

Daily Union Article  
Saturday, December 21, 2019  
Title: "Step Out With Positivity"

If you're counting down the days or hours of shopping left before your Christmas gift exchange, I want to caution you that you are nearly out of time. How can you ensure a strong finish to your gift selection season? I would suggest you do it with a **K.I.S.S.** I don't mean a small chocolate candy nor warm moist lips placed on the side of your cheek. Instead, I am suggesting a different kind of K.I.S.S. – an acronym for **Keep It Simple, Silly!**

The holiday season is already full with parties, celebration meals, commutes, and calendar dates that are stacked on top of each other. Stressing about those last minute gifts can be a drain on your energy and joy. So – keep it simple using some of these simple suggestions:

- 1) Simple and unique ornament. For my close family and friends, I know their personalities well enough that I can choose an ornament that reflects their character, interests, or hobbies. The ornament itself can be universal in use or target their focus on what the holiday season represents. For example, most of my friends and family support a specific Kansas 4-year university. I can find an ornament that could go on their tree or could hang in their office or living room wall to accent other college regalia.
- 2) Simple and flavorful olive oil. I come from a family of cooks and culinary artists. My dad taught his children to prepare flavorful and aromatic traditional meals and use our five senses to guide our ingredients and seasoning selections. Flavored olive oil can serve as an ingredient in pasta, a new twist to your homemade salad dressings, or simply drizzled over grilled steaks or chicken breasts.
- 3) Night at the movies. Sure, anyone can go to a red box, pick up a DVD or BlueRay at the store, or stream a movie off the internet but there is something really special about taking the time with your best friend or life partner to go to the movies and enjoy the big screen and stereo effects. You can buy the tickets in advance or simply give them a couple of pre-purchased tickets and a concession stand gift certificate.
- 4) Special spa treatment. This can range in simplicity from a pedicure to a full body message. Too often, we get wrapped up in the holiday chaos and lose sight of taking care of ourselves. Giving a simple gift that allows a person to pamper themselves can ease the stress and strain the holiday season may evoke.
- 5) Simple food mixes. As I mentioned above, I come from a family of cooks. Creating a food mix that a busy person can use to make a quick meal or a contribution to a family potluck can be both simple and quick. You can make

mixes that range from soups to cookies, or beverages to desserts. Check out the Friendship Soup Mix recipe offered below as one of the recipes found in a publications titled "Mix It Up! – Food Mixes in a Jar" provided by the North Dakota State University Extension Service. You can find this publication posted on the Geary County K-State Research & Extension website at: <https://www.geary.k-state.edu/health-home-family/> under the new resources tab.

Reduce the stress of holiday shopping by deciding to give a K.I.S.S. gift. This will give your gifts a personal touch while helping with time and money management. You'll also enjoy more time to simply relax and enjoy your time with family and friends. Unit next time, keep living resourcefully!

### **Friendship Soup Mix**

#### Ingredients:

½ cup dry split peas  
2 Tablespoons beef bouillon granules  
½ cup pearl barley  
½ cup dry lentils  
¼ cup dry, minced onion  
2 teaspoon Italian seasoning  
½ cup rice  
½ cup macaroni noodles

In a clean quart-sized jar, layer all the ingredients except the macaroni. Place the macaroni in a sandwich bag and place it on top of the other ingredients. Cover the jar tightly with a lid, decorate it, and attach a copy of the recipe card.

To make this soup:

1 container Friendship Soup Mix

Additional Ingredients: 1 pound lean ground beef or turkey  
3 quarts water  
1 (28oz.) can diced tomatoes

Brown meat and drain. Place in a large pot and add the water and tomatoes. Add soup mix except macaroni. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for one hour. Add macaroni and continue cooking for another – minutes (until macaroni is done). For best flavor, use this mix within one year.

NOTE: To avoid overcooked pasta in leftovers, add the appropriate amount of macaroni to the portion being served.

*Makes 12 servings. Each serving has 150 calories. 4g fat, 12 g carbohydrates and 390mg sodium.*