



The Prize Closet

Have you ever had to scramble around for someone's birthday present when time was tight and you had to settle for something that wasn't quite as great as it could have been? Think of the return on investment emotionally from knowing that you have some excellent prizes just waiting for them and the value of anticipation on how pleased they will be (that alone will encourage you to be extra great to them for weeks before their birthday). Now consider the comfort of knowing there will be no scrambling around for money or time to go shopping. It will do wonders for your entire self-image. Now compare that with the 3 1/2% or less return the \$50 bucks will get you in a bank account, and tell me which path is more valuable to you!

HERE'S THE GAME: To be prepared, in fact to *initiate* opportunities to acknowledge your partner and others to express how much you care, love, and appreciate them spontaneously, not necessarily for any reason other than that you love 'em and they get to win around you!

WHAT TO DO: You pay attention to the kinds of things they like, list them and start building a stockpile of goodies for them and for anyone else that you or you both know, because the practice of giving will enrich your souls. Here are some practical ideas: Keep the closet at work or in big plastic tub box in the basement, hidden away. These things don't have to be expensive; in fact, it doesn't matter what it costs. The more thoughtful it is, the better. Take a look in gift shops, card shops and the like to find those very special things that express some thoughtfulness and love. Think funny; think cute, and think of the others in your life often.

ACTIVITY CHECKLIST:

For a Loved One:

- Pay attention to the little things they mention, especially when looking through a catalog or advertisement, then write it down! Paper remembers and people forget. Put a sticky note in the back of your daily planner with their name on it so you can make a list and capture the goods!
- Ask yourself, "What kinds of things would they really love?" "What do they need that they're not willing to get themselves?"
- Put things on layaway. That way they'll never find them.
- Wrap it up and put a coded note on it to identify what it is. This encourages spontaneity.
- Put wrapping paper, tape and scissors in the "closet" or box so that you don't have to look for them.
- Get romantic things like: expensive perfume or cologne, jewelry, really nice clothes, lingerie or accessories, or even something edible like a favorite piece of pie or chocolates. When you see something they would like, *get it and hide it!*

For Friends or Relatives:

- You might add to the above list: photo albums, CD or video cases, magazine subscriptions, gift certificates at a favorite store, mall or restaurant, indoor/outdoor games, wine, plants, etc.
- Get more of your favorites things like books, CD's, DVD's, gadgets or clever, useful things.
- Make a list, keep it in the box, and one in your planner to catch items for specific people on the fly

For Kids:

- When you see something at a store that they would like or would be especially meaningful, *Just Get It!* Gifts that contribute to the development of a child are always better and harder to find than your run of the mill junk. Pick up models or crafty things that the kids can create with, accomplish with, and share in the creation of with others. It will mean more when special moments are made with it. You can also pick up lots of games and such for pennies on the dollar at garage sales. When a kid receives a gift for no reason, they are delighted and do not care where you got it!