

The Greatest Gift

by Susan Handle Terbay

Right now, in many areas of our country, there are lots of goodbye tears, well-wishing, and excitement of what is yet to be. It's graduation time, and many young people are journeying into the unknown of what is about to happen in their lives. Oh, some may know they have a job awaiting their arrival, or they have been accepted to finish their education at another academic institution. Still some others may know they will be doing service in a foreign country or pursuing a life with another. But no one truly knows what is around the bend until they round the bend!

There will be lots of gifts given at such celebrations, but the greatest gift of all throughout life's journey is the people God so lovingly place on our path. Sometimes it is just a moment, a smile and comment; other times it may be companionship, sharing of studies, sharing of experiences, or more—a sharing of friendship which will last forever.

For those who work or minister with young people, it is bittersweet to have students enter into our lives and then move on to the path before them. Saying goodbye is difficult, yet we know with every goodbye we are watching someone pursue a dream. What a gift!

In all of this, choices are made to either open the gift or ignore it—or worse, not even realize a gift has been given. Each of us has the opportunity to open the gift and also to be the gift. We may not know what is around the bend in our lives, but we do know one thing: we are all blessed to have had the gift of so many in our lives, and this is the greatest gift of all.

The Greatest Gift

It comes wrapped in various coverings.

It holds within it
happiness and sadness,
joys and sorrows,
laughter and tears.

Sometimes it rests quietly
in the background.
Sometimes it bursts
into the foreground.

The receiver has no idea
what the gift contains,
but surely within the gift
lies a treasure to share . . .
happiness and sadness,
joys and sorrows,
laughter and tears.

The greatest loss
is never to have opened the gift.