

A trick for competing with Santa

By Sarah Sobanski

Black Friday always makes me feel like I'm behind on my shopping. Cyber Monday makes that worse, and then come the first of December I'm just about ready to throw in the towel. Like so many however, I'll be flipping through Pinterest with a furious fever to help Santa get the perfect gift ideas for everything on my loved ones' lists ? I might even throw his name on a few, poor guy has to do the whole world after all.

I was doing just that, looking up gift ideas for the big man in red himself, when I came across an idea that stood out. It's more about the spirit of Christmas than the perfect gift. Let's look at some factors before delving into it.

If you have little ones ? or like me you have friends with little ones ? you might have noticed the Facebook buy and sells for Kawartha Lakes, Peterborough, and Bancroft lighting up with quick auctions for this year's must have toys. A Hatchimal ? which is essentially a live action Neopet ? popped up on one of those pages. It retails for \$59 in the U.S., was on auction starting at \$90 and by nightfall it was \$200.

Two-hundred dollars is a lot of money for a stuffie that works its way out of a plastic egg. Then again, so is upwards of \$500 for a Playstation 4, or an Xbox One, or whatever else might be the latest and greatest for the kids of 2016. I assume game consoles are still on lists because I want one for Christmas ? nudge, nudge, Santa.

There are a number of families in our community and elsewhere that don't have the money to be spending big bucks on large items like these. Two-hundred dollars is a week's worth of groceries for a family of four. Two-hundred dollars is a hydro bill or a winter jacket. The question is then, how does the value of money come into play when working with the magical man with the deep belly laugh?

I remember doing it as a kid, ?Look, Santa got me this, what'd he get you?? I probably deserved the sting of learning that Santa got others better things after being so boastful, but comparisons do happen on the playground. Why does Santa bring more expensive gifts for some children, and less expensive gifts for others? Is it because they wanted something more, or that they were better than those who received less? Were they just not good enough this year? I really doubt Santa would be that unfair.

So the idea is this: when wrapping Santa's presents to give him a leg up this year, wrap the smaller gifts and give them from Santa. I am a firm believer in socks at Christmas, because no one ever buys socks for themselves, but I know a five-year-old wouldn't be as impressed as me. So give candy, sweets, colouring books or whatever the lesser items on your young ones' lists are this year.

With Santa giving all the little things, save the big things to come from you. If you buy that souped-up Tamagotchi or a Hatchimal, take credit for it ? wrap it from you. The same goes for all of the big gifts ? for the record just because a Dyson is a bazillion dollars does not take away from the fact that it's still a vacuum cleaner, boys. Even Santa can't save you from that mistake.

By giving the more expensive gifts from you, when a child returns from the playground you can explain the value of a dollar and the realities of some families being more or less fortunate than yours. Also, you can teach your children to be humble. Mom and Dad can afford to buy these things for you, but that doesn't mean you should boast about it because some other moms and dads can't afford to give their kids the same privileges. It also takes the blame from the child for not having made the top of the nice list ? even if he's has straight A's all year.

It's just a thought, but if everyone in the community started doing this, Christmas might go a lot smoother for all of us. Also, I want to take credit and rake in the hugs and kisses for buying that Hatchimal ? sorry, Santa.