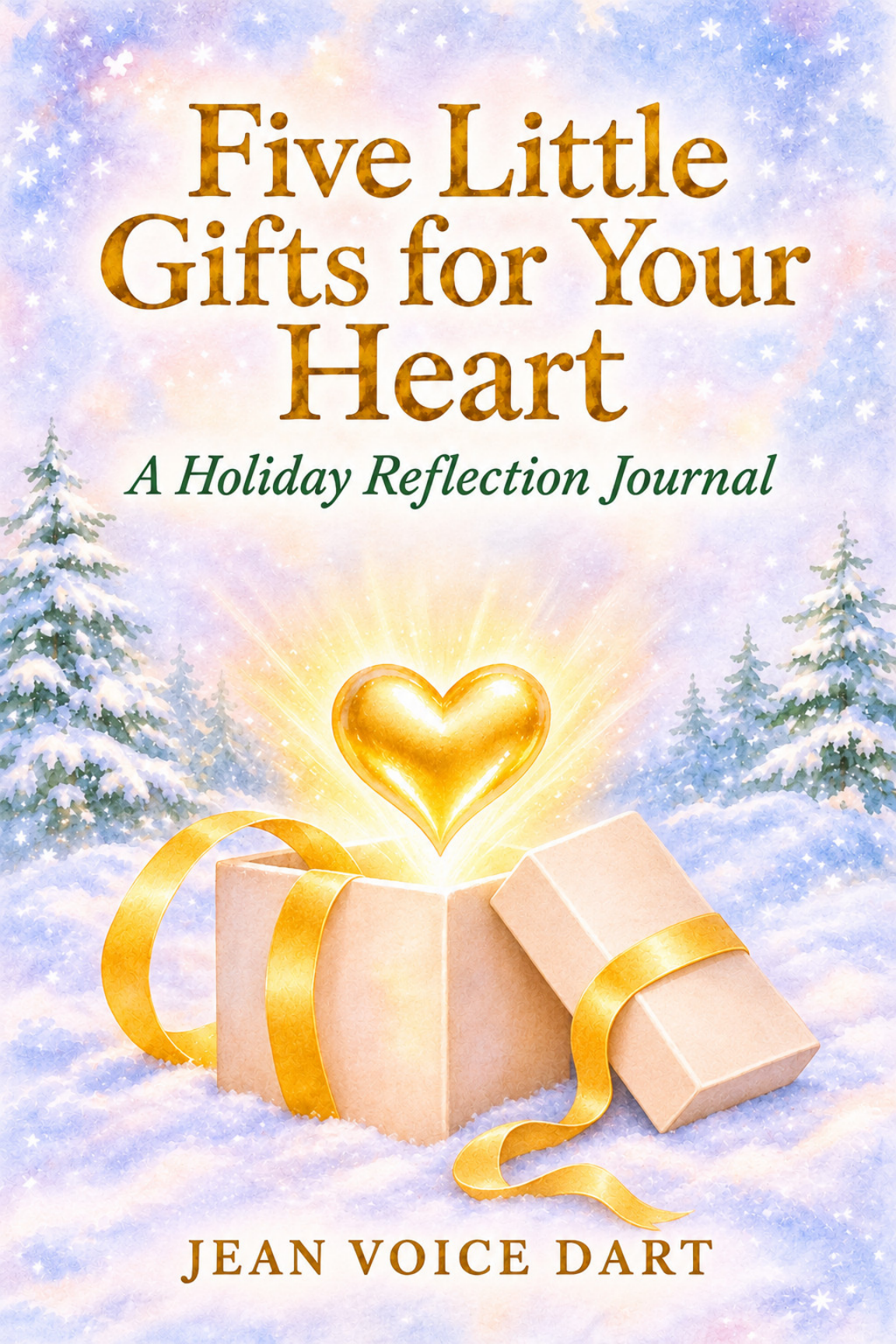
Five Little Gifts for Your Heart

A Holiday Reflection Journal



JEAN VOICE DART

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Jean Voice Dart

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Dedication

To you—

who are ready to unwrap
your inner gifts, embrace
your authentic heart,
and discover the golden
treasures within.

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Before You Wrap Another Gift, Have You Unwrapped Your Heart?

by Jean Voice Dart

The smell of hot chocolate, holiday songs, children's laughter, and grandma's pumpkin pie fill the air. Festive decorations and lights bring a warm, loving glow, yet suddenly an emotional tsunami washes over you. What happened?

The holidays are filled with opportunities to express our love through gifts, cards, traditions, and gatherings. Yet while we're busy expressing ourselves outwardly, many of us are suppressing ourselves inwardly.

Stress, grief, excitement, loneliness, and joy arrive as unexpected holiday packages, wrapped in pretty paper. What will you find? Golden gifts are always waiting in your heart.

Opening Our Emotional Packages

Unwrapping emotional packages can help us let go in creative flow and transform challenging emotions into something meaningful.

Grief → Gratitude
Anger → Inner Peace
Stress → Vitality
Loneliness → Self-Love
Self-Doubt → Self-Confidence

Which emotions are you ready to shift and uplift through the expressive arts?

Five Holiday Unwrapping Practices

The expressive arts are everywhere during the holidays. Stop, look, and listen. What are your feelings telling you?

Write It

Journal anger, loss, joy, doubt, gratitude, and love.

Create It

Make music, draw, paint, craft, build, plant, bake, or photograph happy memories.

Move It

Take a walk, dance, stretch, march, exercise, or spend time in nature.

Hear It

Enjoy the sounds of holiday music, the birds, the wind, or the human voice. Speak, hum, or sing.

Share It

After expressing yourself through the arts, share your experience with a trusted friend, family member, counselor, or online community.

If you're feeling overwhelmed this holiday season, you're not alone. You have many expressive tools at your fingertips. Expressing through the arts gives emotions a healthy place to be released, acknowledged, and loved.

Your emotions matter. This holiday season, your greatest gift might be unwrapping your feelings and expressing them through the arts. Happy holidays!

Close your eyes. Listen to your heart. What emotions do you feel?

I feel love, comfort, fear, anxiety. I surrender to Spirit with joy.

Welcome to Your Golden Gifts

A gentle invitation to feel, reveal, and heal.

Gifts come in many colors, but golden gifts are harder to find. The most meaningful gifts aren't always wrapped in pretty paper. Sometimes they're waiting quietly within your own heart.

This little journal invites you to explore five expressive arts gifts: writing, creating, moving, hearing, and sharing. Each offers a different way to discover the golden treasures that are uniquely yours.

Write It — Listen to the words within.

Create It — Remember what brings you joy.

Move It — Receive the gifts of nature.

Hear It — Make your Golden Sound Index.

Share It — Choose what to keep and what to share.

Some golden gifts are ours to keep.

Others are ours to share.

Both deserve care.

A gentle note: Choose only what feels right for you. Adapt any activity to your body, abilities, beliefs, and circumstances. You may pause, skip a question, keep your discoveries private, or share them when the time is right.

What golden gift would I like to explore first?



Write It

A letter from your golden heart.

Writing has long been a golden treasure, helping us receive and express our feelings, hopes, and dreams. Emotional packages aren't always easy to open or embrace, yet even challenging experiences may reveal unexpected gifts when we approach them with love and acceptance. Writing helps us feel, reveal, and heal.

Look at holiday decorations, a treasured photograph, or a familiar ornament. What memories return? What feelings emerge? What golden gift might be waiting in that memory?

Your writing gift: Imagine your heart could write you a letter. Would it offer encouragement, celebrate your courage, ask for forgiveness, or remind you of forgotten joy? Begin with the words below. Write a poem, memory, story, or a few honest sentences. Let your words flow without worrying about perfection.

Dear Me,

I've been waiting to tell you something...

A Letter from My Golden Heart

Giving and Receiving

The golden gifts of giving and receiving.

One of the greatest lessons in life is learning to give and receive love. Some celebrations and traditions fill our hearts with joy. Others bring longing, gratitude, grief, or hope.

Perhaps it is Thanksgiving, celebrating gratitude; Diwali or Hanukkah, honoring light; Christmas, celebrating faith and giving; Kwanzaa, honoring heritage and community; or Lunar New Year, welcoming renewal. Perhaps it is a quiet tradition of your own.

Different cultures. Different traditions.
Golden gifts of love, light, gratitude,
and connection.

Holidays invite us to give and receive. Yet while we are busy giving, do we remember to receive? Look around. Listen to life. A friend's kindness, a forgotten memory, a whisper of wind, or an unexpected moment of joy may be offering you a golden gift.

1. Which holidays or traditions speak to my heart, and why?

2. How can I give love this season?

Giving and Receiving

The heart can welcome both.

3. How, when, and where can I open my heart to receive love?

4. What golden gifts is life offering me right now?

5. Which gifts have I overlooked or been hesitant to receive?

Giving is a gift. Receiving is a gift.
The heart can welcome both.



Create It

Remember the golden joys of creativity.

What will you create today? Remember yourself as a child, teenager, or young adult. What brought joy to your heart? What made it golden?

Was it baking with your mother? Creating a puppet show with your brother? Planting a garden? Knitting, crafting, coloring with crayons, building, photographing memories, or making music? Choose one that brings joy. Begin with a playful step, however small.

My creative challenge: Make, draw, bake, build, plant, or begin something that delights you. Notice how it feels to create rather than perform.

1. A creative memory that still makes my heart shine...

2. My creative gift to myself today will be...

A golden gift does not need to be perfect,

beautiful, or finished. The joy is in expressing.



Move It

Receive the golden gifts of nature.

It's time to move with nature. Imagine a beloved outdoor setting, look through a window, or step outside. What do you imagine? What do you hear? What do you see? What golden gift is the wind offering? What is nature telling you today?

A bird might sing: “Hurry! Life is a blessing. Enjoy the feast.”

A tree might whisper: “Stand tall. Hold your ground. Connect with the earth. You are supported today.”

Move with nature. Stand if comfortable, or move while seated. Keep your eyes open or soften your gaze. Breathe naturally. Receive the golden gifts of nature in your heart. Imagine the cool, clean air if you are indoors or homebound.

Remember spinning, running, and jumping as a child. Wiggle your toes. Gently shake your arms. Reach toward the sky. Sway, jiggle, giggle, spread your fingers, and turn your head as is comfortable. Let movement follow the sounds, smells, and rhythms of nature. Adapt or skip any movement that does not feel right.

Thank you, world. Thank you, life.
I feel you. I move within you. I stand beside you.
I reach beyond you. I love you.

Take a moment to gratefully receive the gift of movement. Share below what you experienced as you moved with the rhythm of life.



Hear It

Gather the sounds that live in your heart.

Sounds carry memories: coffee percolating, wind chimes tinkling, a cat purring, holiday bells, your dad's voice, or the ignition as you start your car. Each can awaken a different feeling.

Your sound assignment: Create a personal Golden Sound Index. Ask your body and heart to remember the sounds of ordinary life and extraordinary moments. Include favorite music, familiar voices, sounds of nature, and sounds of home.

For example, a song such as "Flowers" by Miley Cyrus, a father's encouraging voice, or a car starting might bring confidence to someone. Your list will be uniquely yours.

Not all sounds feel pleasant. You can name a difficult sound, skip a category, or return to a sound that feels comforting. There is no right or wrong answer.

1. A sound I remember from childhood...

2. A sound that feels like a golden gift today...

What is your heart hearing that
your ears may have overlooked?

My Golden Sound Index

Save the sounds that speak to your heart.

1. Sounds That Bring Peace

2. Sounds That Bring Anger

3. Sounds That Bring Laughter

My Golden Sound Index

Continue collecting your golden sounds.

4. Sounds That Bring Fear

5. Sounds That Bring Confidence

6. Sounds That Bring Joy

7. Which sounds are golden gifts I want to welcome into my day?



Share It

Let your golden heart shine outward.

Go back through this journal. Find the golden moments that make your heart shine. Which gifts will you treasure within your own heart? Which gifts are you ready to share?

Did you bake something you could share? Could you create a special drawing or card for a family member or homebound friend? Share a flower with a neighbor? Or post a photograph with a few poetic lines to shift and uplift others?

Which experiences brought joy, comfort, peace, or healing? Which offered inner revelations or moments of transformation? Some revelations rest quietly within our hearts. Others may be shared, when the time is right, with humility, forgiveness, and grace.

Some golden gifts are ours to keep.
Others are ours to share.
Both have value. Both deserve care.

Sharing is a choice, not a duty. Honor your feelings and boundaries. Choose what, when, how, and with whom you share. A revelation does not have to be disclosed to be meaningful.

Recall a joyful or challenging holiday memory. What did you feel? Take time to discover the golden gift from this memory. Would sharing this memory be a kind and loving choice for everyone involved?

Your Golden Revelations

A moment to honor what stays and what shines.

1. Which golden gifts will I treasure within my own heart?

2. Which golden gifts am I ready to share with others?

3. What revelations have helped me heal, grow, or understand myself?

4. How might sharing one gift bring joy or encouragement to another?

Some revelations shine within us.
Others shine through us.

This is your time to feel, reveal, and heal through caring and sharing your golden heart.



Receiving and Giving Gifts

The Uplift Gift

A reflection on light, wisdom, and love.

Find a comfortable moment. Close your eyes if you wish, or soften your gaze. Breathe naturally and notice your feelings. Let memories arise only if you feel comfortable. You do not need to fix or understand everything.

If this spiritual imagery speaks to you, imagine yourself as Soul, a sparkling being of Light and Love. Imagine embracing your physical, mental, and emotional bodies with tenderness. Or picture a warm golden light surrounding you in a way that feels meaningful to you.

I'm sorry I ignored you.
I hear you now.
I feel you now.
I respect you now.
I care for you now.
I love you now.

Imagine your heart shimmering as a golden, glowing light of wisdom and love. Rest in that glow for a minute or two, if you wish. And so it is. Thank you.

Golden Treasures Within

Listening, glistening, snow and ice.
Sharing hugs and words so nice.
Music, laughter, and stories told.
Soft touch, kind words, turn hearts to gold.

Joyful singing and hugs so dear.
Time alone to feel, see, and hear.
Feeling the pain, the joy, and despair.
All of your feelings need loving care.

Removing each wrapping is how you start
Finding the treasures within your heart.
Digging down deeply, accepting your past.
Nursing your wounds, finding love that lasts.

Keeping the gifts that bring love and grace.
Sharing your joy in a warm embrace.
Your path grows brighter. Your purpose is clear.
The treasures you find will always stay here.

Golden treasures live deep within.
Loving acceptance is where you begin.
Forgiveness and courage make golden hearts shine.
Compassion and kindness are yours and mine.

Jean Voice Dart

Keep Your Golden Gifts

Return to these pages whenever your heart calls.

Perhaps your gifts arrived as a memory, a song, a movement, a new creation, or a quiet revelation. Some may have brought laughter or love. Others may take time to understand. All deserve your compassion.

You can revisit your Golden Sound Index, write another letter, make something with your hands, move with nature, or give and receive love in a way that fits your life.

The most meaningful gifts are not always
wrapped in pretty paper. Sometimes they are
waiting quietly within your own heart.

Feel. Reveal. Heal.

Some golden gifts are ours to keep.
Others shine through what we share.

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About the Author



Jean Voice Dart, MS, RMT, CATP, is a multiple award-winning, best-selling author, expressive arts psychotherapist, teacher, coach, and spoken word performer with more than fifty years of experience helping others feel, reveal, and heal through the creative, expressive, and performing arts.

As a registered music therapist, art therapy practitioner, creative arts teacher, and coach, Jean works with writers, artists, performers, craft-makers, and individuals seeking to discover, embrace, and express their feelings through creativity.

Jean is a Senior Partner with The Wellness Universe and hosts its Take My Hand Support Series, a platform dedicated to suicide prevention and mental health awareness, as well as Brave Families Caring Community. She is also a champion of The Wellness Universe's Compassionate Crisis Care Training, bringing her extensive experience in grief, trauma, and chronic pain to this important work.

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The article, "Before You Wrap Another Gift, Have You Unwrapped Your Heart?" first appeared in The Wellness Universe Winter Gift Guide 2026–2027. This journal, "Five Little Gifts for Your Heart: A Holiday Reflection Journal" was originally created as a companion to the article, offering additional opportunities for personal reflection, creative expression, and discovering the golden treasures within.