

## Christmas gifts

Monday, 10 December 2012

My dear friend Deniz - now 83 - has given me a huge bag of Christmas presents.

All lovingly and carefully wrapped in different paper.

I haven't opened any yet, of course. But I know they will each be original, imaginative and not expensive.

That's the point. They don't need to be valuable in cash terms; they need to illustrate thought and affection and knowledge of the other person. They say they love you. That's what matters.

James (my friend and assistant) gave me a small leather pouch for coins a few years ago; he'd heard me moaning, during the year, that my old one had died after 30 years of use (the seams had burst). So he made a mental note. It was the perfect gift; I still use it every day.

For my birthday, Alex had heard the story of my only offer to star in a movie (second choice Laurence Olivier got the part). I could never find the film. He tracked down a rare DVD and gave it to me. Fabulous.

The reason I mention this is to illustrate the point of gifts. It's not showing off. It's a message of love. That's why they are appreciated and that's why they show imagination, thinking, but most of all - love.

So this season don't say "I can't afford to give anything". Something cheap and cheerful, if clever, is worth a million quid.