

December 2009 / January 2010

Release... Christmas is Coming

Ever wondered why retailers decorate their shops for Christmas in late October? It's all about the psychology of spending; they're hoping you'll get swept up in the spirit of things and spend, spend, spend. Don't start the New Year in monetary misery; find out how to stay debt free this Christmas.

Are you heading for festive debt?

There are a few warning signs that should show you that you are heading for dangerous territory this year:

- Are you competing with friends and family to get the biggest, best or most thoughtful present?
- Are you blowing more than you can afford because you feel guilty if you don't?
- Are you hiding your spending from yourself or your partner, for example on a credit card, that you 'promise you'll pay back later'?

Resolve to yourself this year that you will not go into debt because of Christmas. If you are already in the red, make sure you don't make things worse for yourself. Here are some tips for resisting temptation and staying in the

black:

Let them know

If you are struggling financially and you don't think you will be able to buy many presents – if any – for your friends and family this year, let them know beforehand.

- If you have children, sit them down and explain that you simply can't afford too many presents this year but that you love them even more! Get them to choose one special present that they would like and say that that will be it, bar a few small extras for the stocking.
- Suggest to friends that you set a spending limit on presents for each other – say £5 or £10 – or just agree that you will all go out for an evening together as your present to each other.
- At work, suggest that you do a 'Secret Santa'. Where everyone buys just one present for one other person with a set price of, say £5. You would be surprised how many of your colleagues will be pleased as they may also be struggling with their finances.

This article in continued in the centre pages of the SNAP Advertiser...

Release... Christmas is Coming

Article continued from page 3 of The Post Mill and Page 4 of Top To Bottom...

Be Creative

You don't have to spend mountains on presents to make other people feel happy. In fact, people often prefer presents that don't cost anything.

- Have you ever told them you love them? How rarely we let our loved-ones know how much we care about them! This Christmas, put it in words – maybe a heartfelt letter, a handmade card, or an embroidered picture. You would be surprised how much such a simple gesture can mean to people.
- Give a gift of time. Elderly relatives in particular would prefer quality time with you instead of another bottle of bubble bath. Give them a 'time token' – the offer of a day out with you, even if you end up staying in and chatting.
- Make a gift card for people offering

them a present of a 'service' from you. Perhaps a manicure, two evenings' babysitting, a massage, a week's worth of ironing or whatever you are good at and think they would appreciate.

If there are any topics you would like us to cover relating to money/debt issues please contact us.

For FREE, confidential and non-judgemental advice on creating a budget and dealing with debts, contact RELEASE (Financial) Charitable Trust on 01773 306289, 07805 795748, or 07932 088331.

www.releaseonline.org.uk

Registered Charity No. 1110731 RELEASE (Financial) Charitable Trust Licensed by the Office of Fair Trading No. 576547 - Debt Adjusting/Counselling

Wishing you all a very happy (and affordable!) Christmas!