

Wishing you a very happy, ethical Christmas

Christmas can be a very difficult time for many of us. This is often not helped, and, is often, caused, by the pressure to buy and consume as much as possible! When we are all too aware of so many dreadful things happening in the world, this can result in a disconnect between what society appears to be telling us should make us happy and what we innately feel is right. This can lead to feelings of guilt and powerless. It can feel as if the true spirit of Christmas is buried under the piles of plastic toys, Christmas jumpers, receipts and credit card bills!

But take heart; here are a few ideas to help to take that pressure off whilst simultaneously helping to make the world a better place 😊



A reverse advent calendar is a lovely idea – decorate a cardboard box and then fill it with small gifts each day. At the end of advent take it along to your local foodbank, homeless shelter or refugee charity. A great one to do as a family!

Have you ever thought about volunteering at a homeless shelter or with an animal charity over the Christmas period? Sharing compassion with those who need it most can be mutually beneficial.

Do we really need more stuff? Research has proven that having less material goods in our lives makes us happier and less stressed.

How about paying for family or friends to go to a show, buy them cinema vouchers or membership of their favourite place to visit or charity?

Maybe a year's subscription to their favourite magazine or newspaper? Ethical Consumer do a fantastic Christmas gift subscription:

www.ethicalconsumer.org/xmasgiftsubs.aspx

Perhaps you could offer to give your time or skills – write them a personal pledge to give some of your time and pop it into a hand-made card.

Children, could you pledge to make your family dinner, wash the car, walk with the dog or help with the gardening every Saturday for a month (or year!)?

How about baking a neighbour a cake or casserole and leaving it on their doorstep with a little note, or even anonymously?

For the person who 'has everything', why not invest some money on their behalf into an ethical lending organisation such as Shared Interest, Charity Bank or Lendwithcare?

www.shared-interest.com/gb

www.charitybank.org

Lendwithcare gift vouchers allow Britons to lend relatively small sums of money to people in 11 countries who are keen to start or grow their own small business.

www.lendwithcare.org

For those who still love to shop, charity shops have some amazing bargains, often unused goods, and you will be helping the charity as well as your pocket.

There are plenty of organisations selling a whole range of fairly-traded and ethically-made gifts from food, toiletries, gadgets, clothes, books and toys. Try Traidcraft, Animal Aid, Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, the Vegan Society and New Internationalist for starters.

Ethical Consumer does an excellent ethical Christmas Gift Guide:

www.ethicalconsumer.org/shoppingethically/ethicalchristmas/giftguide.aspx

The guide mentions Hive.co.uk as "a great alternative to Amazon" for books, combining online shopping with support for local shops.

You can also check out the unethical companies to avoid:

www.ethicalconsumer.org/boycotts.aspx

When most of us have too much stuff and really do not want for anything, remember that time shared with loved ones, friends and even strangers, will be truly appreciated.

Wishing you a peaceful Christmas and a joyful New Year.