

Should Parents Place Limits on Christmas Presents?

According to [Gallup](#), American adults plan to spend an average of \$830 on Christmas gifts this year. And, if [past experience](#) is any indicator, a large percentage of them will go into debt to foot the bill.

And then there are the more extreme cases, such as the [British woman](#) who was recently chided for buying 300 Christmas presents for her three children (see her photo of the presents above).

Many today express a desire to curb Christmas spending, but it's easier said than done. We live in a culture where shopping is part of the common holiday experience, and in a credit-based economy where spending this time of year is tantamount to a civic duty.

It can be especially difficult for today's parents, whose children often learn to associate both Christmas and love with piles of presents under the tree.

It is said that proper feasting—if it is to remain enjoyable—should avoid overindulgence. When it comes to Christmas, perhaps the best thing parents can do, both for their bank accounts and their children, is to establish limits on gifts. Excess is more likely to occur when there are no set boundaries.

A couple of years ago, my wife came across the following Christmas gift-giving “rule” for each member of a family. It sounds like a great idea to me:



By limiting presents, and following a rule such as this one,

people can perhaps avoid some of the stress that comes with spending too much. Parents, too, might very well find that their children enjoy Christmas more, and better appreciate the fewer presents that they do receive.