

The Official Gift Ideas During Separation Cheat Sheet

A 3-step checklist to help you pick the perfect gift for Valentine's Day, Christmas, her Birthday or your Anniversary during separation.

*Estimated Reading Time:
Less than 10 minutes*

Who is this for?

This 5-page guide is a quick and dirty cheat sheet for any separated man who wants to get his wife a special gift on...

- Valentine's Day
- Christmas
- Her birthday
- Your wedding anniversary

... Or any other special holiday that normally includes gift-giving.

Separation is hard even on the non-romantic holidays.

When these usually special days roll around, things get even more complicated.

Should you get your wife a gift?

Should you just let the day go by without any fanfare?

If you do get her a gift, how do you know she will like it? How do you know it won't make things worse?

Separation makes things tricky. In this quick 5-page guide, you'll learn the 3 guidelines to pick out the perfect gift for your separated or distant wife.

Prerequisite reading: [Valentine's Day During Separation](#)

This post is relevant for all gift-giving holidays. In it you'll get 10 gift ideas and 2 real-life examples from other men Inside the Haven. We'll include those ideas here, but you'll want to read the post for details.

The 3 Rules

Rule 1.

The gift is personal or meaningful *to her*

It should be something that will make her think, *“Wow, I might not love him as a husband right now, but I can’t deny he knows what I like or what’s important to me.”*

Rule 2.

The gift makes her life better or more enjoyable

It should be something that will make her think, *“I’m actually looking forward to using/doing this!”*

Rule 3.

The gift does NOT put pressure on her (**IMPORTANT!**)

It should NOT make her think, *“Oh, he’s just giving me this gift because he wants me to work on the marriage,”* or, *“If I do/use this, I’m going to give him false hope for the marriage.”*

It SHOULD surprise her how accepting you are of the separation, like, *“I didn’t expect him to be able to respect what I want.”*

This last one is very important, and it all goes back to motives!

Analyzing Real-Life Examples

Example 1.

Dennis Gave His Wife An IHOP Gift Card

The first example we talked about in the blog post was Dennis. His wife's favorite restaurant was IHOP, so he got her a gift card.

Let's see how this fits our three rules:

1. This gift is **personal** for her -- IHOP is his wife's favorite restaurant
2. This gift **makes her life better** or more enjoyable -- She gets to go socialize at a place she enjoys.
3. This gift puts **very little pressure** on her -- He didn't get her the gift card to use with him. He didn't try and get her to go on a romantic night out with him. He just wanted her to have fun with her friends!

Dennis got to show his wife that he knows what she likes, that he's willing to work to make her happy, and that he's willing to make sacrifices in order to do it (because she knows that he would rather go with her, but that he gave her a gift card because he knew she would have a better time without him).

Example 2.

James Took The Whole Family Out For Dinner

The second example we used was James. He took his whole family out for dinner and made it about the kids.

Looking at James' example, again, we see his Valentine's Day gift hit all three rules:

1. It was **personal**... The night was meaningful for her because it created happy memories with the kids and allowed the whole family to take a break from "divorce mode".
2. It was **enjoyable** for her because she liked getting gifts from the kids, and because she enjoyed the activities he'd planned.
3. It put **no pressure on her** in any way because the night wasn't about their relationship; it wasn't about "them". It was about the family and most of all the kids.

Everyone had a good time and it was good for the marriage without being done FOR the marriage.

10 Quick Gift Ideas

1. Send her a small card or gift through snail mail. Silly and friendly probably works better than romantic and sweet. *(this still works even if you live together!)*
2. Pay homage to a Valentine's Day tradition *(like Dennis' example)*
3. Take the whole family out for dinner and activities *(like James' example)*
4. Give HER a night out while you watch the kids.
5. Get her a gift that's only from the kids... She'll know you helped! Silly gifts go over better than romantic ones.
6. Get her a small gift card for somewhere she likes *(e.g. Starbucks, Amazon, Target)*
7. Treat her to a couple nights to herself at an AirBnB or hotel
8. Get her framed pictures of just the kids, or just her and the kids *(bonus: book her a professional photo shoot to get nice pictures without you in them)*
9. Pedicure, manicure, massage, or all!
10. Think you can pull off romantic? Go for mixed flowers and her favorite candy *(be careful with this one, not ideal for most separations)*

What If Your Gift Idea Isn't On The List?

Does this mean that you can't give your wife a Valentine's Day gift if it doesn't meet all 3 requirements perfectly? No!

Everybody's separation is unique, and ultimately you should trust your gut. If you have a genius idea for a Valentine's Day gift that doesn't quite fit the mold outlined here, great! Go for it!

These rules and this list of ideas are based on what I've seen work for other men, and what I've seen NOT work for other men. Of the 3 rules, the one that you want to be the most careful about is #3, not putting pressure on your wife.

If you give your wife a gift that pressures her, there's a good chance that you're doing it with the wrong motives, and THAT is the one thing that you must not do.

Prepare For A Bad Reaction

Even if you do everything perfectly with completely selfless motives, there's no guarantee that Valentine's Day will go over perfectly the way that you envision it.

And that's okay!

Remember that with any act of affection, you're NOT doing it because you want your wife to recognize that you're good husband...

You're doing it because you ARE a good husband. And as a good husband, you want your wife's life to be the best it can be, even if you don't get repayment for the sacrifices you make to do that.

This means there's nothing to be worried about! If you have the right motives, *her reaction doesn't matter.*

If your Valentine's Day gift is driven by genuine unselfish motives... If you really are just looking to make her life better on this special day of the year... Then you won't have any regrets even if she doesn't have the ideal reaction. You'll be able to have confidence that you made the right decision even if she doesn't like it.

In the end, do what you feel is right and do what you feel she will like - whether that's as small as a card or as big as a date night out.



Thanks for reading, and as always...

Much manly love,
- Stephen

