Tanya,

I believe you should gift Nana with a pottery lesson for her, your boyfriend, and yourself. This is the ideal gift because Nana has been mentioning it to your boyfriend for three months because this was a special tradition between her and her grandson. According to Galak, Givi, and Williams (2016) giving gifts that are what the recipient desires are more successful than surprising them with something they don’t want, also if the gift shows a valuable attachment to a relationship, the gift is more successful. This will continue your bond with the family and dedication to your relationship, and as reported by Boven and Gilovich (2003) is more meaningful than something like a vase or picture frame.

Because the goal of the gift giving is to impress your boyfriend’s family and get their approval, you should focus on the satisfaction of the recipient and not of yourself as the giver. According to Galak, Givi, and Williams (2016) the gift will benefit the recipient the most if it is traditional, reflets personal interests, requested, and experiential. I believe that the gift of a pottery session hits the majority of this criteria because it’s a tradition in their family, it is something she wants, it is something she likes to do, and it is an experience that you all can enjoy together. I know there is some concern about giving a gift that cannot be used immediately upon opening, but the value of the gift is more important than the instant satisfaction of using the gift instantly (Galak, Givi, & Williams, 2016). Additionally, as stated by Boven and Gilovich (2003) participants in their survey were more satisfied overall with an experience that cost them $100 than an item that cost them the same amount. This research is why I encourage you to give a gift of the pottery making experience.

One limitation that I see with this gift is that Nana may feel constricted to not use the gift how she wants to, if the tickets are for the three of you. In their article, Galak, Givi, and Williams (2016) state that the recipient would prefer a more versatile gift so they can use it at their will. To combat this you could get three tickets and not specify that they are for the three of you, so that she feels no pressure but the option is still there for you all to go. Another limitation is that the difference between experiential and material is not easily defined (Boven $ Gilovich, 2003). The experience of making pottery should be able to both be defined as an experience with a material take away.

I hope this was all helpful for you,

Haleigh Pannell