



## **Holiday Gift Guide: Seniors with Memory Loss**

Buying, wrapping and giving gifts is an important part of the upcoming holiday season. But this tradition can seem overwhelming or even a bit sad if you find yourself shopping for a loved one with mild or significant memory loss. We are here to put a little sparkle back into your holiday shopping tradition, hoping that this year you can give a gift that will be meaningful to the both of you.

### ***Music***

The gift of music can be more than just the gift of a new song. Indeed, the gift of music can often be the key to connection, reminiscence, and a meaningful interaction with your loved one when she unwraps it, and then again and again over the course of the year. Since the part of the brain that houses music is one of the last ones to be affected by dementia related diseases, music has the potential to unlock memories, and the voice, of your loved one.



Before you run off to purchase some current music hits, you will need to do a little investigation to assure that you are getting music that will best tap into your loved one's heart. Try to remember any songs that might be important to your loved one: wedding songs, religious hymns, music from their early parenting years. Purchase a few of these tracks and wrap them up with a bow to tuck under the tree. While it might take a bit of trial and error, we have seen seniors start to sing and smile again with the perfect music accompaniment.

You can also find music that won't necessarily bring up memories, but instead sets a productive and relaxing atmosphere. Try finding relaxing music to turn on to combat anxiety or stressful times of the day, or music that encourages sleep.

### ***Aromatherapy***

Since dementia is so often accompanied by anxiety or nervous behaviors, you may consider giving the gift of relaxation for your loved one. Aromatherapy can be a wonderful complement to other anxiety interventions, and you can package up quite a few aromatherapy things to add to your loved one's home.

When you head out shopping, consider grabbing soaps or shampoos that are lavender scented, as it encourages relaxation and calm. This can be particularly helpful if your loved one gets anxious or acts out during bathing care. You can also benefit from tucking in a sugar scrub with lavender (for relaxation) or citrus (for energy), or sheet spray infused with lavender for better sleep.

### **Photos**

Your loved one would love the chance to flip through old photos, even if she may not remember everyone in the pictures. Consider putting together a scrapbook or photo book with photos and captions that your loved one can look through anytime throughout the day.



### **Experiences**

Consider ditching the gift all together and instead spend your money on an experience that the two of you can share. It might be a garden walk or just an afternoon baking together, but your experience will be lovely for the both of you and worth more than anything money can buy.

### **Compassionate Care**

Finally, consider giving your loved one the gift of compassionate care in their home. If the holidays have you concerned that your loved one isn't functioning well alone at home, our [Visiting Angels](#) are just a phone call away. We would love the opportunity to assess your loved one and find the services that will suit your family.

Visiting Angels of Wayzata, MN

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