The Gift Economy

By: Leila Forouhi

Why do we give? Perhaps you want to pay for a friend’s movie ticket, or it is your daughter’s birthday, or you want to support a local food bank. Whatever the reason, giving is a part of our nature – everyday people are giving their time, money and other gifts to those they love and even to strangers.

Giving is one of the five languages of love. Relationship-counselor, Dr. Gary Chapman, talks about this subject in his book [*The 5 Love Languages: The Secret to Love That Lasts*](http://www.5lovelanguages.com/resource/the-5-love-languages/). Dr. Chapman writes that people express feelings of love through the giving of gifts to their partners and loved ones.

The positive feelings that gift-giving fosters drives economies. Simple acts of giving contribute to a gift economy, which is based on the exchange of gifts or services without profiting directly. It shows up during holiday merriment, the giving of alms, community organizing, and more. By participating in a gift economy, we profit indirectly and receive intangible rewards such happiness, gratitude, sense of community and self-worth.

“[A lot of things that we use money for we’d probably be happier if we met those needs on an informal, local level](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_JKOcb3UygA)” says Charles Eisenstein, author of [*Sacred Economics*](http://sacred-economics.com/). He believes that by going back to a more local, gift-based economy, we can help combat the feelings of alienation in society and weakening of communities under our current economic system.

The advent of the Internet has paved the way for many novel and innovative opportunities to participate in the gift-giving economy. The free exchange of information and ideas are part of the original ethos of the Internet. There are many resources available to us to participate in this alternative economy, and SimplyWishes provides a platform to do just that. We have the power to shape our [global village](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HeDnPP6ntic) to be inclusive for all its villagers, to give freely, and make an economy out of giving.