

BENEVOLENCE

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Doing well by *'doing good'*.

I will start the topic of *doing well by 'doing good'* with some adapted excerpts from a *Profit* magazine editorial by Ian Portsmouth entitled *The Gifts of Giving—Second Cup founder Frank O'Dea reminds us why entrepreneurs and charities are a perfect match.*

O'Dea says he gets back as much as he gives. Two decades of work in philanthropic organizations and his own charitable startups—which include *Street Kids International* and the *Canadian Foundation for AIDS*, among others—have produced new contacts, perspectives and approaches that helped him grow his for-profit companies. Because of the transparency demanded of charities, adds O'Dea, “I've learned more about governance in these organizations than anywhere else.”

O'Dea strongly encourages entrepreneurs to get involved in philanthropic work: “Pick something you're passionate about, and do it.” There is evidence that enterprise and philanthropy are intersecting more often. Charitable work engenders skills, contacts and experience that entrepreneurs can use. And charities can definitely use more growth-savvy entrepreneurs. As Norman Lear, the founder of *The Business Enterprise Trust* once observed;

“The evidence seems clear that those businesses which actively serve their many constituencies in creative, morally thoughtful ways also, over the long run, serve their shareholders best. Companies do, in fact, do well by doing good.”

The key to social responsibility is BALANCE

“To be responsible to employees, communities, shareholders, and the greater good, means to carefully balance a host of competing interests. You have to be very sure of your values and weigh them honestly against the needs to sustain the enterprise. If you anger suppliers, if you alienate groups of customers, if you spend too much time and money on causes, you cannot build a strong, long-lasting company. If your company fails, or fails to grow, you can no longer afford to be socially responsible.” Howard Schultz {R}, Starbucks CEO, in *Pour Your Heart Into It* (one of the most 'human' business books on the market...)

GIVE BACK—It's the right thing to do!

“True to its family spirit, Southwest Airlines likes to be thought of as the 'Hometown Airline' in every community it serves. The company believes that employees who understand this goal will work harder to invest in the communities in which Southwest operates. Not only is it good business, it's good stewardship. Good corporate citizenship is often discussed in terms of doing what's right. Southwest believes that doing the right thing—keeping the moral code, if you will—is a natural by-product of acting out of love. Love uses power to serve, and wealth to expand its capacity to serve.” Kevin & Jackie Freiberg {R}, in their book *Nuts*, the story behind Southwest Airlines and its CEO, Herb Kelleher.

***“No person was ever honored for what he received;
honor has been the reward for what he has given.”***

-Calvin Coolidge

**“The commitment of The Body Shop is:
to dedicate the business to the pursuit of social and environment change.”**

-Anita Roddick

I subscribe wholeheartedly to the tenet of Patricia Spicer and Jerry Kerr—partners in life and in business:

“If we don’t care for others—who will care for us? Everyone has the same needs as everyone else—starting with self-esteem and a sense of belonging. We hold the tenet that those in the community who are capable and strong must be willing to provide strength, assistance and reassurance to families, colleagues and neighbors. **Living life fully** is NOT being independent and aloof from others in your community. Rather, **living life fully** means being involved with others and caring about them in a way that demonstrates that their existence really matters, and in the process, you will discover that YOUR existence also really matters.”

One at a time

By Jack Canfield & Mark Victor Hansen

A friend of ours was walking down a deserted beach at sunset. As he walked along, he noticed a man in the distance who kept leaning down, picking something up, and throwing it out into the water, time and again.

As our friend approached even closer, he noticed that the man was picking up starfish that had been washed up on the beach, and, one at a time, he was throwing them back into the water. Our friend was puzzled. He walked over to the man and said, “Good evening friend. I was wondering what you are doing.”

“I’m throwing these starfish back into the water. It’s low tide right now and if I don’t throw them back into the ocean, they’ll all die up here.”

“I understand,” our friend replied, “but there must be thousands of starfish on this beach, and hundreds of beaches like this one up and down the coast. Can’t you see you can’t possibly make a difference?”

The man smiled, bent down and picked up yet another starfish, and as he threw it back into the sea, he replied, “*Made a difference to that one!*”

Now, to contribute to *social and environment change*—to ‘make a difference’—you don’t have to be a global company like Starbucks or The Body Shop. Nor a giant like Second Cup or Southwest Airlines or even an emerging company like The REITE Club Inc. As demonstrated in the starfish story, you *can* make a difference as one person, whether you are an entrepreneur on a quest for success (like Lyne), a salaried employee, or a stay-at-home mom.

An unexpected road out of the valley (Lyne Racicot’s personal journey)

I was so tired of the rat race. At the ripe old age of 35, I felt disillusioned with the “quest for success”. What had all the money and accolades really given me? I wistfully remembered a youthful dream of helping people in a poor country. After some soul searching, I finally decided that it’s never too late to make a difference and found the courage to follow my heart... straight to a small Mexican town called Valles (translates ironically to “valley”).

There are no words to adequately describe the life-altering experience I had teaching English and being welcomed by the most incredible people, especially my new adopted family, the Moctezuma-Avilas. I returned to Canada renewed and eager to continue finding ways to bridge the gap between cultures so that we see the humanity in everyone.

In the fall of 2003, I founded the **Global Family Dinner** to bring together people of various backgrounds, cultures and religions to share a meal on Christmas Eve and, in the true spirit of the holidays, to rejoice with others from all over the world! It was so gratifying to witness strangers becoming friends as they came to realize that we all have so much in common despite our cultural and social differences. I have visions of the dinner becoming international and offering hope that we could one day live in relative peace with other members of our “global family”—not just over the holidays but year-round. I no longer subscribe to the cynical view that this is an impossible pipe dream because I know first-hand how it happens, one person at a time, then spreads like a ripple effect.

I finally understood how to achieve win-win. If we align our most important values with our actions, life becomes more meaningful with great results, both personally and professionally! I know that no one can be all things to all people but maybe I can work to touch just a few lives without feeling like it's a sacrifice at all. As a matter of fact, my greatest insight from this experience is simple yet easy to overlook: *Giving is not just a gift to others, it's a gift to yourself.*

Great story...and great observation...so let's repeat it:

**“Giving is not just a gift to others,
it's a gift to yourself.”**

-Lyne Racicot

**“Through giving we expand and become something more,
something that truly touches hearts and transforms lives.”**

-Angela Jackson

Go ahead, just DO “IT” for how good it will make YOU feel! And DOING “IT” could be as involved as starting a new non-profit organization, or a research fund, or an event as Lyne did, or it can be as simple as volunteering—whether as an officer, a manager, or as a front-line person. You'll be welcomed with open arms.

**“Don't ever overlook the possibility of doing well by doing good.
Volunteering is the easiest way to add new faces to your network,
and it feels great.”**

-Harvey Mackay

Volunteer and learn

“If as a manager you think it is difficult to get results through people over whom you have some authority, imagine how it is to get results through people *without any authority over them whatsoever*. That's the description of volunteer work.

There is no better place to learn the subtle points of management than as an officer of a volunteer organization, be it a volunteer health agency or the board of an educational institution or the Boy Scouts or the PTA.

I have heard people describe these jobs as “thankless” and without reward. Not true. Most of them are involved with doing good and doing good work, reward enough in itself, and the people I know who **volunteer** regularly are richly rewarded. Beyond the spiritual reward is a management learning experience beyond anything they could dream up in business school.

As a member of, and then president of, the board of directors of a national voluntary health agency, I was involved in a near-bankruptcy situation, a complete reorganization, the hiring of new staff, restructuring the board, redoing the fundraising apparatus, introducing a new planning process, lobbying for congressional action, leading national conferences, and participating in the successful merger of two national organizations.

All that was accomplished without the benefit of authority. All of us on the board were driven only by our concern for the cause to seek consensus and workable solutions for every nasty problem. I learned about influence and quiet persuasion, about good committee work, about getting the best work from people who were sincere and well-intended but not very qualified for the tasks for which they had volunteered. (You can't "fire" an incompetent volunteer.)

This experience has served me countless times in my business life. I encourage all my managers to find a cause, to volunteer, to learn, to grow. *There are no failures in volunteer work.*" James A. Autry, *Love and Profit*

The Expertise-Community Connection

"Expertise is a strange thing. The minute you claim to have it, you probably don't. You know that—I know that—but what are we supposed to do about the challenge this fact of life represents? The only possible course of action is to keep on learning. But how do we slide learning into our already over-burdened schedules. I have six great suggestions for you on my website, but for the purpose of the topic at hand, I'll share one of them with you here: **volunteer!**

Volunteer. Sharing your expertise within your community's non-profit world is enormously rewarding. Taking your expertise outside your normal environment can provide amazing insights. Besides, research is pretty clear that people who volunteer live longer, happier lives." Chris Clarke-Epstein

If volunteering is not possible for you, there's one thing you CAN do—that everyone can do—that will be greatly appreciated by ALL the non-profit organizations: Get out the checkbook and give generously... for how good it will make YOU feel. Be a part of the most cherished nation on earth: DONATION!

I want to close the topic of benevolence with this beautiful poem. You are welcome to pass it along or send it to anyone in your circle of influence.

Friendship Wish

**Somewhere out there,
There's someone who needs a smile.**

**Somewhere out there,
There's someone who needs a touch of your hand.**

**There's someone who needs a kind word.
Some understanding.
Forgiveness.
A whisper of appreciation.**

**Somewhere out there,
There's someone who needs something to eat.**

**A place out of the cold.
A pair of warm socks.**

**Somewhere out there,
There's a soul who needs to be remembered.
Just remembered.
Even that will do.**

**As you live your life from this moment to next,
Please think about those whose path you cross.
Even if they stand right in front of you,
Take one little step that can,
And will,
Make all the difference in the world.**

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