

Gift Giving: Is It Really the Thought That Counts? Psychologists Weigh In.

December 27, 2021

As I scrolled through a friend's Secret Santa wish list recently, I felt conflicted. I've always believed that a good gift requires thought and effort. If I just got him something on his wish list, would he think I didn't care enough to try to come up with the perfect present on my own? If I put in minimal thought, would he like the present less?

The answer is no, [according to research](#). In fact, focusing on adages, such as "It's the thought that counts," isn't necessarily the best approach to gift giving.

"One of the central challenges in gift giving is that you are trying to get something that's ideal for another person, and what seems ideal to you — what's going on in your mind as a gift giver — might be quite a bit different from a gift receiver," said [Nicholas Epley](#), a behavioral science professor and the director of the Center for Decision Research at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business.

...