



Security Through Connection



[1] Sometimes experiences in life lead us to overdo self-protection. In *Bad Habits of Mind*, Robert Jackson, Harvard University, tells us just that! After "bad" things happen we can enter into an emotional space that is contrary to our best interests. We develop the bad habit of allowing everyday occurrences to become reminders of past awful events. **The past becomes sensitized, and the present becomes desensitized. And this is the reverse of what would be helpful.** We end up rejecting reassurance, kindness, flexibility, comfort, learning, self-confidence, realism, creativity, and belonging.

In the past, the focus to sadness or grieving has been personal analysis and re-examining the painful past. The work of [George Bonanno](#) [2] of Teachers College, Columbia University, however, *strongly suggests* that **there are better ways to avoid social isolation, immune system disorders, and decreased ability to work - all of which increase as we isolate for prolonged period of time.** Bonanno suggests getting help to see the fallacies in the narrative of guilt and regret, and to develop concrete goals to begin moving forward back toward a normal life.

Another antidote to isolation, fear, and grief is generosity. Marc Lesser, in [The Practice of Generosity](#) [3], tells us: "Real generosity requires that we open our heart and allow ourselves to be curious and vulnerable and accepting."

Gratitude says yes to all facets of life, even the difficult ones, which also leaves us open to experiencing more joy. What about the idea of slowing down and **being generous with ourselves** to create space helpful thoughts and questions to emerge, often slowly, allowing us to go deeper in our lives and open doors to new ways of approaching and resolving thorny issues?

Practicing generosity toward yourself and others - **real gratitude and acceptance for who we are and what is - loosens fear's grip.** The result is greater accomplishment with less effort.

Practicing generosity in our daily lives, in our work, and in our relationships is not easy or simple. In [Awareness: Seeking the Wisdom of Love](#) [4], Stephen Sims lets us know there are times for legitimate complaining such as to lament lost love, defiled beauty, compromised truth, wasted talent - times to weep, feel injury and injustice. But **the healthy release of sorrow and desolate emotion makes way for generosity and gratitude's entry. Our fear and sadness ultimately give way to gladness, much as the mud gives way to a beautiful garden.**

Francis Moore Lappe, noted author, (*Diet for a Small Planet*), explains "in us all is a deep, now-proven-to-be hard-wired need and capacity for cooperation, caring, and helpfulness."



[5]The concepts of personal safety nets - reaching out and gathering as part of caring groups and teams - the need and capacity to help - are first steps towards generosity - giving our full caring and attention to someone, without expecting anything in return. **Creating and being part of another's personal safety net is an act of generosity - and leads forward on the road to community and connection, and away from fear and isolation.**

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[2] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wmCmThpe5-U>

[3] <https://www.marclesser.net/its-what-you-do-the-practice-of-skillful-action/>

[4] <http://www.stephensims.com/river-of-awareness/>

[5] <https://personalsafetynets.org/file/188>