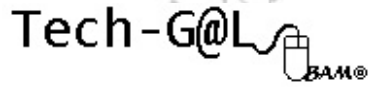


Here comes the... How do we return it?



By Beth A. Martin

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Beautiful dishes and glassware, more Tupperware, linens that don't match...

People are so particular now-a-days so do not take it personal.

Engagement

gifts are thoughtful but not required according to the rules of wedding etiquette.

There will probably be a bridal shower, a bachelor party, rehearsal dinner, the wedding and then reception. These gift ideas work for all of these festivities.

I was married at 25 the first time and I am now engaged. This is my experience and that of many of my married friends.

Everyone says it is so impersonal, but truly it is not. Most NEW couples have one major thing in common. They are not wealthy. If they are paying for their own wedding, they even have less money.

So the number one thing that most engaged couples want is (you guessed it) MONEY! If you are concerned about it feeling impersonal then gift cards are a great alternative. Let say the new couple is moving into a starter house, a home improvement gift card is great. You can always get a gift card from the store where they are registered. A gift card from a restaurant is also a good idea and they can use that on their honeymoon. Most gift cards have a congratulations theme and some even have a wedding theme.

If you just can't stand the thought of a gift card, then write a small check and include a nice picture frame (for wedding photos) or a bottle of wine. The average for a nice frame or wine is \$10-15 which would then allow you to write a check for \$20 or \$30 which is really what they want.

If you have more money to spend and are closer to the bride and/or groom, offer to pay for something at their wedding. The pillow for the ring bearer, the wedding favors, the center pieces or flowers, invitations, videographer, etc. My sister-in-law-to-be bought the invitations; the groom's parents paid for the DJ.

If you must buy a gift, use their registry. Please be sure to get a gift receipt and include that because sometimes registry gifts get duplicated.

Luggage is another good gift. The couple more than likely will have a few small bags and duffle bags and they probably don't match. My parents got us matching luggage, and we got to use it right away on our honeymoon.

Whatever you get the couple, please be sure to get a gift receipt also because they know what they want and don't want most of all. This way that special couple will love what you got even if they return for something else!

One more important (non-monetary) thing that they do want is for family to butt out! They are in love and they need their space and even more so if it is not a first marriage. So please respect their new life, and only give advice and support when asked. They love you and respect you; the family just got bigger, so embrace the new couple but don't suffocate them.

This will pave the path for a wonderful new family and future!

Now for what engaged couples do NOT want.

The number one thing that most engaged couples do NOT want is advice and questions about when they will be having kids. These things are annoying and take the spotlight away from the couple. This is their moment, so keep it about them and their wedding!

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