

Your best holiday present is your presence

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Joan Dickinson, ED.D.

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Look at how similar these words are...presents and presence. Every time you wonder what gift to get for someone this holiday season, think of giving your presence. What a fun reminder, presence = presents. Now that really is worth a smile.

I know families who love their traditions of making gifts for each other. How can you throw out Aunt Nora's knitted flamingo pink sweater when you know it took her weeks to make? How many years have you held onto the rainbow colored macaroni necklace and matching earrings your boy scout gave to you? Maybe you don't wear the sweater or the necklace and earrings, but they are the gifts that keep on giving, keep creating happiness when you glance at them, even stuffed in a dresser drawer.

Here's another idea from my family. My daughter wanted to give me presents as a child, but like most children, she didn't have much money of her own. Now, of course, I gave her some money to buy presents, but really loved the annual coupon books she made from wrapping paper. One coupon was for washing the dishes, unasked. Another coupon was for a back rub, albeit of one-minute duration. I had a lot of fun redeeming my coupons.

It's interesting that I didn't make a coupon book for her of my time, what she probably needed most. She might have liked that as much as the Guess jeans. Well, maybe not, but why not give a few homemade gifts and your time to a loved one this holiday season? Why not give the gift of a half an hour of your precious time to someone at work?

Here's what I think, gifts made with love, bring love. And the best present is your presence, your time. Here's a sample wish list:

- Homemade Christmas cookies made together
- One walk on the beach at sunset
- One web site management lesson
- Stockings packed with fun inexpensive things, like Emory boards or nail polish
- One game of Scrabble, Monopoly, gin rummy, or bridge
- One garage clean-up morning
- One family tennis or golf game
- One dog walking or cat sitting
- One half an hour of telephone duty to extend an employees lunch break
- One half hour of help on a project of their choice
- One evening preplanned date with your spouse or significant other
- One friends night out, their choice...even if you hate it

Have your family, co-workers and friends make up their holiday wish lists that include gifts of time, talents and experiences, yet cost no money. The purpose is to make

someone smile, lighten a load, give what they'd like, not what you think they need or what you'd like. And the ultimate purpose is that of sharing love.

Then make note of how you feel when you give and redeem your gifts. When we are present moment centered, caught up in sharing experiences with those closest to us, worry, fatigue and frown lines just seem to disappear.

If you'd like help manifesting your 2008 dreams I'm giving a Create your New Years Resolutions workshop at the Anna Maria Community Center on December 5, 7:00-8:00 PM. For reservations call 779-1908 and ask for Sandy Pruitt, ext. 9200. Cost \$10.