

## Give the Greatest Gift: Love

*My sister-in-law plans to purchase used items as Christmas presents for my kids. I know this is not a budget issue but a lifestyle choice, one I support and frequently participate in. However, my husband feels second-hand items are inappropriate for gifts and is concerned our sons will think they don't deserve new things. I feel it's the giver's choice. By not raising my husband's concerns, am I not being supportive of his feelings or parental stance? It's putting strain on my relationships and my holiday spirit.*

— *Stuck in the Middle*

While it is appropriate to acknowledge your husband's feelings, the dynamic between him and your sister-in-law is not yours to manage. However, as a couple and as parents, there is a rich opportunity here for both of you to heal old wounds and patterns around what you deserve, responsibility and acceptance — and to not pass those unhealed challenges on to your children.

Get clear about what is important to *you*. Then explore with your husband what you each believe the holidays are truly about. What do gifts symbolize? Is there something more? Resist the need to be right or make him wrong. Seek common ground based on your core intentions for your holiday experience. Then choose to stand together on the foundation of your shared values.

Just as we learned in childhood by observing the adults around us, your children are building beliefs systems and life strategies by watching you, your husband and the expanded adult family. The persistently common false belief at the root of so much suffering and separation is that something or somebody is wrong. Imagine for a moment a world where that perspective is lifted. It literally changes everything.

If you can agree to teach by example, then acceptance, respect, graciousness and the deeper meaning of Christmas become a wonderful gift to everybody. This is the holiday miracle you have the power to bring to yourself, your family and the world.

On the surface, this may seem to be about gifts. But really it's about love. Be that. ❀



**STEF SWINK, RScP**, has been a practitioner since 1999. As a protégé and assistant to Louise Hay, she was a frequent ghostwriter for the "Dear Louise" column. Through speaking, spiritual counseling and workshops, she inspires others to create fulfilling lives they love. Connect with her online at [StefSwink.com/Ask-Stef-Submission](http://StefSwink.com/Ask-Stef-Submission).