

# Re-gifting

## Yes Maybe or No

By Lillian Africano

**S**o it's the season for holiday gift-giving and you're looking at a few presents you received last year. You appreciate the thought behind them, but you just can't use these things and you're wondering whether it's okay to re-gift them.

First is the stunning handmade Italian leather belt you received from an old acquaintance who doesn't know that you stopped wearing belts when your waistline started to spread. You know someone on your gift list this year who would look great in said belt. Regift?

Yes to this, subject to the relevant rules listed here.

Then there's the gorgeous big bottle of Chloe perfume – from a cousin who remembered you loved the scent five years ago, but who doesn't realize you moved on to another fragrance. Regift?

This one is a Maybe. Unless you're absolutely one-hundred-percent positive that the recipient does use a particular perfume, do not re-gift.

And finally, you have the pretty cashmere sweater that's the wrong color and the wrong size. You wonder if perhaps it came from a consignment shop because there are no tags that indicate it's brand spanking new. Re-gift?

No to re-gifting anything that doesn't look brand spanking new. If you can't use something like this, consign it – or, in the spirit of the holiday, donate it.

Re-gifting has gotten a bad rap, mostly because it's often done carelessly and without consideration of the person who receives the re-gift. We've all heard stories about re-gifts with the name of the

original recipient left in the package – or the re-gift presented to the person who originally gave it.

**I consider re-gifting an honorable extension of recycling, but only within these guidelines.**

**1. If you are a regular re-gifter, keep a list of unwanted gifts along with the name of the people who gave them..**

**2. Don't use the original packaging. Make the gift "fresh" with fresh wrapping and ribbon.**

**3. Do not re-gift anything that doesn't look fresh or new. If you've been given a less-than-desirable re-gift, do not inflict it on anyone else.**

**4. Don't put a re-gift in a store box. I was once given a gift that turned out to be the wrong size in a Bergdorf Goodman box. When I tried to exchange the item, I was told it had not been purchased at Bergdorf Goodman. Embarrassing.**

**5. Make sure the gift you're recycling is appropriate for the person you want to give it to. Make sure the colors and sizes are correct. And while you may have no use for the chandelier earrings, do make sure that the person you're giving them to actually wears long, dangly earrings.**

**6. Don't ever re-gift fruit cake, unless you know someone who actually likes them. (Yes, Virginia, such people do exist. I have an**

**English friend who enjoys fruit cake, but only the fancy versions sold by purveyors like Fortnum and Mason.) Also be cautious about re-gifting those mass-produced food assortments that include cheese "products" and similar items.**

**7. Bottom line: The best re-gifting follows the rule of Yes-No-Maybe. Take a good look at the item in question. If you were in a store shopping for the potential recipient, would you consider buying the item? If your answer is "Yes" or "Maybe," go for it. If it's a "No," donate the item to Goodwill or a similar charity and feel good about making that choice.**

