

# With love from me to me: Why we self-gift

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Do you put a little present under the Christmas tree for yourself? Is your birthday coming up and it practically coincides with the release of the new season's Jimmy Choos or latest electronic gadget. Will you give yourself the shoes or the new Bose stereo system for your birthday?

If you shell out for that treat, you are indulging in "celebratory self-gifting", one of seven reasons QUT [consumer behaviour](#) expert Dr Gary Mortimer has found we use to justify buying ourselves a little (or big) something now and then.

"Self-gifting purchases tend to be planned and related to situations such as birthday, Christmas, success or [mood state](#) which makes them different from impulsive, compulsive or dysfunctional shopping," Dr Mortimer.

"With [compulsive shopping](#), consumers engage in extensive and informed purchase decisions, however, they lack an ability to control spending and buying.

"These shopper types must purchase every time they go shopping. In the extreme, such shoppers can become hoarders, with purchases remaining unused in boxes or unworn with the tags still on.

"Impulsive shopping, on the other hand, is a little different in that these shoppers make uninformed, irrational [purchase decisions](#). They buy without thinking and have a low-involvement [decision making process](#).

"In contrast, self-gifters relate, rationalise and, to some extent, justify their purchases."

Dr Mortimer is developing a self-gifting consumer behaviour scale based on the seven situations that motivate people to buy themselves a present.

"This scale will enable marketers or retailers to determine their mix of [shoppers](#) and tailor appeals that target specific groups. Messages like, 'you deserve it', 'go on, treat yourself today' or 'reward yourself' appeal to those in the [market](#) for self-gifting.

"The initial research has found we buy to celebrate, we buy when we are sad, when we are happy, to improve our moods, maintain our mood and to motivate ourselves:

- Reward self-gifting: Purchases are considered a pat-on-the back for achieving a goal or working hard. It's like saying, "well done, me!"
- Personal disappointment self-gifting: Purchases are designed to distract us from an unexpected result or outcome. So, if you missed out on that promotion, you may stop on the way home and buy a good bottle of wine.
- Negative mood reduction self-gifting: Unlike personal disappointment, a short term emotion, moods are longer lasting. So, you've had a long difficult week at work, your boss constantly on your back, so you say to yourself, "I need a massage and facial".
- Positive mood maintenance self-gifting: In contrast to reducing the effects of a negative mood, some people will maintain a positive mood. We shop when we are happy. "I've had a great month of sales, relationship is going well, life is good and I deserve a great dinner out with my friends."
- Motivation self-gifting: Need to get fit for summer, "I'll buy

these new joggers and gym equipment and then really knuckle down to get fit."

- Celebratory self-gifting: "It's my birthday, it's Christmas, I might buy myself a little treat."
- Hedonistic self-gifting: Feeling bored? Go shopping. Seeking out that elusive bargain will provide both excitement and pleasure.

Provided by Queensland University of Technology

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