



**Inspirational Gift or
Straight Money Transfer
What's Your intention?**

Last week, we talked about the unintended, meteoric impact of receiving a large transfer of wealth.

Gift? Transfer? What are you talking about?

In Jay Hughes' recent book *The Cycle of the Gift*, he defines a gift as "one that combines the giver's intentions with the gift's own qualities ... a gift with spirit causes both the giver and the recipient to grow and feel free. And, it spurs the recipients to give in turn, perpetuating the cycle of the gift."

A gift without spirit, on the other hand, is simply a transfer. "A transfer is the movement of a lifeless object from one person to another, a figure from my accounting column to yours ... it is what happens in most business exchanges ... it is what happens when family members find themselves unable to speak about or realize the fullness of their gifts to one another."

I imagine that every parent, grandparent, aunt, or uncle gave their first "gift" of money with the hope that it would be received with pleasure, excitement and gratitude. Can you imagine the face of your grandmother, bubbling with happiness - anxious to feel your excitement and wanting to hear the wonderful things you are now able to create for your life as a result of her gift? Or ... do you see your father standing with his arms crossed and a stern look on his face, saying, "Okay, I've now given you your inheritance, time to step up."

But step up where? To what? When and how were the hopes and expectations made clear?

Making the time (over months and years) to have those wonderful conversations with our children, enables us to build those deeper relationships that ensure that their inheritance becomes a true gift as opposed to a mere transfer.

How to Begin?

Believe it or not ... the work actually starts with YOU! First identify *your* core values and your work aspirations. Become clear about your personal hopes and dreams – for yourself, as well as for them. Then, find out what *their* values might be; and, how their values and dreams are similar or different from yours. We have tools to help you do this.

Write a Legacy Statement.

A legacy statement is about your personal history and dreams for the future. It involves answering questions such as: Who are you ... really? Where have you been? What have been your guiding principles? What were your big mistakes/failures? And, how did you learn from them? What did hard work look like? What did it take to get here? And, where do you want to go in the future? Sound daunting? Your advisor/coach can help you explore those questions.

Next, ask your children how their values and dreams are similar and different from yours. The key is to deeply listen to their response, rather than filtering them through *your* interpretations of *their* thoughts, and the judgments and fears that might get triggered for you. Help them dream, as opposed to feeling a need for *you* to make their dreams happen. Give them the gift of freedom ... the space to explore, trusting that at some point they will ask for your help in making their dream a reality.

Sounds Daunting

Most of us haven't had any models for how to engage in these inner and outer explorations, so if you are not sure how to approach this, talk to us. As your advisor/coach, we can give you the tools for beginning this journey.

So I leave you with a question to ponder, "Have you ever given what you "thought" was a gift, but turned out to be a transfer that had unintended consequences on the recipient?"

Next Week

Next week, I'll share with you a short story of two families' reaction to news of their inheritance.