

Did you get what you wanted? The world is split into surprise wanters and those with a list. The list makers usually have more on the list than they can get which still leaves them with an element of surprise. The others might well have been dropping hints all year and so the surprise is rarely a shock. I've always been a surprise wanter and my husband the opposite, but this year we changed sides. I had a very specific (and expensive of course) request and he claimed not to have anything specific in mind. Socks and a tie it was then.

It's a good job we are all different, isn't it? Imagine how dull the world would be if we all enjoyed the same things. Brown sauce and red sauce people, sweet snacks and savoury, cat and dog lovers, those who enjoy a festive party and those who long for the dark days of February to roll around. Those who have bought their Rod Stewart tickets and those of us going to see Status Quo.

We like what we like, although I'm sure are influenced by those around us. I can remember buying Abba's Greatest Hits and then bumping into some of my school mates. I had to pretend it was for my Dad's birthday and that I was in fact going to treat myself to something by Talking Heads.

There is a campaign underway now to get children's marketing away from whole the boy/girl thing. Those behind it wonder why girls have to play monopoly on a pink board and boys need toys that make very loud noises. Before Victorian times, it used to be pink for a boy and blue for a girl. It is handy to have some sort of distinction for very young babies, to avoid insulting the parents by cooing over a little girl who is actually a little boy. It's not always easy to tell.

The campaigners argue that the whole pinkification (it wasn't me that made the word up) thing is just a cynical marketing ploy so that we buy two versions of all the same toys. What it does, though, is exaggerate the differences between the sexes and makes it more uncomfortable for any one child to cross the boundaries.

I know one little boy who has been hankering after a doll's house but because Santa couldn't quite approve of such a thing for him he ended up with a (quite fabulous to be honest) castle. It was filled with knights, horses and other masculine accessories to play with and he was delighted. We gave him a tea-set which he also loved, although so far his dad has refused to enjoy the delights of pretend tea and cake with him.

You know I struggle to understand anyone who doesn't wholeheartedly agree with me but I enjoy the differences between us. At home and in work we often have good natured and sometimes heated arguments about everything from independence to political correctness to the X-Factor. Every time we split along different lines – no-one else agrees with me about everything. Every day in the our office we have people huddled round the heaters wrapped in layers of thermals and others sitting in t-shirts next to open windows. This New Year I will toast them all, and it doesn't matter if I do so with an Island malt or a Chilean wine, the sentiments will be the same.