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**Secrets to a Stress Free Holiday**

**By Patricia Twitchell**

**Secrets to a Stress Free Holiday**

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December and all the excitement that comes with it can either be one of the most pleasant times of year or one of the most stressful. Even though the holidays are a couple of months away, there are things you can do to make it an extremely pleasant season.

For the ten plus years I have owned and operated Just Bears and Stuff, I have been witness to those people who plan ahead when it comes to buying gifts. Then there are those who wait until the last minute. Although we love both types of customers, experience tells me those who plan ahead are the ones who seem to most enjoy the festivities that await them.

If you are planning on buying gifts this year, start with making a list of everyone you will be giving something to. You can write the list for both personal gift giving and those people who are more of a professional type relationship.

Once you write the list, organize it into two groups. One would be the easiest to buy for and the other the most difficult. Some people prefer to search out the most difficult gifts first in order to reduce the pressure associated with finding things.

Still others will buy everything at once to avoid going back to stores while there are some people who prefer to do a little bit each time they go out. By having a list and checking off those names you have found a gift for you will quickly see how much you are accomplishing.

Another time saver can be to make one trip to the store to get all your gift wrapping accessories. Bows, boxes, ribbon, paper, tape, and name tags are just a few of the items you will need to consider.

Something that has become more popular with each passing year, especially for very busy professionals, is to have a professional shopper take care of the gift buying process. Although this is a definite convenience, it can take some of the charm out of the process of shopping.

## Secrets to a Stress Free Holiday

Another option is to utilize the services of store owners such as myself. After numerous requests by people who are extremely busy to help them pick out the perfect gift for someone special, I found it to be an added convenience to my customers to develop a shopping program that allows for their individual tastes and yet, takes the stress out of wrapping and shipping gifts. That is how my corporate services division was born.

Shopping online has become very popular over the last few years. A few tips that will save you unnecessary problems when shopping online are to know who you are dealing with. It is very easy to confuse a legitimate site with one that is set up merely to dupe consumers. Do not give out your personal information such as Social Security number, mother's maiden name, PIN Numbers or passwords to anyone over the Internet. There is no reason for this.

When ordering online, check delivery dates and review warranties. Keep all receipts and website printouts. You will also want to check shipping and handling fees and ask enough questions to determine if there are any hidden fees.

My goal in writing this article is to help you to have the most enjoyable holiday season possible. As I mentioned earlier, I can certainly help you with your online or over the phone shopping requests. And yet, I do hope for those of you who will be in the Myrtle Creek, Oregon area, you will drop in for a visit and enjoy the huge selection of bears and gifts we make available to our guests.

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Publishing Guidelines: You may publish my article in your newsletter, on your web site, or in your print publication provided you include the resource box at the end. Notification would be appreciated but is not required.

Patricia Twitchell is the proprietor of Just Bears and Stuff, a unique gift shop located in Myrtle Creek, Oregon. Nestled in the scenic mountains, it is a favorite place to visit for people from all over the country. Receive "Beary Special Moments" a free online teddy bear facts and tips e-zine by visiting

## **Secrets We Keep From Those We Love**

**By Timothy Cole**

Everyone keeps a few secrets from a husband or wife, boyfriend and girlfriend. And people keep their secrets for a lot of reasons. Often people are embarrassed or they are fearful of a partner's hostility or possible rejection.

And research shows that it is in one's best interest to keep some things private, especially when partners or spouses are likely to respond poorly to the truth. Being rejected, scorned, or stigmatized

does not help any one work through a serious issue.

But, keeping secrets can also be harmful.

Keeping secrets often prevents people from dealing with the problem at hand. Keeping secrets leads to increased stress, anxiety, and it often makes people think about the issue (event or topic) more frequently.

For instance, people who have a secret crush on someone often dwell on their feelings more than people who are able to talk about their feelings out in the open. More often than not, keeping something secret makes it seem more important than it really is.

Likewise, revealing secrets is very helpful when it is done right; that is, in a safe, non-judgmental environment. Revealing secrets can reduce stress, it helps people let go of an issue and think about it more clearly.

If a secret is bothering you, it really does help to get it out – as long people don't respond negatively or use the information against you.

In fact, research shows that the simple task of writing down a secret, even if no one ever reads it, makes people feel better. Writing a secret down reduces stress – it is cathartic.

With this in mind, we have created a place where people can anonymously reveal the secrets they keep. Maybe you will find that letting go of one of your own secrets is helpful and not so embarrassing after all.

Article by Timothy Cole, PhD. Take a look at the secrets people keep from their romantic partners at

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