

An Independent Generosity

Let's begin by asking the question, just what is generosity? What does it mean to be genuinely generous? Webster's Dictionary describes the word generous as "*being noble-minded; to give or share.*" And Roget's Thesaurus states "*large or great heart; go out of the way; observe the Golden Rule; noble-mindedness; unselfish.*"

The noble-mindedness, of course, harkens back to the days of kings and queens, who had plenty and (hopefully) shared their wealth with others who had less. To have a large or great heart brings us to the idea of compassion for others, by giving of something of yourself. The Golden Rule, '*do unto others...*' may not apply so much today, because we may not see how our generosity is accepted, appreciated, and just as importantly, returned back to us.

"Give and it will be given to you...for the measure you give will be the measure you get back. "
Christianity ~ Luke 6:38

You may say, well, I don't expect anything when I am generous or give to someone! But in reality, most of us do. It's only natural to expect some kind of response, or pat on the back, that's the world we live in. Instant gratification, I did this, now you do this for me. Especially, if you may be thinking, hey I couldn't really afford that gift, couldn't really take the time to visit and that person really didn't seem to appreciate the sacrifices you made. Sound familiar?

Which gets me to the point of this article. To be truly generous, one has to resolve any feelings of the "give and owe" factor, meaning, just because you give something to someone, does not obligate them in any way to return the favor. And, this concept is multi-dimensional. First, to be generous, one has to take their own emotions out of the picture. Just giving, and expecting a "reward" or recognition for the simple act of giving, is not being generous. Look at it this way, did that person truly want you to give them that gift, did they really want you spending hours at their home or on the telephone chatting away or did you just "give" of yourself from some personal desire to feel needed, or to say you did such and such for someone?

"The gift which is given without thought of recompense, in the belief only that it ought to be made ~ in a fit place, at an opportune time ~ such a gift is Pure." Hinduism ~ Bhagavad Gita 17:20-21

We all want to be needed and appreciated that is a normal human condition. But think back to a time, or times, when possibly your gift, money, or time spent was not appreciated. What might that tell you? It's simple. It means that it might not have been appropriate to do for the other person at that particular time, but more importantly, it may not have been given by you, from a clear and clean space about what it means to be really generous.

Especially in these times of lost jobs, being over-extended with regard to credit, over-mortgaged for our childrens' college tuition, and even just from the day to day exhaustion of everyday life ~ it's very difficult, to say the least, to be truly generous when you just don't feel you have the financial, emotional, or personal time resources to spare, or give freely. But, we all go through this, so don't beat yourself up about it! Just begin to have an awareness of when and how you

give to others, as we continue on in this new year.

Giving, and being generous is an individual endeavor that is unique to each one of us. There is no set rule or pattern about doing so. Being generous and the act of giving of oneself is truly person-specific. So, if you truly do not feel you can give freely, without reservation, without thought of recognition then don't! That's ok! And, when you do feel that you can give without any thoughts or expectations, then do so! That is the true essence of generosity and that is when you will see the gratitude and appreciation for your gift and generosity.

"If you knew the fruit of sharing gifts, you would not enjoy their use without sharing them, nor would the idea of holding back ever be in your heart. If you knew the fruit of sharing, even if it were your last bit, your last morsel of food, you would not enjoy it without sharing it..."
Buddhism ~ Itivuttaka 18

Pax!

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