly feel freer to share my voice.

It Didn't Start With You by Mark Wolynn. I've been interested in family constellations and family systems theory for years and this book makes a great case for understanding that your problems aren't necessarily all your fault! Research in neuroscience and stress is showing us that sometimes the health challenges we face may be linked back to inherited family trauma. The author reminds us that with stress comes resiliency so delving into the difficult stuff in your family's past doesn't have to be depressing.

The Five Languages of Love by Gary Chapman and *The Five Languages of*

Appreciation in the Workplace by Gary Chapman and Paul White. These are two great books to help you understand that your spouse, your child, your client, your co-worker or your employees all desire appreciation, but it looks different to each individual. My husband gave me *The Five Love Languages* on our second date (17 years ago!) and to this day, we use these principles in our marriage. The languages—Words of Affirmation, Quality Time, Acts of Service, Tangible Gifts & Physical Touch—are easy to understand. *The key is making sure you give someone what THEY want, not what YOU want! (Remind me to tell you the can opener story some time!)*



Services

And finally, I'd love to invite you to give a loved one—or yourself—the gift of Intuitive Coaching.

Intuitive Coaching Session. I've helped people with a wide variety of issues: career transition, starting a new business, generating financial abundance, helping children cope with grief and anxiety, marriage issues, relocation decisions and more. *What's coming through is nothing short of remarkable...* loved ones who have crossed over are sending messages, I've been able to help people reconnect with family heirlooms they had forgotten they had in their possession and healing is occurring on multiple levels. I'm in awe and so are my clients! I invite you to visit my [website](#), read the testimonials, and schedule a session if you're getting that inner knowing that says "Yes, now is the time for this."

Here's to holiday shopping that's easy, meaningful and (relatively) stress-free!

Elizabeth



Elizabeth Barbour, M.Ed., Life & Business Coach, Shamanic Practitioner, Speaker, Retreat Leader, and Author helps professional women find and maintain sanity in the chaotic world of balancing work, family, and life. She understands all too well the necessity for professional women to employ smart self-care strategies to increase their success. She is passionate about helping clients design rituals and celebrations when big transitions are afoot (life and death, weddings and divorces, moves, etc.).

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