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Published December 18, 2020

## With Holiday Giving Comes a Mystery

As we find ourselves in the middle of the holiday season during a global pandemic, there is much for us to think about and be thankful for. I must admit that my family and I have been blessed. We have not experienced any family infections or deaths and any serious social or economic hardships.

I am aware of the significance of this blessing. I am also aware that many of you who are reading this article have experienced a similar blessing as well.

My recent thoughts surrounding the mystery of holiday giving began early this week. While participating in a monthly Zoom meeting of an international social service organization, I listened attentively to a young man, who is a member of our group, ask for donations to support an annual community effort in Savannah called *"The Holiday Makeover Project"*.

He and another young man are leading this year's effort to collect the funds needed to continue the Project's giving during a year where all the

organization's annual fundraising activities had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The young men passionately described the two individuals chosen this year to receive a "holiday makeover". Both individuals selected are single women. One of the ladies had recently lost her job and is struggling to keep food on the table to feed her children. She has no hopes of providing them any kind of Christmas this year. The other lady is a young mother with an infant child who lives alone. She was excited about having been given a Christmas tree, but was saddened due to the reality that there would most likely be no gifts to place under the tree.

After listening to the young men's touching recollection of how past recipients of the Project's giving all had thanked them profusely and most with tears in their eyes, I could not help from jumping into the conversation and offering to give them several hundred dollars this year to support their cause.

Fortunately, my wife and I have been able to give and donate graciously to family members, friends and local organizations offering help to others during this unusual year.

However, this donation was different and contained an awakening.

Just listening to the two young men describe "*not only what they were doing*", but also how "*what they were doing*" affected the lives of the individuals --- struck a fervent chord within me.

Along with being touched in this special way, I began to realize that holiday giving is truly a "mystery".

By this I mean, for those of us who give, we generally do it unconditionally and from the heart. There is no thought given to how "*what we do or give*" affects the recipient, beyond the moment.

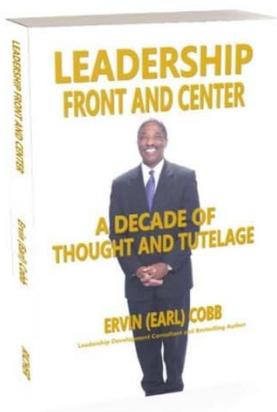
Because of this common approach to giving, most of us do not give a thought to how a "single gift" can impact the receiver.

The gift could be the last straw needed to change a life. It could be the difference between maintaining hope and giving up. It could be the one gift that complements a born talent and helps someone realize their prodigy. It could also ignite an unfamiliar flame of unconditional giving within others.

It's no mystery that giving and helping others during the holiday season makes us feel good. The real mystery is in NOT being able to know how your giving may be impacting the people who receive your generosity.

Most of you are like me and have remembered throughout your life the saying *"God loves a cheerful giver"*.

So, join me this holiday season in also remembering that we are not only just giving a gift...we are also the authors of new "mysteries."



**Ervin (Earl) Cobb** is an accomplished corporate executive, entrepreneur, author, leadership development coach and speaker. He is the author of eleven published books. Six of his books provide practical and unique insights into how to prepare yourself to effectively lead and win within any organization. Learn More About [Earl Cobb](#) and His work.

