



# Perspective

## *Exchanging Invitations*

By JAMIE BUCKINGHAM

That time is here again. You know what "that time" is, don't you? Sure you do. It's the time when everyone exchanges invitations with each other. Mainly the wedding and graduation types.

It's nice to be remembered by so many young friends this happy time. But surely among us there no longer lives a man with soul so dead who never to himself hath said, "The only reason I get an invitation is they expect a gift."

This year, with almost two dozen invitations on the buffet, I finally turned to my wife and said, "It will take a small fortune to respond. The only thing I know to do is send them a copy of my latest book. At least I can buy that wholesale."

"You'll do nothing of the kind, you cheapskate," she glared. "This means an awful lot to these kids. And remember, we're still eating off the dishes we received as wedding gifts."

"You're right," I conceded. "But remember it took us 15 years to wear out those nine Lazy Susans so we could start using the dishes."

"You're horrible," she countered. "You think the only reason people send invitations is to get gifts."

"I've probably misjudged an entire generation of youth," I said. "I realize now these kids don't send us invitations simply to get presents. Therefore, I'll sit down and write them all a note, thank them for the invitations and tell them we'll be happy to attend the ceremonies."

"Ohhhhh!" she said through clenched teeth. "Just remember your oldest son graduates from high school this year and he's sending out invitations. What if all he got back was little notes from people like you saying they would attend the graduation exercises?"

Just about that time Bruce came wandering into the room. "Dad, I've still got 15 invitations left and don't know whom to send them to. Do you have any rich friends?"

Now fully convinced I'd have to play the game, I agreed to come downstairs and help Bruce address the last 15 invitations.

I looked at the stack already completed. I was mortified over his handwriting. Besides that, he was supposed to have put the people's names on the little envelope that goes inside the big envelope. And he hadn't done it.

"Move over, son," I commanded. "I'll address these last ones."

With that I set to work doing it the right way. I went through the address book and picked out the name of 15 rich friends who I know are just sitting around waiting to receive a graduation invitation. I put their name on the inside envelope, addressed the outside envelope and sealed them shut. It wasn't until I was putting the last inside envelope in the outside envelope that I realized I had a mismatch. Somewhere down the line I had put a wrong envelope in and it was already sealed.

"There's no way to win this game," I sighed to Bruce, sealing the last envelope with someone else's name inside. "Let's just work on a theory that no one ever opens these things, anyway."

So, if you receive an invitation from our son and it has somebody else's name on the inside envelope, don't feel cheated. Somewhere, across this nation, somebody else is receiving yours. Maybe the two of you should exchange gifts.