

Why You'd Better Be Ready to Receive this Christmas

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"You begin to give back completely when you receive completely. That is the principle of heaven and earth... If you begin to return before you have received, then it will not come back to you in its entirety." -- Rev. Sun Myung Moon

We don't usually consider receiving a skill or something we need to be conscious of doing. It requires a bit of etiquette, perhaps, but isn't it pretty straightforward to receive a gift, be happy and grateful, and move on? You may be surprised, but it isn't quite that simple.

Consider the scenario of a simple conversation. If giving is speaking, then wouldn't the speaker want their friend to listen, or receive the message, before returning their own thoughts? Receiving is actually a very important part of relationship! It's called "give and take," and the take needs just as

much emphasis as the give.

The holidays are coming up, a time when all good things are exchanged from heart to heart. We want to be good givers and show our friends and family how much we love them, but to do so we need to be good receivers first. Here are four stories you know very well that remind us about the impact of a gift well-received:

The Distressed Mother

Our hard working mothers give to us every day. As much as they provide, mothers often end up not receiving very much. It's hard to accept an opportunity to rest or hear that "thank you" when there is just so much to do! The problem is, when she's gone long enough without receiving anything in return, she can burn out, get pretty tired and maybe even a little unhappy. When we receive well, we can avoid the burnout and appreciate the thanks. Allowing ourselves to receive gives us the chance to recharge and be ready for more.

Gifts for Good

When we are given a gift, it is best when we can use it for good. Using a gift for good doesn't necessarily mean giving that gift away to someone less fortunate. Using a gift for good can happen in the form of sharing with those we love and creating more love in that process, or using it to develop ourselves in order to do good with our skills and talents later on.

Gifts are the kind of thing that can multiply. If we can receive a gift well and then give well to others, we might also inspire them to do the same. In turn, more and more people will want to give (and receive) gifts. This can cause a huge chain reaction of giving and affect a great number of people. In most countries around the world, the gifts given around the holidays represents almost 20% of that country's revenue for the year and provides hundreds of thousands of jobs! Even in a completely economic sense, giving and receiving does multitudes of good.

Thank You, Jesus

When Jesus was born, we were given the ultimate gift. God's one true son was on Earth to lead us back to our Heavenly Father and Mother. Though Jesus lived for the sake of the world, few were able to appreciate this precious gift from God. Instead, Jesus was cast away and sentenced to die on the cross. Jesus's life was the ultimate gift: a spark of hope for the world to believe in, and a path to follow.

Many looked down upon Jesus and failed to recognize his value. Because of our sins, Jesus gave us his life in order to save us. When we are given a gift, our ultimate gift in return is to recognize the love and care that someone invested into their gift. Like when a parent gives to his or her child, the child's joy creates joy for the parent. Imagine the joy God would have experienced if we had been able to receive the gift of His son with utmost joy and adoration.

This holiday season, take some time to fully experience and appreciate each gift you are given. Show your gratitude to the giver of the gift and then, pass it on! Spread some joy for all to share.