

It's Better to Give

By Lane Osborne

When my brother and I were children our mother would always remind us that it's better to give than to receive, every time the holidays rolled around. This was a difficult concept for me to grasp, but my brother, six years older and far more sophisticated, took it to heart immediately. When our mother would ask him what he wanted for Christmas he would tell her in earnest, that it wasn't about him, but others.

"I don't need anything," my brother would say. "The greatest gift I can ever get is to see the joy and happiness on other people's faces."

Our mother was proud. Proud of a son who already at the age of twelve showed the maturity of a young adult. When she asked, "What should we get your brother?" He already had a list ready and waiting...a list of things he secretly wanted.

"Are you sure he wants a bowling ball?" she asked one year. "He doesn't even like to bowl."

"Oh yes, ma'am," he said. "He wants a blue one."

And so, when I, at six, opened my 12-pound gift, I was puzzled, but said thank you. And my brother was quick to add, "If you don't like it, I'll use it."

And this is how it's gone our entire lives, continuing into adulthood. Last year he gave me a power saw for Christmas that has spent as much time at his house as it has mine. It seems odd for someone who's so willing to ask for strokes, mulligans, and gimme putts to be unable or unwilling to say what he actually wants for Christmas all these years.

Nevertheless, this holiday season I've decided to return the favor. I'm going to get him all the things that I've been wanting he wants: a new driver, tickets to the Master's, and a couple rounds at Pebble Beach.

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"Good, good?"

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