



Personal Safety Nets® e-Newsletter



Generosity and Gratitude

February 2012, Issue 47

In This Issue

Putting Ideas Into Action
From the Mailbag
Security Through Connections
News & In the News

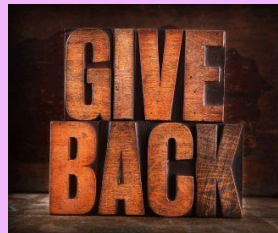
Putting Ideas Into Action

(Editor's note: Let's give credit where it's due. The ideas for this piece come from noted Portland psychotherapist, and Emmy-Award-winning writer, Donald Altman. His new book is **The Mindfulness Code: Keys for Overcoming Stress, Anxiety, Fear, & Unhappiness**. We've done some editing and added our own touches - as you'd expect.)



Giving to others (and letting ourselves receive) moves us closer to personal and spiritual growth. Generosity, charity and giving - both physical and emotional - are simply expressions of your caring and love.

Here are 3 good ways to start building a generosity-centered life:



1) Identify and Share Your Empowering Gift. Whatever the life skill, talent or gift you possess - such as cutting hair, facility with a needle and thread, or fluency in another language -

Security Through Connections

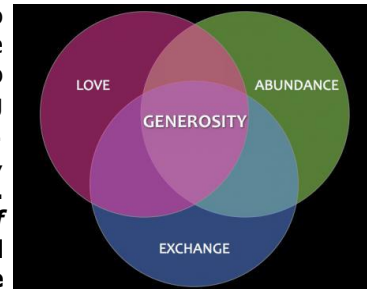


Sometimes experiences in life lead us to overdo self-protection. In **Bad Habits of Mind**, Robert Jackson, Harvard University, tells us just that! After "bad" things happen we can enter into an emotional space that is contrary to our best interests. We develop the bad habit of allowing everyday occurrences 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 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**, 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?

this can be put to use for the service of another. Don't underestimate what you already do! Ask around and be open for others who could benefit from whatever it is that you could share.

2) Pay It Forward. You can change the world by taking a good deed, or blessing, and passing it on to others. Think about how you can take a good deed you have experienced and pass it on to another.



3) Commit Random Acts of Generosity. You can be generous with your emotions and joy. Rather than focus on the negative story you carry with you, share an uplifting story or be generous with your attention when listening to another. Each day, commit to one act of random generosity - even buying a cup of coffee for the person behind in you line for no other reason than just to make someone happy.

"We make a living by what we earn. We make a life by what we give."

- Winston Churchill

From the Mailbag



"I enjoyed the class . . . I am so glad I had my safety net in place during this last storm. I had to go to person #4 until I found someone who could help, but it was good that I had all of that in place."

- Kristin

I just discovered a movement afoot to make February 14th also **Happy Generosity Day** and fell in love with this! I thought it might bring yet

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**, 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.**"



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.

News & In the News

** UPCOMING SEMINARS/PRESENTATIONS:

Editor's Note: Some of these events are open to the general public. Please check directly with the organization before attending to see if they can accommodate you.

March you can find us speaking at the, working with the **AmeriCorps Team at King County Housing Authority**, and with the very talented counselors who will attend the **Aging Your Way Conference**.

April finds us presenting persona safety nets to the

MARCH 2012						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Washington Academy of Elder Law Attorneys, introducing personal safety nets to the **West Seattle Rotary**, conducting class for **ANEW** (linking women to apprenticeships and livable wage jobs in construction trades, manufacturing, aerospace and utilities), working with the entire staff at **Childhaven**, travelling to Nebraska to work with the **BryanGH College of Health Sciences**, and holding our seminar at **East Shore Unitarian Church**.

Add your name to this list! Now is the perfect time for you to schedule a time for the staff of Personal Safety Nets® to come and work with your group or organization. Personal Safety Nets® is moving towards its goal of putting 5,000 copies of our book into prepared hands to remind people of how teamwork can help! **From now until June 2012, most seminars are FREE, and we include a free book for every participant.**

* * * * *

** WALLET CARDS:

another smile to your day.

- Dena



"So I'm in a try to keep that feeling in mind, the feeling of being cared for, the feeling of being supported, feeling the safety net, and allowing myself to feel it. Because if I feel it, and in a place of affirming love, then it can generate out through me to my rooms to the house to the neighborhood and beyond. Like ripples in a pond."

- A Friend

Our wallet cards are the very best way to start to gather needed information and prepare yourself for any immediate emergency, and all challenges that may come your way. The new and improved wallet card is available for FREE to you, your relatives, friends and organizations. Simply send us a self-addressed, stamped envelope and tell us how many of the new cards to send to you. (One first-class stamp will get you up to 6 cards).



Or invite us to come meet with your group - then you get not only wallet cards, but our book (FREE) on team building and personal safety nets as well!

* * * * *

**** WE LOVE TO TALK WITH YOU:**

Share your thoughts, tell us about yourself, and answer important question by joining us on our **blog** and **Facebook**.

* * * * *



**** READING MADE SIMPLE**

We've make it easy to read all the past issues of the Personal Safety Nets® e-Newsletter library - without having to have lots of papers around.

