

EPISODE ONE

# 5,000 BROKEN GIFTS

**AS I  
AM**



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## EPIISODE ONE - 5,000 BROKEN GIFTS



### FILM SUMMARY

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The traditions of gift-giving are as diverse as the people who practice them. From birthdays and graduations to weddings and holidays, humans have found countless occasions to give gifts. Seldom, however, do people give a gift every single day. In this episode, we meet Mateusz, a man who has taken up gift-giving on a daily basis for the past 15 years (and counting). Mateusz and his mother share the story of his curious choice of gift and his inventive way of giving.



"EVERYONE IN MY HEART"

-Mateusz Jaworski

### FILM THEMES

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- **Worthy gifts, worthy recipients**

A decorated, broken cassette might not seem like a very valuable gift. Nevertheless, everyone who receives one of Mateusz's cassettes cherishes it. One recipient refers to his collection of gifts from Mateusz as "brilliant treasures." Mateusz started by giving a cassette to his aunt but, in the film, we see him give to people he has just met (a store clerk and a clergy member). There is even a photo of him giving one to a Nobel Prize winner. The viewer is left wondering what makes a gift worthy? What makes a person a worthy recipient?

- **Unexpected gifts**

When holidays or birthdays come around, we may expect to receive gifts. On a regular day, when we are just going about our business, we probably wouldn't expect any gifts. In the film, we see that when Mateusz gives someone a decorated broken cassette, they are surprised. Maybe they are surprised by

the timing, or the packaging, or the giver. His gifts are unexpected. This could be said about the actual gifts he prepares and about Mateusz himself. Too often, people like Mateusz are disregarded because of their disability, but Mateusz really enjoys surprising people with the vibrancy of his personhood.

- **Brokenness**

The “gift in brokenness,” is a reference to the gift and the gift-giver. As a person with an intellectual disability, Mateusz may be seen by some as imperfect, damaged, or useless. In his wisdom, Mateusz offers us a profound assertion of the truth. Something that is “broken” has a purpose. Someone who is considered “broken” has gifts, including the gifts of creativity and imagination.

- **Communication**

In the film, it says “Since Mateusz uses language in ways we don’t easily understand, he has never told us the full story behind the cassettes.” Nevertheless, there are moments when Mateusz’s way of communicating is very clear. Often, people invent ways to communicate when speech or language do not serve them. Mateusz, for example, uses certain sounds, gestures, facial expressions, and his book of pictures. There are many ways to communicate who we are and what we have to offer.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever received an unexpected and seemingly useless gift that you, in fact, really valued? What was it?
2. Think of a time when you were able to understand someone even though they didn’t use words. What was that like? What are some ways you communicate without speech? Do you feel understood?
3. What would it mean to say that each person has a gift? Could we say that each person is a gift?
4. What can we learn from brokenness? What are other examples of beauty in brokenness? Consider different art forms that involve broken or imperfect materials (e.g. mosaics and the *wabi-sabi* aesthetic).
5. Mateusz didn’t wait for an occasion – he gave someone a gift every day. If you could do that, what would you give every day?
6. Mateusz indicates that everyone is in his heart. What does it mean to be carried in someone else’s heart, or to carry someone in your heart?

## BEHIND THE SCENES

The broken cassette could be considered a double gift. In the film, Mateusz was as enthusiastic about making the gift as he was about giving it.

## IMAGINE THE WORLD DIFFERENTLY

What are your gifts? Do you share them with others on a daily basis? Be attentive to when others are sharing their gifts with you, especially when they are unusual or unexpected!