

## Wedding Traditions

By Michael Kabel

"I need to get my wife some leather," my friend told me.

"Whatever keeps the marriage going," I said.

"No, stupid." He showed me the chart. "It's our third anniversary."

I read down the table. The third anniversary gift was leather. A second column said crystal or china was also appropriate.

"How about some new china plates?" I said. "Or new glasses? That seems more... I don't know. Gift-like?"

"She's traditional," my friend said. "She'd want the leather."

Many wedding anniversaries, by tradition and modern design alike, carry themed gifts that spouses can exchange with one another. Most people realize the fiftieth wedding anniversary is celebrated with gifts of gold, and the 25th with gifts of silver. But there are many more customary gift symbols, especially in the early years of marriage.

### Celebrating the Symbols

The symbols were designed as a means of rewarding long-running marriages. In the traditional scale, the price and value of the goods gradually escalates, culminating in the diamond on the 60th Anniversary. In fact, the tradition of giving diamonds started when Queen Victoria of England celebrated the sixtieth year of her rule in 1897. Her "diamond jubilee" drew well-wishers from around the world and jump-started the diamond gift market.

Modern anniversary symbols are more skewed to current standards of wealth. (The diamond comes on the tenth anniversary - quite a leap up!) and practicality.

### Matching the Right Gift to Its Symbol

As you plan your anniversary gift, the symbols should be used as a guideline. For example, leather gifts for the second or ninth anniversary might include wallets, purses, a new coat, or any other leather accessories. The fourth year gift of electrical appliances could be interpreted to include a wide-screen television.

The gifts you give for an anniversary should be fun, and of course they should also be as affectionate as you like. There's no mention of price related to these symbols, either. (A "paper" gift on the first anniversary could be two paper tickets to the Super Bowl.)

So here's the list of symbols, drawn from a variety of online sources. The traditional gifts are taken from American custom - British customs vary slightly.

### The First Ten Years

1st - Paper (Traditional) or Clocks (Modern)

2nd - Cotton (Traditional) or China (Modern)

3rd - Leather (Traditional) or Crystal & glass (Modern)

4th - Fruit & flowers (Traditional) or Electrical appliances (Modern)

5th - Wood (Traditional) or Silverware (Modern)

6th - Candy or iron (Traditional) or Wood (Modern)

7th - Wool & copper (Traditional) or Desk sets (Modern)

8th - Bronze & pottery (Traditional) or Linens & lace (Modern)

9th - Pottery & willow (Traditional) or Leather (Modern)

10th - Tin or aluminum (Traditional) or Diamond jewelry (Modern)

### Years 11 - 20

11th - Steel (Traditional) or Fashion jewelry (Modern)

12th - Silk & linen (Traditional) or Pearls or colored gems (Modern)

13th - Lace (Traditional) or Textiles or furs (Modern)

14th - Ivory (Traditional) or Gold jewelry (Modern)

15th - Crystal (Traditional) or Watches (Modern)

20th - China (Traditional) or Platinum (Modern)

#### Later Years

25th - Silver (Traditional) or Silver (Modern)

30th - Pearl (Traditional) or Diamond (Modern)

35th - Coral (Traditional) or Jade (Modern)

40th - Ruby (Traditional) or Ruby (Modern)

45th - Sapphire (Traditional) or Sapphire (Modern)

50th - Gold (Traditional) or Gold (Modern)

55th - Emerald (Traditional) or Emerald (Modern)

60th - Diamond (Traditional) or Diamond (Modern)

75th - Diamond (Traditional) or Diamond (Modern)

90th - Granite (Traditional) or Granite (Modern)

Be sure to visit My Wedding Favors for the perfect gift giving ideas that will accomodate even the most demanding of traditions and keep this guide as your reference for many years to come.

#### About the Author

Michael Kabel is a senior writer for My Wedding Favors (<http://www.myweddingfavors.com>). Visit the the website for more article from Michael and more writers like Morlette Cowan, Chris Horton and others for more great wedding articles and gift giving tips.

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