

**Give Essence gifts this holiday season**  
**By Marlene and Bob Neufeld**

This holiday season give gifts that come from your essence, give experiences and gifts of your “presence” rather than stuff. A friend told me that he asked his children during birthdays and holidays if they wanted an experience or an object. One child at a young age asked, “What’s the difference?” He answered, “An experience lasts a lifetime, an object lasts as long as your interest and/or you take care of it.”

We have created a list of potential essence gifts for you. Some of them have been gathered from friends of ours. Please be creative and enjoy giving something that comes from your Self.

**CREATIVE ESSENCE GIFT IDEAS**

- ♥ Write a poem for someone.
- ♥ Create a song for someone.
- ♥ Give the gift of your time; give gift certificates that can be exchanged for tasks, hugs, etc.
- ♥ Create a photo album of your favorite photos of someone and give it to them with captions saying why you love each photo.
- ♥ Create an appreciation book for someone – have everyone present write one thing they appreciate about that person – and leave lots of blank pages for the future.
- ♥ Have a Family story night. Invite each person to choose their favorite story and read to the family...or have their favorite story read to them.
- ♥ Create a 12 days of Christmas appreciation celebration, finding creative and yummy ways to appreciate your family in the days leading up to Christmas. Our friend Audrey did this and used cards, emails, flowers, songs, poems, etc to appreciate them. Audrey told us that at the same time she generated lots of creative juice and love within herself.
- ♥ Another friend, Gayle told us “One year everyone in my family wrote an appreciative story about our family; it could have been a family memory or something general. We created and sent copies to everyone in the family. I still have them and read them every so often. Warm love fills me just thinking about them.”
- ♥ Gayle also said “A friend of mine has a family gratitude journal that they pull out every year when everyone is together during the holidays. Each day they take turns writing down something they are grateful for. She said they have filled a couple of journals already and delight in re-reading past entries and the big joy that arises when they count their blessings”.
- ♥ Ask everyone at your holiday gathering to answer one or more of the following:
  - What was the best present you ever gave someone?
  - What was the best present you ever got?
  - What is your favorite holiday song? Teach it to us or sing it to us.
  - Describe your favorite holiday decoration.
  - Tell us about your favorite holiday memory.
  - What is your favorite holiday treat to eat? Describe it.
  - Describe the most fun you ever had in celebrating a holiday.
  - Share a time when you had a deep sense of being treasured and valued.
- ♥ Reta said, “I wrote out about 60 appreciations (e.g. I appreciate your laugh; I appreciate your willingness). I cut them out and put 18 per person in a bag tied with ribbon. I had another 30 appreciations on a plate in case people wanted to turn in appreciations and get others. I asked

people to get up one at a time to hand out appreciations to each other. I explained that there were 2 parts to the game, giving appreciations and receiving them, and invited people to have fun with both aspects.”

- ♥ One year, Marlene made an appreciation box for Bob for our anniversary, writing 101 appreciations and inviting him to take out one per day.
- ♥ Create a special day, telling your special someone that they can be Queen or King for the day and you will agree with everything they ask for (within limits of course).
- ♥ Make a customized holiday decoration for someone special.

Have fun this holiday season.

*Marlene & Bob Neufeld practice body-centered Coaching and Psychotherapy. They are a couple who help couples learn life-changing skills and create closer, more loving relationships with one another. For more information call 613-594-9248 or see [www.marleneandbob.com](http://www.marleneandbob.com).*