

**How to Give A Gift You'll both feel Great About**

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Have you ever felt the pressure of picking the perfect gift, or the anxiety after you've given a gift, hoping their reaction was genuine? Or have you ever given a gift and received a less-than-positive reaction? If you can relate, either way, you're in the right place. Gift-giving is an important aspect of relationships and social connections, and it's important to ensure your gift is strengthening your relationship, not weakening it.

In this post, you'll learn how to give the best gift and feel confident about it, and learn why giving gifts can make us happy as well. You will also learn how to give gifts that not only please the receiver but strengthen whatever relationship you want with one simple gesture! But why does it matter, you may ask?

### **Gift-giving**

“The process of selecting, transferring and evaluating tangible and intangible objects to fulfill a traditional social obligation or give in a spontaneous manner”

(Septianto et al., 2020 p. 1705).

The tradition of gift-giving is not a new concept in our civilization. Some speculate that gift-giving has been present back to the birth of Jesus and the three wise men. In fact, humans aren't the only ones too! Gift-giving is even practiced among the animal kingdom, where multiple different species, including insects, birds, and mammals have all been observed in the wild practicing this custom.

For our society (and animals too), gift-giving has become a huge part of people's lives, from a consumer's perspective gifts serve as a way to create and maintain social bonds, and in turn, reinforce a deeply ingrained tradition and culture. It has also been observed that gift-giving can serve many different functions as well. Some examples [are](#):

1. A symbolic communication between the giver and receiver

2. A social exchange that aids in building and maintaining interpersonal relationships
3. An economic exchange which serves as obligatory reciprocal exchanges
4. A socializer which helps parents teach children about the customs of society

With all of these subconscious and alternative motives behind gifting, it's fair to feel stressed or uncertain about purchasing a gift. This feeling is so common that there is a descriptive term for it: Giftophobia.

### **Giftophobia**

As previously mentioned, gift-giving is much more than a frequent gesture, it is the material and social exchange that is inherent among societies and is essential in maintaining relationships and expressing feelings. This can be unnerving! The term 'giftophobia' may be foreign, but it describes the fear of the whole process of gift-giving. Some common behaviors of giftophobia can include procrastinating. Giftophobes may leave the entire gifting process to the last minute, or they may depend on others to choose a gift for them. Overall, giftophobes experience a substantial amount of anxiety and dread about the gifting process, which may result in an unsuccessful gift. This, in turn, can damage social relationships, social life, as well as self-confidence.

Even those who don't experience giftophobia are susceptible to the anxiety and dread that accompany buying a gift for someone that you are unsure of. Although it's hard to believe, choosing the wrong gift may have repercussions for both the receiver, as well as the recipient.

### **Gift-giving & Social exchange theory**

The theory of social exchange can be explained as the idea that people subconsciously keep track of the cost and benefits ratio that comes along with forming and maintaining relationships with others. As people, we are motivated to maximize the benefits of our social

exchanges and minimizing the costs. For example, before entering into a perceived friendship, we may ask ourselves, “Do I have fun with this person? Do they make me feel good? Am I dissatisfied when I’m with them?” These are all examples of balancing the benefits and costs of our relationship. But still, you may be wondering, how does this relate to giving gifts?

Social exchange theory is a concept that we use more often than we think. As well as being a common occurrence in our everyday lives, a social exchange can also come in various forms, including material objects such as gifts. Gift exchanges don’t just represent interpersonal interactions, but can also represent a social function, which suggests the constitution of positive emotions that can lead to the construction of relationships and prosocial behavior. While psychological research continues to focus on the function of gift exchange, there are three forms of obligation that guide the gift exchange.

**Three forms of obligation:**

1. To give
2. To receive
3. To repay

It should be noted that ‘To repay’ is the most influential form in the gift exchange system, as the idea of balanced reciprocity, or the achieved symmetry between the gift-giver and receiver is the ideal outcome of social exchange theory.

**Positive effects of gifting**

**Prosocial behavior**

Prosocial behavior, or the behaviors intended to help other people, can also play a part in gift exchanges. It has been studied that when gift-giving is implemented as an act of prosocial

behavior, interpersonal relationships can be strengthened through the increased behavioral and neural connection between individuals that are brought on by simply giving a gift.

Furthermore, prosocial behavior and gift-giving can provide us with a multitude of effects that can benefit us, as well as the recipient of the gift.

### **Psychological effects**

As previously mentioned, gift-giving strengthens relational bonds as well as positively affecting our psyches too. Just from engaging in prosocial gift exchanges, our brain function can increase and be positively affected. Here are a few psychological benefits from gift-giving:

- Improves behavioral and cognitive efficiency
- Increases synchronization in specific inter-cerebral areas
- Increases neural coordination among individuals

### **Mood-boosting effects**

[Studies](#) have illustrated that those who participate in prosocial behavior are much more likely to experience better moods. To better understand this, let's look at how our hormones levels are affected. When we receive or give a gift that is relevant and engages our interests, happy hormones such as dopamine, serotonin and oxytocin are released, otherwise known as our happy hormones.

### **Social support benefits**

Psychologically, the majority of gift exchanges are intended to preserve social ties and bonds. Gift-giving reinforces and strengthens our sense of reciprocity, which in turn strengthens our relationships. Unfortunately, giving a thoughtless or careless gift can weaken social ties and relationships. As gift-giving is a form of social exchange, there is symbolic meaning attached to gifts, which means that even though we mean well, giving a thoughtless gift may do more harm

than help. [Studies](#) can further back up this claim, concluding that gifts *can* influence relationships for the worst, both platonically and romantically. It is also [stated](#) that when you choose the wrong gift, it tells the receiver that there are no commonalities in the relationship.

### **The perfect gift**

Giving gifts allows us to communicate our feelings and appreciation towards someone in physical form, so when we are unsure about a gift, it can be interpreted as thoughtless by the receiver. But no fear! [Research](#) has outlined 6 elements that a perfect gift should include:

#### **Six principles of a perfect gift**

**1. Illustrate true giver sacrifice.**

The “giver sacrifice” refers to the amount of effort the giver put into their gift, including aspects such as perceived financial, physical, or time-related effort.

**2. The wish of the giver should be the recipients' happiness**

**3. The gift is a luxury**

**4. The gift is distinctively appropriate to the recipient.**

This is about the level of personalization that goes into the gift and is often affiliated with how well the giver knows the receiver.

**5. The recipient is surprised by the gift**

**6. The gift succeeds in pleasing the recipient**

If these elements seem daunting and you are more confused than ever on what gift to buy, we have you covered.

#### **Perfect is Personalised**

When taking into account all of the many aspects that go into the perfect gift, it may seem like finding a good gift is impossible. Fortunately, we found it! Personalized gifts are recipient-

centric, meaning the gift is specific to a specific person. They also show that there was effort and attention put into the gift, which in turn positively increases and reinforces relationships. By choosing a personalized gift, you tell a story of your relationship to the recipient and express your feelings to them. Personalized gifts are also timeless, as they never lose meaning and can be used for long periods. With personalized gifts, you can focus less on the stress and hassle, and more on enjoying the feeling that giving gifts will give to you and the receiver.

### **Conclusion**

In a society where gift exchanges can weigh too much on relationships, it is almost normal to be unsure about the gift you buy. Fortunately, though, research and information have been laid out so that gift exchanges can strengthen relationships instead of weakening them! With personalized gifts, your gift is guaranteed to be a success, while also psychologically benefitting yourself! As a timeless and carried cultural tradition, gift-giving should remain true to its roots and be used to move relationships forward. With these psychologically based tips, you don't have to worry about giftophobia or the related stressors that can also be in association. Instead, you can focus on the people who truly matter to you and enhancing your relationships, one gift at a time!

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