

The magic of giving



Giving is magic!

Gift-giving is like magic that not only brings a smile to the recipient's face, but also brings deep joy to the giver. It is that warm feeling of knowing that you have given a gift that is unforgettable.

The giving of gifts has a long tradition that goes back to the origins of mankind. Whether it was an unusually shaped rock, an animal tooth, the bark of a tree or another object of natural origin, gift-giving was certainly already common when we were still cavemen. And this gift-giving



In prehistoric times, people gave each other animal teeth as gifts, and the Romans gave each other gifts at the festival of Saturn.

has continued throughout human history. The ancient Egyptians gave gifts to the pharaohs, the Greeks attached particular importance to gifts for guests and the ancient Romans even had a gift-giving festival: the Saturnalia, from December 17-23. The week-long festival, which was later extended to December 30,

was extremely popular and a time of merriment, celebration and the exchange of gifts. Family members and friends gave each other candles, poems or pottery as a token of affection.



The first "Christmas" was probably celebrated on December 25 under Emperor Constantine in 336 AD. It is speculated that Constantine chose this date as the "birthday of Christ" because it also marked the birth of "Sol Invictus", i.e. the sun, which was invincible even through the darkness of winter. The merging of these two feast days could probably be seen as an intelligent move by Constantine in the sense of the coexistence of religions and thus in the spirit of the Edict of Milan. However, the custom of exchanging gifts with family members and friends during the Christmas period only finally manifested itself during the Renaissance and has continued worldwide to this day. And the fact that gift-giving is moving with the times can be seen very clearly in the type of gifts: why else is the market for "experience gifts" growing at the moment? In other words, people are giving gifts of time and activities - no longer just objects. And what does the future hold? Perhaps in the future we will let artificial intelligence find the perfect gift to suit the preferences, experiences and interests of the person receiving the gift (like the picture on the Swiss stamp generated by AI).



The first Christmas is documented from the time of Constantine the Great; today people give each other vacations or in the future the AI will put the presents together for you.

To understand why we are so fond of giving gifts, it is important to understand the psychology of gift-giving: this teaches us that it is not just about the material value of the gift, but above all about the gesture of giving. Psychological studies have shown that gift-giving has the following effects:



Giving gifts has many positive effects on us!

- **Strengthening relationships:** A gift has the power to deepen relationships. It shows that you care about the person and helps to strengthen trust and affection.

- **Increasing happiness:** Giving a gift brings joy and happiness. It is a way to spread positivity and kindness and can lead to a deeper sense of fulfillment and satisfaction.

- **Strengthening self-esteem:** By giving gifts, we express love, gratitude and appreciation. This generosity can boost self-esteem and provide

a sense of satisfaction and fulfillment.

- **Promoting social relationships:** Gift giving is a wonderful way to make connections and build social bonds. It creates a sense of community and belonging, which is invaluable for our emotional well-being.
- **Stress relief:** A gift is not only a source of joy, but also a way to relieve stress. It provides a sense of purpose and understanding of oneself and the world around us.

In addition to the positive effects on our own well-being, gift-giving also has a beneficial influence on the recipient. It conveys a feeling of appreciation, recognition and love, which in turn can promote the mental health and well-being of the recipient.

But what gives us this warm feeling when we give a gift? This brings us back to our DNA and our body's reactions. When we give a gift, our reward system in the brain is activated and more dopamine is released. Dopamine is one of our happiness hormones and makes us feel good. But oxytocin is also released. This hormone triggers a feeling of familiarity and security and also reduces stress. As its effect lasts longer than that of dopamine, we also feel good for longer after giving a gift. Interestingly, we now also know that our brain reacts by releasing these hormones not only at the time of gift-



Giving gifts releases hormones that strengthen our trust and affection.



The act of buying, wrapping and, last but not least, the gift-giving itself releases our happiness hormones.

giving, but also during the various steps leading up to the actual act of gift-giving, such as shopping and wrapping the present. In this way, gift-giving changes our brain and leaves long-lasting positive traces.

And this is how we stay mentally healthy through the magic of giving!



Quellen:

- <https://www.uni-heidelberg.de/presse/unispiegel/us08-5/weihn.html>
- <https://www.apa.org/topics/mental-health/brain-gift-giving>
- <https://www.curioushistory.com/the-origins-and-history-of-gift-giving/>
- <https://overjoyd.de/geschichte-des-schenkens/>