



## The greatest gifts!

Have you ever thought of giving gifts? If you are like most people, you definitely have! But...what are the world's greatest gifts? They are those with the most meaning, the ones money can't buy, the ones that won't cost us anything, but they are worth more than gold!

### 1. The first gift is

**Compassion.** It is more than mere caring or concern. It is love in action. For example, someone at work is stymied by a problem and you have a spare moment, so you immediately jump in, without being asked, and offer a helping hand. Other examples include offering our seat in the train or bus to another, holding the door open for a young mother with



a baby carriage trying to enter a building, and guiding an elderly or disabled person safely across a large street. Imagine the surprise and delight of others as we offer them these much needed gifts. A moment's reflection will reveal many other ways we can express our compassion. For instance, when someone else is trying to speak, we can offer the gifts of silence and a listening ear. Or when others are trying to express a dissenting opinion, we can agree with their right to have such a view, and use it to expand our own understanding, rather than try to convert them to our way of thinking.

2. **A second gift is that of Honesty.** If it were a commodity exchanged in the Stock Market, its price would be on the rise because of its scarcity in the business world. We can make a big difference by helping to restore it. If we're in sales, instead of trying to sell a bill of goods, we can sell service, support, and knowledge. That is, we can be a help, rather than a hindrance. If we're asked about something we don't know, we can be honest and admit our ignorance. And if it's within our capacity to find the answer, we can make the effort to do so. In our personal relationships, honesty means keeping our word, avoiding gossip, not exaggerating our accomplishments and recognizing the achievements of others. It also means being true to ourselves or practicing integrity. In other words, we align our actions with our values. For instance, don't you think it's strange that we sometimes hurt those we love? To do so is dishonest, for it is not how we feel in our heart. Don't you agree that honesty is healing and dishonesty is hurtful?
3. **A third gift is that of Recognition.** People are criticized more often than they are recognized. As a result, they are starving for recognition. Because sincere praise is as rare as diamonds, it has great value. When we offer praise, congratulations, and admiration, we are offering the gift of recognition. We are effectively saying, "The world is better off

because you are here. You have value. I am honoured to know you. You make my life more enjoyable." How often do we express these sentiments to our family, friends, and co-workers? Isn't true that if we are silent, we are dishonest and unloving?

4. **A fourth gift is that of Interest.** What do you imagine is the worst thing you can do to someone? It is not to hate them, for hate is sparked by jealousy or fear. Although highly negative, such feelings at least recognize them. No, the worst thing you can do to others is to ignore them. To deny their existence. To have no interest in them. While the gift of Recognition honours others for what they have done, the gift of Interest honours others for what they are. And what are they? They are fellow travellers on the journey of life. They have as much right to be here, as much value to the world, and as interesting a story to relate as anyone else. All we have to do is give them an opportunity to tell their story. Each person is but one facet in the gem we call life. When we express interest in them, we give them the opportunity to sparkle. Be especially aware of those diamonds in the rough that you have at home and call your children.
5. **A fifth gift is that of Sincerity.** When we act compassionately, we grow joyful. When we are honest, we are at peace with ourselves. When we shower others with recognition, they recognize us for our kindness. When we express interest in others by asking them to tell us about themselves, we discover the wonder and beauty of the world. So, each gift we offer has its own reward. But one of the greatest gifts of all is that of Sincerity, for it is a beacon. When we act out of sincerity we act without desiring a reward. We offer each of the above gifts with no motive other than it is the right thing to do. Sincere people do not try to improve others, they just try to better themselves, but in doing so, they improve the world. Rather than trying to grab from life as much as they can, they try to add whatever they can.
6. **A sixth gift is that of Time.** It is a priceless gift, for it is the only one that is a non-renewable resource. In each of our lives, there is a limited allotment of time. Once used, it is gone forever, never to be replaced. Since time is the stuff our lives are made of, when we spend time with others, we are giving the greatest gift of all, ourselves. When we encourage others and cheer them on, we infuse their life with meaning; we make their life worthwhile. What greater gift can we offer?

Each gift is not meant to be thought of in the abstract, but is meant to be lived. Not in the future, but NOW. Their primary purpose isn't to help those in desperate need thousands of miles away, but to lessen the fear and pain of those in our immediate circle of family, friends, acquaintances, and, even those strangers we meet each day as we go about our daily business