

The Gifts We Have Missed

By Blair Watson

Well, it's over. The gifts have been opened, the food has been ravaged and piles of paper and boxes are still strewn across the living room. Another Christmas has come and gone. Or so it might seem.

You see, this is when every so often a wonderful thing happens: we discover a gift we had missed. Perhaps it fell behind the tree or was hidden beneath a pile of torn paper, but there it is. And what a joy it is to learn we have received more gifts than we first thought.

But these situations aren't limited to holidays. There are gifts we miss every day, not because they are hidden beneath paper or behind a tree, but because we're too busy, distracted or self-absorbed to recognize them. Gifts such as kindness, compassion, sympathy, generosity, appreciation and a million other ways people make our lives richer without our even being aware of it.

If we would but take some time to reflect, we might discover our lives are filled with gifts we have missed.

Some of these gifts are little. People open doors for us but we fail to notice. Someone slows down to help us merge into the flow of traffic and we don't think to give them a wave of thanks. Or perhaps someone simply offers us a smile but we're more focused on the phone against our ear than the people before our eyes.

Some of these gifts are large. Our parents sacrifice so that we might have something nice, but we're so caught up in our own lives that we don't notice. Someone goes out of their way to find us the perfect gift, and while we may thank them for the gift, we rarely thank them for the time they put into finding it – even though *that* cost more than the object itself. Or perhaps a friend, neighbor or teacher once took an interest in us and helped turn our lives around but we were too young or immature to appreciate what they had

done. So rather than thank them, we simply took the gift and went on with our lives.

Whatever our reason for overlooking them, if we would but take some time to reflect, we might discover our lives are *filled* with gifts we have missed. And for those who think finding one last gift under the tree is special, it's nothing compared to discovering an overlooked gift in our past and acknowledging it in the present.

No, the greatest gifts aren't always found under a tree. Sometimes they're found by taking another look at our past.

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