

The Wrapping

By [Lance Woodbury](#)

As I was contemplating our “gift” theme for this month’s *Dispatch* articles, my mind wandered to the part of Christmas gift-giving I least enjoy: Wrapping presents. I’m lousy at cutting, folding and taping, and the time it takes (me) to wrap a gift is so much longer than the speed at which the present is unwrapped. In fact, I don’t even need to fill out the “From: ____” portion of the gift tag anymore. People know my handiwork when they see it!

But my difficulty in wrapping a present made me think about the ways that many of the “gifts” we receive in our lives and family businesses are seemingly poorly “wrapped.” That is, the things we come to value most are at first disguised, or even unattractive, yet they conceal the present we are about to receive.

For example, the gift of **time** with another may be wrapped in a difficult medical circumstance, as Bill describes. I recently visited with one family member who commented that the gift of **recalling fun memories** came wrapped in an unplanned car ride together with no agenda. Davon suggests that the gift of **appreciation** for others’ talents may come wrapped in the daily experience (and stress) of running a business together.

In many situations, the gift of **clarity** comes wrapped in the process of working through different visions for the future. And often, the gift of **change** in the family or business comes wrapped in conflict. Perhaps the key to a successful new year is the ability to see the gift beneath the wrapping – however beautiful, awkward, ugly or difficult that wrapping may be.