

Opening Act

Imagine giving a friend a birthday present. Instead of opening it right then and there, she gratefully accepts it and then runs excitedly off to another room to open it in private. Did she like it? Did she use it? Weeks pass and she gives you no indication either way. You'd be miffed, and rightly so!

It's a laughable (and improbable) scene because it goes so against the simplest etiquette of receiving a gift. But isn't that how most gift cards are used? Think about it. With gift cards, a gift is exchanged but the whole gifting experience feels incomplete. The pay off for the excitement you feel in giving sort of falls flat.

The Whole Act of Giving

The psychology of gift giving goes a long way to explain that unfinished feeling. When you give a gift, there's so much more going on beside an exchange of property. Giving involves the object exchanged and the [total experience that both giver and receiver share](#) in that exchange.

The experience of giving unfolds like a drama with many acts: leaving hints, searching for the gift, the presentation, the excitement at receiving the gift, the graceful acceptance, and the show of appreciation. [C. Mayet and K. Pine](#) describe the theatricality of gift giving as masterful performance of reciprocity where each person responds to the other—like two great improv comics feeding off each other's energy.

The drama requires creativity and empathy in order to intuit the intentions of another person and respond in kind. Giving is an exercise in the social skills that make us good at relating to each other. We play the parts because we implicitly understand how important gifting is in fostering mutual interest.

[Marcel Mauss](#) describes in *The Gift* (1927) how gifts are perpetually linked to the giver (as explained on [Sciencelens](#)). It's almost as if ownership of a gift is shared between the giver and receiver, which is why selling a gift is hard. Through shared ownership of something, two people effectively have shared interest in each other. At its best, the total gifting experience forms a tight social bond that lasts well past the actual moment of exchange. That's why behavioural economists suggest that a durable gift with high utility has the biggest social impact because it makes [multiple impressions over time](#).

Gift Cards — An unfinished act

Giving a conventional gift card is like having the curtain drop midway through the final act. Gift cards are rarely (if ever) redeemed with the giver present. The giver is left to merely imagine the receiver enjoying the gift. The important last stage of the gift experience, where the giver gets to see the gift put to use, never happens. This last stage, which [Mayet and Pine](#) call the move from revelation to consumption, is a culmination of the previous stages. It makes real the potential value contained within the gift before it's open. Without it, the experience is incomplete and the social potential inherent to giving squandered.

This gap between receiving the gift card and redeeming it disrupts the important social function of giving. The shared experience that link people together in the gift exchange goes unrealized. A degree of separation occurs between what the giver hands to the receiver and what the receiver redeems at the store. As the gift card wipes out the total at the checkout counter, the receiver feels like she's getting something for free from the store. The goodwill present in the gift shifts from the giver to the retailer, and that fabulous something the receiver got when she redeemed the gift card isn't linked with the giver anymore. It's hard for people to transfer the emotions connected to a gift from the plastic card that changed hands to the thing of great value they end up with.

Kiind — Closing out the show and bringing down the house.

Kiind has a simple, smart solution to this problem. Kiind connects the gift back to people by notifying you when your gift has been redeemed. Doing so lets givers make the gift exchange about relationships once again—to make that human, emotional connection. It closes the loop between revelation and consumption in a way no other digital gift marketplace does. It finishes the gift experience.

It's simple to do with Kiind and it has powerful repercussions. Gift notifications let givers return in the final act of the play. To be the hero and share the stage with the retailers. To close out the show with thunderous applause. It's the difference between something changing hands and the connection between two extended hands.

Why Gift Notifications Finish the Gift Experience

Gift notifications affirm the giver. A notification is a simple way to let you know that you're a good person who did something good for another person. It feels good—as it should! Feedback is necessary for a gift exchange to have emotional resonance and foster mutual interest. Multiple studies, collected in Diana Rico article for [Odewire](#) and scrutinized by the [Harvard Business School](#), show a strong correlation between giving and improved overall happiness and connectedness. It allows the giver to feel [valuable and generous](#) and part of the receiver's life. It confirms that the receiver accepted the gift and understood the message it conveyed. Without feedback, a gift reduces to the thing changing hands and the whole giving experience is lost.

Gift notifications also help the giver to appreciate the receiver one more time. Sending a simple tweet or note to the receiver shortly after getting a notification links the gift and the receiver's enjoyment of it back to the giver. It creates that long-term impression that turns good gifts into good relationship. A notification opens the door to extend the giving experience and the positive emotions associated with giving. It erases the degree of separation inherent to redeeming gift cards and reestablishes the shared experience and shared ownership that are so essential for social connection. Sending a kind word to follow-up is the type of small, human touch that stands out so much in a world of half-hearted interactions.

Gift notifications make giving with Kiind feel really smart. You get the advantage of a gift card—the receivers get the [thing they really wanted](#)—and you also get [the social advantage](#) of a gift that makes multiple impressions over time. The giver gets linked to something the

receiver really wanted, giving rise to long-term positive association between two people.

For the Encore

“It’s the thought that counts.” It’s a well-worn adage bordering on the cliché, but when it comes to the social network effects of giving, thought is everything. The [thoughtfulness of the gift matters less](#) than [how often the positive thoughts of the giver and receiver turn to the other person](#). The total gifting experience is an extended ritual of reciprocal thought and goodwill directed at other people.

Giving is a wonderful way to generate positive thought. Powered by Kiind’s gift notifications, giving becomes super-effective at creating shared goodwill across a social network. A simple change like notifications can turn gift cards from a gift that causes a deficit of thought to one that creates an abundance.

It’s like seeing your favourite actor in your favourite play and then getting treated to an hour-long encore. Kiind makes that possible.

There’s more to come, and we’re really excited to show you all the other things Kiind makes possible as we roll out our service.