

Presence over presents: Wellbeing stars Katie Piper, Kate Ferdinand and a host of The Big Retreat Wales talent share how they'll be staying more mindful this Christmas...

Submitted by: The Big Retreat Wales

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... plus style Influencer Erica Davies (The Edited) joins the line-up at TBR 2020

Have we finally had enough of stuff? Sorry Alexa, but the trend for experiential gifts continues to rise and it seems that what we really want from Santa is real connection and time and attention from our loved ones. (one in five Brits planned to buy experience-based gifts at Christmas 2018*, (an increase of 115% on the previous year).

At The Big Retreat Wales we are big on experiences, encouraging our visitors to 'find their feel good' by curating an eclectic schedule packed with new things to try, including photography workshops, bush craft, bug-hunting, gin-tasting, acro-yoga and self-help speed dating.

At this time of year, we know it's more important than ever to prioritise connection and, with a little help from our Talk Tent friends Shelf Help, we've curated eight tips on making the most of this very merry time...

Eight ways to practice presence over presents this Christmas and New Year by The Big Retreat Wales

1. Get off your phone - Katie Piper, activist, presenter and self-help author of several books including Things Get Better and Confidence, The Secret, told our Talk Tent host Toni Jones: "I'll make sure I'm more present this Christmas by being mindful of how much I use my phone," and Kate Ferdinand, author of new health & fitness guide, Fitter, Happier, Healthier said: "Less time on my phone means more quality time with my family." Festival favourite, Shahroo Izadi, who is a Behavioural Change Specialist and author of The Kindness Method added: "This holiday season – and year! – I'm going to be more present by using my phone less, especially before I go to bed."
2. Get playful – Hazel Gale, therapist and author of The Mind Monster Solution says: "For me, being more present is all about playing games – especially board games – because this kind of play can give us a whole host of psychological benefits, including a deeper bond with those we are playing with, increased resilience and problem-solving skills."
3. Spend your money on experiences - Tanya Goodin, Digital Wellbeing expert, who will be appearing at The Big Retreat 2020, says: "One of the biggest pressures of Christmas is getting everyone a present they will love. So, instead of trying to guess their size or if they have already read that book, why don't you buy them an experience you can do together? By buying tickets to a show or festival, or even a voucher for dinner you can show how much you care about spending time with them!"
4. Less oversharing - Another great tip from Tanya: "Whilst the Internet can make Christmas special and help us to connect with those we cannot physically be with, we must remember not to let the pressure to share online take away from the special time we could be spending with each other."

5. Less booze – Laura Willoughby, co-founder of Club Soda and co-author of How to be a Mindful Drinker told us: “Not drinking is my number one Christmas presence tip: you get to pack more in, you get to spend more quality time with wonderful people and you get to enjoy every moment without a hangover.”

6. Don't bother dressing to impress (anyone but yourself!) Erica Davies, Fashion Editor and Influencer, and the latest talent to be confirmed on The Big Retreat Wales line-up says: “Real style comes from that sense of knowing who you are and the comfort that comes from that. It's not about dress size, or budget - it's about putting pieces together in a way that truly feels like you,” and Lauren Bravo, author of How to Break Up with Fast Fashion says: “If Scrooge was alive today he'd probably be a fast fashion mogul. Be more present by swerving the High Street and making peace with wearing last year's sequins to the party.”

7. Learn how to say no: Shelf Help founder Toni says: “At this time of year our time, energy and money are being pulled in all directions so it's important to clarify what and who is most important to you and be strict in saying 'no' to anything that isn't that.”

8. Start your own traditions festival founders Amber & Diana say: We all love to remind our friends and family at Christmas just how much they mean to us - but presents don't have to be 'things'. Why not take a first step to creating an annual Christmas tradition: sing a song, tell jokes, recite a poem, hit the beach for a wild swim! Traditions make for wonderful memories that get a fresh coat of paint each year!

Shahroo Izadi, Tanya Goodin, Erica Davies and Toni Jones, will all be appearing at TBR Wales 2020.

The Big Retreat Wales will take place on the stunning Old Castle Site in Lawrenny from 22nd-25th May 2020. with weekend adult passes starting from £169 and under-5s admitted free. Admission includes access to over 200 fitness and wellbeing sessions, workshops, talks and live performances.

To book tickets go to www.thebigretreatwales.co.uk