

*"This book is a gift that will transform your appreciation
for charity and the act of giving."*

- Jack Canfield, bestselling author and co-creator of
the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series

CHARITY

The Gifts of Giving



*Discover the hidden benefits of
kindness and generosity*

GARRET BISS

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Introduction

Requests for charitable donations surround us. They bombard us on the radio and television. They pop up on the computer and ring through our phones. We find solicitations plastered around checkout counters and filling our mailboxes. Occasionally, you may even have someone knock on your door looking for a contribution to his or her cause.

Charity is a big part of our culture. You see it through the organization and support of soup kitchens and through volunteer efforts within the community. Many world religions advocate regular contribution to charity. In fact, tithing, giving 10 percent of your income, is a regular practice in most religions.

Nearly everyone would agree that donating to charity is a good thing, but few people actually make charitable involvement a normal part of their lives. We talk about the benefits of exercise or eating a balanced diet, and know these are good things to do. But we routinely fail to take the appropriate actions so we miss out on the benefits. The same is true about giving to charity.

Through my own involvement in charitable giving, I have come to understand and see the benefits of my involvement, what I refer to as “The Gifts of Giving”. I have found through my own experience, and by speaking to others, that donors often receive substantial benefits from the act of giving either time or resources.

Giving is certainly a noble and righteous act, but we are not necessarily inspired to do it for that reason alone. This book’s purpose is to educate readers about the many benefits that come with charitable efforts -- beyond the obvious benefit provided to the recipient. Like the reminder about proper nutrition and exercise for physical health, this book is a lesson in how acts of charity can provide you spiritual health by bringing joy, happiness and vitality to your life.

*“The only care
That I shall share
Shall be the care of others,
And on the road
I’ll halve the load
Of overburdened brothers.
I rather guess
It’s selfishness
That drives me to such actions,
For in this plan
I find I can
Forget my own distractions.”*

~John Kendrick Bangs

Whether for selfishness or righteousness, everybody wins when someone gives.

Chapter Three: Positive Energy

“Life engenders life. Energy creates energy. It is by spending oneself that one becomes rich.”-- Sarah Bernhardt

Giving helps the charitable person because the act itself creates positive energy. One important point to understand is that in this world there is both positive and negative energy. This may be harder to understand in the context of physical things (the concept of anti-matter, for example, is hard for most people to grasp), but for emotions, it is quite easy.

Every emotion we experience is either positive or negative in nature. Hatred, envy, frustration, guilt and a long list of other emotions can all be categorized as negative energy emotions. On the other side of the emotional spectrum, you have everything that is positive in nature - love, happiness, gratitude, appreciation, joy, etc.

As people, we have the ability to create emotional energy. Positive emotions, derived from positive energy, can inspire us to commit positive acts. The positive acts we commit have the ability to create positive emotions in our heart. The act of opening a door for another person is a positive act; one which will create a positive emotion of appreciation in another person.

Enjoying an emotion of gratitude or joyfulness often inspires us to commit positive acts, like complimenting a stranger or leaving a big tip for your server. I don't wish to belabor a discussion on the alternative, but it is important to see that the opposite is also true. Negative energy emotions inspire negative acts like rude behavior, yelling and violence. Each of these acts has the potential to manifest negative emotions in those who experience the act.

Neuroscience explains this phenomenon. Our thoughts and feelings are tied to actions. Even when we hear people use words that *describe* actions, the motor areas of the brain are activated as if we *were actually doing* the action described. Our brains are organized so that ideas and actions are intimately connected, as you will learn later when you read about research in cognitive science. Our feelings inspire actions, and our actions inspire feelings.

Understanding positive and negative energy emotions can empower you to leverage your own actions and emotions. When you commit an act that inspires a positive emotion, that act creates a positive emotion in you and in the person who benefits from the act. By presenting a friend with a nice gift, you feel a positive emotion inside. You may experience the warmth of love or the happiness for your friendship. When your friend receives the gift, he or she will likely feel gratitude and appreciation. One act committed creates a positive emotion for both of you. But it doesn't stop there.

Positive emotions can inspire positive actions. With your good feeling, you may share your positive energy with others when you are inspired to compliment or lend a hand to a stranger. Your friends may also commit similar acts that are inspired by the positive emotions they now embrace. Your one gift has created a wave of positive energy that can spread far beyond you or your friend.

The greatest benefit of positive energy is what it does to negative energy and negative emotions. If you were having a bad day and experiencing many negative emotions, how would you react if someone gave you a thoughtful and generous gift?

Imagine you recently came home from a very stressful day at work. Maybe all you could think about was the stress of work piling up on your desk, the lack of appreciation you felt from your boss, or the rude behavior of a few co-workers. You may understandably feel some negative emotions like frustration, anxiety, anger and maybe even hatred.

Now, imagine later that evening a very close friend of yours stopped by to give you a wonderful gift; maybe it was a gift certificate to your favorite restaurant or a small trinket that you really enjoyed. Imagining how you would feel, what changed in the emotions you held? Did the severity of your anger and frustration diminish, if only for a moment? Did the hatred you experienced earlier begin to fade?

One way to think of the relationship between positive and negative emotions is to equate them to hot and cold water. Let's pretend that negative energy is akin to cold water and positive emotional energy is like hot water. When you feel the negative emotions of cold water, if someone were to share some warm water with you, it would warm up your negative emotions. The amount of temperature increase would be relative to the amount and temperature of the cold water in your cup. A little hot water for a short time would warm your negative emotions just a little. A sustained flow of hot water for a long enough period would help you reverse the coldness of your water and bring you back to warm, positive emotions.

Charity can be an effective way to increase the positive energy in your emotions. When we give of ourselves selflessly to benefit another, this act creates a very warm and positive emotional response in our heart and mind. The greater the contribution, the greater the positive feeling we receive from the act. The more continuously we donate to charity, the more warmth we continue to feel. This positive and warm feeling we enjoy can be a wonderful benefit of charity.

The human brain is wired for social connection, bonding and giving. Oxytocin, the so-called "love hormone," is secreted during bonding and connection. It's probably part of the reason that giving of ourselves literally feels good. There is also a healing component to this. Many people believe that giving is good for our health. The hormone oxytocin is actually associated with a reduction in inflammation, the basis of

many ailments and symptoms. There is, therefore, a real connection between giving in its broadest sense and well-being.

It won't surprise you to learn that in addition to the release of oxytocin, giving is associated with a reduction in the stress response. When giving, the brain literally experiences a flow of positive energy that can neutralize the anxiety inherent in the fight-flight reaction. Giving results in measurable and real changes in brain chemistry. In short, giving of yourself is a great stress management tool.

I have used this gift of charity many times in my life. There have been days when I faced minor struggles or felt negative emotions clouding my mind. When this happens, I will often turn my attention to charity and commit an act of giving for the benefit of another. Sometimes, this act is a quick donation to one of the charities I support. Other times, I will stop to grab a small gift for a friend. Either way, this short diversion from my own problems and the positive energy I create through my act are usually enough to erase the negative emotions or concern I felt and get me back to feelings of appreciation or gratitude.

At one time in my life, I was experiencing a very difficult and dark period. I faced career and personal challenges that cast a shadow over my life and emotional state. I effectively used a habit of daily charitable contributions to help me get through that period. The positive energy and emotions I received from these small but regular acts of charity certainly didn't erase the challenge I was facing in my life. It did, however, provide some positive energy and regular moments of reprieve from my stress. I found this made a huge difference.

The challenge is something I still face, but my contribution and focus on charity during this time has made this period in my life bearable. Reducing stress and depression is a gift we enjoy from charity.

Action

- ✓ The next time you find yourself stressed or experiencing a negative emotion, take a moment to make a small donation to charity or commit an act of kindness towards another. Reflect on this experience and the effect it had on your emotions and the stress you felt.

To download a full copy of the book, visit <http://amzn.to/1FdsBn2>

For other work by the author, visit his author page: amazon.com/author/garretbiss

About the Author

In addition to being a supporter of a few charitable organizations, Garret is a student of and advocate for the act of selfless giving in any of its forms. Garret's involvement with charity began with an occasional contribution to a local cause, a meager donation to a national organization, or tithing to his church. Garret, like many others, soon noticed that an interesting thing happened; the more he gave, and the more attention he gave to the act of charity, the more he received. Many benefits from the act of giving began to emerge, which brought new meaning and significance to the act. For everything he gave of himself, he received back positive energy and goodwill. The more often he gave, the more joy came from the act.

Garret recently founded his own charitable organization, One Million Goal, Inc. This organization promotes and will track the progress of Garret's personal life mission to raise enough money and awareness to help bring clean water to one million of the men, women and children in need. You can find out more about this organization and follow Garret's progress towards this lofty goal at www.onemilliongoal.org.

Would you like to use this book for fundraising?

Copies of *Charity, The Gifts of Giving* are being made available at cost to sell as a fundraiser for your-cause. When preparing for your next charitable event, consider offering this book in gratitude for a donation, as an inspiration to increase your involvement, or as motivation for your board to intensify their commitment. Please email Garret Biss at garret@onemilliongoal.org for more information.