

Chess Gifts

The Chess Friends

The Man Benji, The Myth Sarang, and The Legend Vivi

<https://www.chessfriendsbooks.com/blog>

Howdy! It's the Chess Friends! Happy Decembrrrr! With Christmas trees sparkling in many windows, and Christmas songs playing in every store, gifts are on our minds. 'Tis the season of giving!

No matter the season, chess is a gift that keeps on giving. In this article, we reflect on what chess has brought into our lives. There is this three-gift rule, from an old story about the Three Wise Men, now simplified to a common saying about giving someone three gifts only:

Something they want

Something they need

Something to wear or to read

Chess has given us everything from that list and beyond, something we didn't even know we wanted or needed! (Let's agree that everyone needs a good chess book and a nice pair of chess socks!) There are many material things like trophies, medals, and prize money, but also so many intangible things like friendship, fun, learning... that nice feeling of winning...

The Legend Vivi will highlight **The Wants**, The Myth Sarang **The Needs**, and The Man Benji will wrap up **The Wears and The Reads** with a bow! Our friend Peshka reminds us that 'tis the season of receiving also, joining us to show how to gracefully accept all the gifts! Let's get to it!

The Legend Vivi: *Something they want*

I want to learn. I want to make friends. I want to play chess. I want to help others. With these wants in mind, chess has given me concentration, friendship, and the ability to see patterns super-fast! Can you believe that I have played tournament chess for more than half my life?! I have



learned how to concentrate and stay at the board and analyze patterns in my brain even if it's during my opponents' time, rather than getting distracted. I am all about puzzles and think of chess as a giant puzzle with a bunch of little puzzles along the way. I can see patterns in my mind thanks to chess and do that in all aspects of my life!

One of the greatest gifts chess has given me is the ability to help others, via prize money! I may only be seven, but I have won several hundreds of dollars, if not more, playing adult chess tournaments. I try to donate all my winnings to causes that I care about, because the feeling of giving is amazing! One in particular is *Mission Cure* ([Mission Cure - Home](#)), an organization dedicated to helping those battling chronic pancreatitis, including my friend, who I love to support, when I can.

The Myth Sarang: *Something they need*

For me, the greatest gifts of chess that I really need are the three Fs: Friendship, Focus, and Fun! When I was little, I was quite shy, and it took me a while to open up in a group and make friends. It's still not easy, but chess has helped me so much! I now have hundreds of friends in the chess world, many local, and many afar. Even though I may not talk to most of them regularly, whenever we do meet at tournaments, we pick up right where we left off and have a ton of fun!

As a neurodivergent kid with various challenges that make focusing hard, not to mention numerous strengths that make chess easier, chess has helped everything. I still can't sit at a board for more than 30 minutes, but it's a huge step up from when it was probably five minutes or so! Chess is a game where you must be locked in, but that doesn't necessarily mean you have to be locked to your chair! My love for the game has motivated me to figure out what focus looks like for me. While I still have a long way to go, chess has helped me progress a lot! This focus has helped me in all aspects of my life including my homeschool work, my music, my tennis, and more.



The Man Benji: *Something to wear or to read*

My extended family is not that into chess, not in a serious way. They don't know the difference between *zugzwang* and *zwischenzug*, and they probably wouldn't name the first world chess champion, but they still enthusiastically support me on my chess journey. Why? I couldn't figure that out for a long time, but now I get it. Because it's easy for them to pick gifts for me! From chess socks to chess-patterned shirts, from chess stamps to chess books, for any occasions, I keep receiving chess gifts from my relatives!

I have many LEGO chess sets, which I'm still going to play with even after I turn 67 years old! I have chess books on my shelf that I will probably read after I turn 67. I have a handmade wooden chess rubber stamp set that my grandma bought me somewhere in New York, turning Manhattan upside down to find it. I'll probably start using it after... you guessed it... I become 67 years old!

One of my aunts got chess forms for her kitchen so she could make a chocolate chess set, just for me as a present. The white and dark chocolate chess pieces looked so good I didn't want to eat them at first! Eventually I did, and they were delicious.

Is it foolish to get chess chocolate for a present that you don't eat, chess books that you don't read, and chess stamps that you don't use? Maybe it is, but that's not the point of these presents. As one of the greatest American writers, O'Henry, wrote in his Christmas story [The Gift of the Magi](#), such gifts are the wisest of them all! Because behind those gifts are love and support, time and thoughts. That's why I treasure them. If chess were like Christmas, the biggest presents would be family and friends!

A common theme across our wants, needs, wears, and reads is friendship, the greatest gift chess has brought us. After all, we are The Chess Friends, and many of our other friends are from the chess world too. Thanks to chess and all the gifts it brings, we now have our book [Q&A Chess Tournament Edition](#), a perfect "read" gift by the way! If you need "wear" gifts for people in your life, check out the store of our friend, FM/WIM Megan Lee, who makes custom



clothes designs, and who made The Chess Friends hoodies! ([Cloth Tattoo](#) and [Snippet Studios](#))

Enjoy the holidays, everyone! Before you go, here are knee slappers, holiday edition, to share with your family and friends!

Where do Christmas trees learn how to play chess?

In elemen-tree school!

Why did the [Chess & Music](#) blog post disappear from our website?

It went Christmas Chopin!

How are New Year and speed chess alike?

They both make every second count!

What did Santa say to his helper before their chess game?

Good luck and believe in your-elf!

Why did the elf lose his chess game in ten moves?

He didn't snow the opening.

Why did the holiday meal lose the chess game?

It kept getting forked!

What did Santa say after a long night of delivering presents?

Happy Christmas to all and to all a good knight! And a good bishop!

Three Cheers, Fellow Future Master Chess Friends!

The Man Benji
The Myth Sarang
The Legend Vivi

