

HOLIDAY REGRETS? PEOPLE HAVE MORE THAN A FEW

Many Wish They Had Spent More Time With Others, More Time Reflecting on the Meaning of the Holidays, and Less Money

CHICAGO, IL – February 25, 2008. If they could have a do-over on this past holiday season, many people say they would have spent more time with family and friends (54 percent), more time reflecting on the spiritual significance of the holiday season (40 percent), and less money on gifts (30 percent). Those are among the key findings of a new national survey commissioned by personal finance writer/speaker Matt Bell and conducted by the market research firm Synovate.

The Synovate eNation survey asked a nationally representative sample of 1,000 adults what they wish they had done more or less of during the 2007 year-end holiday season. The results show a clean split, with people wishing they had done more of the altruistic activities associated with the holidays and less of the materialistic activities. Below are the top three answers for what people wish they had done more of.

Thinking back on this past holiday season what do you wish you had done more of?	
Spent time with family and friends.	54%
Spent time reflecting on the religious/spiritual significance of the holiday season.	40%
Gave money to charity during the holiday season.	31%

As for what people wish they had done less of, the top three answers all had to do with gift-buying activities.

Thinking back on this past holiday season, do you wish you had done less of?	
Spent money on gifts.	30%
Spent time shopping for gifts in stores.	28%
Spent money on myself while holiday shopping.	23%



The desire to have spent more time with family and friends cut across all respondent segments. However, segments with an especially high percentage of respondents expressing that sentiment included younger people (58 percent of 18-24-year-olds and 25-34-year-olds), unmarried respondents (58 percent), and women (57 percent of women wish they had spent more time with family and friends over the holidays vs. 50 percent of men).

Respondents most likely to wish they had spent less money on gifts were those with at least one child in their household. This segment was also more likely than most others to wish they had spent more time reflecting on the spiritual aspects of the holiday season and given more money to charity.

Thinking back on this past holiday season, do you wish you had done more or less of each of the following	All	Households With Children
Spent less money on gifts.	30%	36%
Spent more time reflecting on the religious/spiritual significance of the holiday season	40%	47%
Gave more money to charity during the holiday season	31%	38%

“This shows the tension that many parents live with, especially during the holidays,” Bell said. “On the one hand, there’s a common desire to make the holidays enjoyable for the kids. But on the other hand, there’s a worry that they may be teaching their kids that the holidays are only about gifts.”

By the same token, people in households with children were disproportionately likely to wish they had spent more on themselves over the holidays (28 percent vs. 20 percent of all respondents). However, those most likely to wish they had spent more on themselves during the holidays were young people. Among those 18-24, 36 percent wish they had done so.



ABOUT

Matt Bell is the author of two books published by NavPress: [“Money, Purpose, Joy”](#) (September 2008) and [“Money Strategies for Tough Times”](#) (April 2009). He speaks at churches, conferences, universities, and other venues throughout the country. To learn more about his work and for a free subscription to his blog, visit his web site at www.MattAboutMoney.com. For comments about the findings in this news release, contact Bell at 708-447-8022.

Synovate (www.synovate.com), the market research arm of Aegis Group plc, generates consumer insights that drive competitive marketing solutions. The network provides clients with cohesive global support and a comprehensive suite of research solutions. Synovate employs over 5,500 staff in 108 cities across 50 countries. For the holiday regrets research, Synovate used its eNation service, an online survey of 1,000 adults 18 years of age or older in the contiguous U.S.A. The sample is balanced to be representative of the general population based upon region, gender, age, and household income data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

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