GIFT GIVING AND RECEIVING:

Gift Receiving:

First, let's be **proactive** by sharing a conversation on this topic before being in a situation where our child receives gifts. Here are some questions we can bring up as conversation starters:

- We expect gifts at the party, but what ***if we don't get any presents?***
- What if ***others get more gifts*** than you, and you find that unfair?
- What if ***you would like*** something else?
- What if ***you want what someone else received*** instead of your gift?
- Can we ***show gratitude*** when someone takes the time to buy a gift for us, even when we don't like the present?

At the moment, it still might be very challenging for our child to navigate these situations. However, they will be familiar with our approach and values. Next, I will go through the various scenarios that may take place and make suggestions on how we can navigate them.

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If our child says, **"I didn't get any gift! Where is my gift?"**

Children tend to be blunt and openly share how they feel, which can make us highly uncomfortable. Sitting with our discomfort is important; not trying to get our children to squash themselves to make everyone comfortable is critical here. We might feel like shushing our child so no one hears them saying that to them!

Validating and empathizing with this reality is essential. We can say to our child, "***I hear you; you wish you got a gift***!" and then also turn to the child/adult that didn't give our child a gift and say something like, "***(our child's name) wanted a gift and your presence is a huge gift to us!***".

Later, during a calm and private time, we can discuss this situation with our child. We can help them understand that not everyone will always bring them a gift and how we can still find value in the presence of others regardless of what they get.

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Child says, "It's not fair! They have more gifts than me!"

Children tend to Children see things as they are through their lenses. For example, if they received an expensive item worth more than five gifts another child has, they might see this as an issue. Through their eyes, their value is found through counting how many gifts each person received. We see things differently as adults and want to honour how our children experience things.

We want to validate and let the moment be without having to fix the situation, try to distract them, convince them that their gifts are better, etc. We want to refrain from saying, "But look what you got! You got this cool car....".
It's okay for them to wish they got more. We want to keep our children's desires alive :)
We can validate and empathize with their feelings and say, ***"I hear you! You wish you got more gifts."***
Let the moment be.
Let them express how they feel.

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Gift Receiving:

Child says, "I want what (child's name) has!"

I know this can make us uncomfortable and we need to remind ourselves to be thankful that our child is expressing how they are feeling. We don't want our child to feel ashamed of feeling jealous. Jealousy is a human emotion that we all experience and guides us to know ourselves better. Nothing is *wrong* with feeling jealousy, it's how it's expressed that may be hurtful.

We can validate how our child is feeling without fixing the situation in any way.

"Thank you for sharing that with me. I hear you. You wish you had what he got. I understand how difficult this must be for you."

Our child says, "Could you get me something else instead?"

If we can exchange the gift at the store, why not? ***Don't we return or exchange things we don't like?***

Let's not have double standards with our kids and force them to keep a gift when we wouldn't if it was possible to exchange a gift we don't love.