

What is the different between a gift or a present? Is a "gift" more of a formal thing, like from a company to employee? And is a "present" something you would give to family members? What do you think?

A Gift is a Gift but a Present is so Much More

A quick look in a dictionary will see the word 'gift' defined as something given voluntarily without payment in return, as to show favor toward someone, honor an occasion, or make a gesture of assistance. But there is so much more. Present and gift are both used to describe something given as an expression of affection, friendship, interest, or respect. Present is the more formal; gift is generally used to describe something conferred on an individual, a group, or an institution. Something special is presented like a birthday present; a less formal example might be a gift to a bride. A donation applies to an important gift, most often of money and usually of considerable size. A bonus applies to something, again usually money, given in addition to what is due, to employees who have worked for a long time or particularly well.



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When a special occasion happens a special gift is given and 'presented' to the recipient at that occasion. This may be a birthday, a wedding, or the birth of a child. The very act defines to the recipient that we have a kind regard for that person. It may mean that the giver loves the recipient. It may even mean more.

Once our physiological needs have been met, once we have enough to eat, drink, clothing and shelter, then we start to think of security. Adults have little awareness of their security needs except in times of emergency such as widespread rioting. Children often display the signs of insecurity and the need to be safe.



The best way to make an impression is to send a personal note or message with the gift. "Seasons Greetings from Acme" is way too generic. So are business cards tucked inside a gift. Keating's company allows purchasers to include a personalized message with every gift. "Tailoring a message of thanks that's personal and heartfelt goes a long way in building long-term relationships." Handwritten notes on stationery or holiday cards signed by you and/or your team are also meaningful.

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I often will ask the question: "Have you ever played chess?" Have you ever won on the first move?" The reason I ask this is because chess takes a little while for the game to be decided. So does life and relationships. Sometimes a gift is just a gift but a present may be the first move in much longer and more complicated series of events. It may be that we feel the need for long term companionship as a step towards more security in life.

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Some of us do not feel the immediate need for safety and for physiological well-being. Anybody who watches the news regularly will certainly have some concerns. Fortunately all of us at some time or another will feel the need for love, affection and belongingness.

Years ago, before the age of modern communications like radio, movies, television, and the Internet, we visited friends and met at the town square or village plaza. But although times change, people still seek to overcome feelings of loneliness and alienation. This involves both giving and receiving love, affection and the sense of belonging.

This is where the act of not merely giving a gift but presenting a present and making it an occasion and really memorable helps to build your sense of connection to the recipient. It's easy to do. To make the presentation an occasion decide who really needs a break, Have the kids been exceptionally good, dad got a promotion, or the family has been stuck in the house for days?

Now what to do? For kids you could try outdoor activities such as scooters, bike riding, skate boarding, or playing in the park. For adults you could try a walk without interruptions from cell phones, dance to your favorite songs, play golf, or try yard sales or antique hunting. At some point in the activity, the time will feel right

to make a present of the gift and make a connection that could last a lifetime.

If the present or gift is for the family, the key to success is to stay active so you can get the gang to try bowling, hiking, swimming, badminton, or flag football. Leave options such as movies and dinner as a last resort.

So gift giving does not have to revolve around a national festival or holiday, it will be doubly appreciated. Just remember this saying:

"The present should look like an accident to the recipient." Make it look like something that just 'happened' along the way. It will be even more memorable to the recipient.

Later in this series we will chat about gift giving on special holidays and occasions.