GENEROSITY IS A GROWTH STRATEGY

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The Case for Living Generously

The flip side of giving and generosity, of course, is receiving and gratitude. On this point, David Kahn highlights research findings on how cultivating gratitude has a positive effect on everything from employees’ self-esteem to their mental resilience. If this has you intrigued, don’t miss Daniel Pink’s interview with Wharton professor Adam Grant. Find out why generosity is a quality found in people at the very bottom of the success ladder – and also at the very top.

Check out John Featherby’s cautionary piece on how organisational gestures of charity that lack sincerity can backfire on a company. Brian Fielkow offers ideas on how to boost genuine buy-in and participation for your own organisation’s giving initiatives.

As you contemplate resolutions for 2017, get some inspiration from 10 habits of genuinely giving people for your own personal lives. As you reflect and recharge, and of being renewed by time among your loved ones. And for those celebrating, a joyous and blessed Christmas to you!

Siaw Mei Li
Leaderonomics Editorial Team

We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give.
– Winston Churchill

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Cultivating generosity as part of organisational culture encourages individuals to light the way for each other in ways that inevitably benefits the business as a whole.

OlidayS are not only a time of celebration, but also an occasion when many individuals and organisations routinely pause to consider how they might share their resources with others in the spirit of goodwill and charity. Amid this traditional season of generosity, the Leaderonomics editorial team has gathered articles and reflections about the meaning of giving and the various ways we give of ourselves at work and in our personal lives.

Rupa Sivanoli opens the conversation by getting us to reflect on how we make ourselves available to the people we work with every day. Digital communications may be facilitating remote work and coordination in our teams, but are we making time to connect with each other in person, know what our colleagues are going through, and offer the appropriate support where necessary?

Over in New Zealand, Lim Kwan-Lyn was struck by the remarkable grit and sacrificial service of emergency workers in the recent Kaikoura earthquake. This has prompted her to examine what it means to demonstrate leadership in giving – whether in times of peril or in simple everyday situations – and how each of us has a part to play in building a more generous society.

In the corporate environment, social media making it so easy for us to network with strangers near and far, there’s still nothing that cements an introduction like the sincere endorsement of a trusted mutual friend, colleague or business associate. Roshan Thiran reminds us that one of the most impactful forms of generosity at our disposal is the willingness to connect individuals or teams with common goals or interests so that new, synergetic partnerships are created.

Lest any of us fall captive to the fallacy that we must be self-denying and self-effacing to be a thoroughly giving person, Joseph Tan writes on the importance of distinguishing between selflessness and love. He goes on to elaborate how acting in love is not necessarily easy or comfortable, but always good business practice that improves relationships within an organisation and drives a culture of greater integrity and accountability to the benefit of all stakeholders. Tan’s article is complemented by a Dan Rockwell’s pithy musings on how to set an example of loving leadership in a corporate environment.

People who give of themselves are often cautioned that others will expect more from them in return unless the giving is sincere and genuine. Lyn was struck by the remarkable grit and sacrificial service of emergency workers in the recent Kaikoura earthquake. This has prompted her to examine what it means to demonstrate leadership in giving – whether in times of peril or in simple everyday situations – and how each of us has a part to play in building a more generous society.

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GIVING OF OURSELVES AT WORK

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE GIVE TIME AND ATTENTION TO THE PEOPLE WE WORK WITH

By RUPA SIVANOLI
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It’s time to do things differently. Let’s look at ways to make giving our time and attention to others as a priority and not let it slip through the cracks. A recent article in the Harvard Business Review tells of how a group of firefighters reported that eating together is a central component of keeping their teams operating effectively as it was an opportunity to connect. It makes their team feel like they are operating as a family and creates the chance to spend time in a meaningful way outside of work. Most managers I meet today are having packed lunches at their desk – if they are eating at all – and do not have time to sit with their teams. Perhaps, given that food is so central to the Malaysian way of life, this can be a good starting point?

As we approach the end of the year, this might just be the right opportunity to reflect on how we give our time and attention in 2016 and come up with a few changes that we can implement in 2017.

When I say giving, I distill it into two areas – our time and our attention. At the end of the day, these are the only two things that we can truly give others. The by-products of how we spend in these two areas will of course be the material, emotional, spiritual and intellectual gains we make as we grow.

I recently heard a heartbreaking story of a friend who lost a colleague and when visiting the family to pay condolences, learnt so much about the story of a friend who lost a colleague and when visiting the family to pay condolences, learnt so much about the person that he otherwise would not have known. If we don’t know each other how can we help meet each other’s needs as people? In moments like this, we realise that at the heart of it, we all want to lead and engage happens, more often than not it’s a result of a boss who is too busy to give attention, listen and guide. I know of a chief executive who makes it a point to have personal lunch with his staff on their respective birthdays. As a result, staff who meet today are having packed lunches at their desk – if they are eating at all – and do not have time to sit with their teams. Perhaps, given that food is so central to the Malaysian way of life, this can be a good starting point?

How often are you stopping to pay personal visits and have personal lunch with your staff? In the workplace, are we measuring how managerial time and attention is being spent? Most of us have profitability or growth targets but never target to build connections with those who work with us. It is assumed that this will take place naturally, but in reality, this aspect of human connection is fast depleting in the working world. New ways of approaching and solving this problem need to be put in place. What used to be natural in the past may need some premeditation and renewed intent behind it, in today’s context.

Before we say human resources or management should do something about this, let us ask ourselves, “if we leave our job, who will really miss us, not as a person who shouldered the workload, but as a friend?” If you can’t think of five names, it’s time to do things differently. Let’s look at ways to make giving our time and attention to others as a priority and not let it slip through the cracks. A recent article in the Harvard Business Review tells of how a group of firefighters reported that eating together is a central component of keeping their teams operating effectively as it was an opportunity to connect. It makes their team feel like they are operating as a family and creates the chance to spend time in a meaningful way outside of work. Most managers I meet today are having packed lunches at their desk – if they are eating at all – and do not have time to sit with their teams. Perhaps, given that food is so central to the Malaysian way of life, this can be a good starting point?

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Shall We Dance

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AFTER buying his first two-cylinder car, Frederick Henry Royce was disappointed with the engine’s performance. The creative engineer decided to take matters into his own hands, improving existing parts and making them run better. In time, he began to make his own two-cylinder, 10-horsepower cars. Royce's innovations soon caught the attention of a London-based French car dealer, Charles Stewart Rolls, and a meeting was arranged for the pair to meet in 1904. Upon meeting, Rolls was impressed by Royce's creativity and perseverance; the two men discussed combining their talents, and later shook hands on establishing a partnership.

In July 1957, a group of young musicians were preparing for a local gig when a mutual friend introduced a guitar player to the band’s leader. After the band’s performance, the guitarist captivated the group with his talent and knowledge of music. The band’s leader asked the young guitar player to join the band. Jack’s creativity and perseverance would lead to such an amazing success, which on that day in 1957 when “The Quarrymen”, led by Lennon, played their gig in Liverpool? What if their mutual friend hadn’t made his introduction? Given the many iconic bands that were once influenced by The Beatles, how different would music and popular culture be today?

Of course, if events had played out differently in each case, things might have worked out even better, or unfolded in a similar way regardless. But each of these pairings had unique characteristics and traits, shared interests, and an intense creative chemistry. Each became an unparalleled success story, defining their industries for decades and creating bold legacies that would remain strong long after the first handshake. And all of it began with a connection.

CONNECTING THE DOTS

Recently, I’ve been thinking about some of the big success stories and how they came about. The examples above – just three of many – are iconic success stories. Who hasn’t heard of Apple, The Beatles, and Rolls Royce? While there have been many stories and theories written about why such people succeed, there seems to be one element that’s often overlooked: connection.

In each of the three stories, two people were brought together by a mutual friend or acquaintance. If Bill Fernandez hadn’t bothered to introduce Steve Jobs to Steve Wozniak, how might we have lost one of the greatest achievements ever? And if Royce hadn’t bothered to introduce John Lennon to Paul McCartney, how might we have lost one of the greatest musical legacies? One decision could have affected the course of history itself. And so, in creating connections between people whenever we meet kindred spirits who are just as passionate about the same thing, we bring about our best innovations, creations and inventions when we meet kindred spirits who are just as passionate about the same thing.

The greatest success stories tend not to come from the pairing of wealthy, well-connected, high-status people. Great success stories, yet to be told, are hiding quietly in corners, waiting for the right conditions to come together before they manifest in all their glory, changing the course of history itself. And so, in creating connections between people whenever we see mutual passions and interests, we never know where it could lead, what opportunities lie in the horizon, or what the next great success might yield.

We humans are social creatures and we bring about our best innovations, creations and inventions when we meet kindred spirits who are just as passionate about the same thing. Whatever we choose to do – whether it is looking for a job, making new friends, or starting a business – we never know where it could lead. We never know what the consequences of our actions might be. We never know what we might discover if we had the courage to try something new.

As someone who has a tonne of ideas and dreams at any given point, I love creating connections for two reasons: first, I simply enjoy connecting people who I know will hit it off; the second reason is that I am always excited to see what might come from two or more people meeting for the first time. I doubt Bill Fernandez thought his introduction would lead to such an amazing success, and there’s no way the friend of Lennon and McCartney could have known what was to follow from their first handshake. They were just ordinary boys from Liverpool, after all. And that’s the exciting part for me.

The greatest stories are yet to come, and we never know where it could lead. We never know where it could go. We never know what the consequences of our actions might be. We never know what we might discover if we had the courage to try something new. We never know what the future might hold. But we do know that by connecting with people who share our passions, we can create something truly amazing. And that’s the exciting part for me.
SELFLESSNESS IS NOT ALWAYS THE ANSWER

SO WHAT IS THE REAL ANTIDOTE FOR SELFLESSNESS?

DIFERENCE 1: THE TEST OF TRUTH

It is easy to be selfless towards your family members and close friends, but think about someone who irritates you, someone who grates on your nerves, someone who is just plain cranky, and let all those feelings of selflessness quickly vaporize away. It does not take a lot to be selfless when we are well liked, likely friends, and people that we have a high opinion of; it requires a greater strength, a higher purpose.

Saying that love which unselfishly gives all that it has is the thing which draws others to us and makes us winners in the shaming and self-repelling world of our generation – humanity; like you and me – who do not seem to have the same disinterested altruism of the giant saints of generosity.

Here is my proposition: the opposite of selflessness is not selfishness, it is evil. So, the question is not: how can we be more selfless, but rather it should be “How can I love more?”

DIFERENCE 2: THE TEST OF FUNCTION

At a very basic level, selflessness means being maternal and pure, being unselfish and unselfishness. It is the truest measure of a person’s character. In my consulting experience, many organisations talk about cultural transformation, but in reality, this worldview choice can be distorted if we think there is more in an organisation, but if there is no transformation, and the absence of clear standards, as with the child, who are roles appropriate to his or her personal growth.

From an organisational standpoint, this particular challenge is that there is a restructuring and reorientation associated. When there is no such structure, as with the child, a Culture of safety is lost.

DIFERENCE 3: THE TEST OF EMBRACE

Being selfless may excuse one from taking responsibility, as with the child, of selflessness means being maternal and pure, unselfish and unselfishness. It is the truest measure of a person’s character. It is obvious: if the cause is valid, if the cause is just, then it makes the necessary sacrifice (the commitment).

In my consulting experience, many organisations talk about cultural transformation, but in reality, this worldview choice can be distorted if we think there is more in an organisation, but if there is no transformation, and the absence of clear standards, as with the child, who are roles appropriate to his or her personal growth.

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THE NATURE OF LOVE

Love is the best and most powerful type of love that is not self-grown. That is the reason why I say that we need to start a movement to focus on selflessness. If we do not, we will never correct this issue of selfishness. – the term “selfless” is a false one. I hope that you agree with me. It is better to start a movement to focus on selflessness.

Selflessness counts the cost of what I give up. I give up something as a sort of compensation for the idea of being unselfish. In the world of self-interest, the selfless require compensation that is just as significant.

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DIFERENCE 4: THE TEST OF EMOTION

The principle of cost, organisation leaders need to go deeper into the heart of many broken relationships – in the workplace and at home. The point is not the money itself but the accompanying emotions. Do I place all my hopes and security in who I am at the expense of rich relationships?

The need “financial freedom” is somewhat an oxymoron because serving money alone does not result in freedom – it is, in fact, brings about the opposite – a bondage to a neverland. Also, those who focus on monetary gains alone are not free to serve others because there is this constant anxiety of protecting the assets and the necessities that the wealth might one day be lost.

First and foremost, you need to stop the process of reshuffling what is shared in this article to avoid any misinterpretation. Focus on the organisational standpoint, this particular challenge is that there is a restructuring and reorientation associated. When there is no such structure, as with the child, a Culture of safety is lost.

DIFERENCE 5: THE TEST OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

If you want to start a new movement, tell people what you are doing and why. The business of selflessness is a business of match-making between values and people, so the question is: how can we be more selfless, but rather it should be “How can I love more?”

THE NATURE OF WORK

Love is the visible mock-up cheque or the unseen one to action? Even in charitable acts, there is the visible mock-up cheque or the unseen one to action? Even in charitable acts, there is the motivation not to give in and ensure that he or she wins the race – not in the spirit of arrogance but for the sake of the child’s long-term character growth.

Love, authentic and real, is by the courage to tell the truth.

The opposite of selflessness is not selfishness, it is love. So, the question is not: how can we be more selfless, but rather it should be “How can I love more?”

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THE BUSINESS CASE FOR EXPRESSING GRATITUDE

TRANSFORMATIVE EFFECTS OF APPRECIATION THAT YOU MIGHT NOT HAVE REALISED

By DAVID KAHN
editor@leaderonomics.com

It is the end of the year and a special time – it’s a chance to take stock of all we’ve accomplished and look ahead to all we need to get done in the year to come. Between these introspections, it’s important to both feel and express our gratitude to those who have helped us get where we are.

This may sound like an idealistic, “aw shucks” sentiment, but researchers have dedicated a great deal of time to studying gratitude over the last few years. Their findings show the many benefits both for individuals and for organisations. Here are a few recent studies that will improve your workplace and make you a better, more appreciative leader.

SELF-ESTEEM

Gratitude reduces social comparisons. This allows us to appreciate others’ accomplishments and feel less resentful, which is a key factor in self-esteem. A study in the Journal of Applied Sport Psychology found that athletes who expressed higher levels of gratitude toward their coaches had more self-esteem than those who weren’t as openly thankful. And the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology reported that people with neuromuscular diseases who kept a “gratitude journal” had a greater sense of well-being and more positive moods.

MENTAL STRENGTH

The ability to recognise what you are thankful for, especially during traumatic events, fosters emotional buoyancy. It helps you bounce back quicker and maintain an optimistic outlook. A study in Behaviour Research and Therapy found that veterans who experienced higher levels of gratitude were more resilient, more willing to forgive others, and less likely to experience post-traumatic stress. Similarly, a study in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology found that gratitude was a major contributor to resilience following terrorist attacks.

RELATIONSHIPS

Displaying gratitude is more than just being polite; it can help you build your network. A study published in Emotion found that thanking a new acquaintance makes them more likely to seek an ongoing relationship and has an increased potential for a “high-quality social bond.” This display of gratitude can be as simple as saying “thank you” or writing a short note. In addition, a slightly older study from Cognition & Emotion shows that gratitude promotes social affiliation and strengthens relationships, which is helpful when facilitating teamwork and group activities.

TEAMWORK

People who express gratitude are more likely to engage in “pro-social” behaviour. Research in Social Psychological and Personality Science found that “gratitude motivates people to express sensitivity and concern for others.” These individuals display significantly greater empathy and sensitivity. They are also less likely to retaliate against others, even when given negative feedback. Another study found that people who express more gratitude are more likely to help others, a key ingredient when working with a team.

Still not convinced that your organisation needs a boost of gratitude?

- Gratitude reduces turnover, fosters employees’ organisational commitment, and aids in “eliminating the toxic workplace emotions, attitudes and negative emotions such as envy, anger, and greed.” (International Business Research)
- Gratitude positively influences the relationship between managers and their direct reports, affecting subordinates’ “sense of feeling trusted, improved performance, and overall satisfaction.” (Journal of Psychological Science)
- Individuals who feel more grateful demonstrate greater patience and delay making hasty decisions. (Psychological Science)
- More gratitude leads to increased loyalty from employees and clients. (Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology)
- Daily gratitude exercises result in higher levels of alertness, enthusiasm, determination, and energy. (Journal of Personality and Social Psychology)

To be a more influential leader, be a more thankful leader. Find reasons to show appreciation to your team. It’s inspiring, motivating, and as per the numerous research, it is good for business. To kick off this new initiative, start the holiday season with a gratitude list. If you feel it’s making a difference, keep it going through the new year. It is cheaper than buying everyone a fruitcake and its positive effects will last much longer.

By JOHN FEATHERBY
editor@leaderonomics.com

I like that we give at Christmas, although it’s only a recent development. But it feels fraudulent. I cringe when the e-mail goes out “announcing” our gift. The company doesn’t particularly care for the employees or the people we engage with daily. If I was in need they wouldn’t help. So, although I think the people we engage with daily. If I was in need – perhaps desperately so. Don’t be cheaper than buying everyone a fruitcake and its positive effects will last much longer.

CHRISTMAS GIVING OR CHRISTMAS TOXIN?

SEEKING INTEGRITY IN OUR CORPORATE GIVING

By JOHN FEATHERBY
editor@leaderonomics.com

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As an exercise, ask yourself these questions: “If we discounted everything we gave to registered charities this year, what remains to demonstrate we’re a considerable, compassionate business?” What stories can we collate? Where have we intervened? Who have we sacrificed for? Where have we gone the extra mile? Who is on our radar for next year? What team is investing time in?

At any given time, someone, somewhere in your ranks or in your chain of relationships is in need – perhaps desperately so. Don’t be fooled by size – the largest of organisations can be the loneliest: so much noise, so little listening.

If you recognise a problem, use your Christmas giving as a launch-pad. See it as the start of your most compassionate year yet, not the end of a year of misalignment.

Because if you do, next year your giving will not be a toxin, but a joyous expression of who you are as a business. That is something your people will want to get behind.

John is the founder of UK BCorp, a non-profit organisation dedicated to using the power of business to solve social and environmental problems. To engage with him, e-mail us at editor@leaderonomics.com.
By DANIEL H. PINK
editor@leaderonomics.com

E
ter in a recent discussion about books. We talked about how many people feel that reading a book is a selfish act, and whether reading a book is truly giving to others. We then discussed whether reading a book is a form of giving or not. We also talked about how giving back to others is a way to create meaning in life. We talked about the importance of giving back to others and the benefits of doing so.

EMPLEYES are often asked to support a charity adopted by the company's executive. It can be an opportunity for employees to become more engaged with the community. It can also be an opportunity for employees to learn more about a cause that matters to them.

In addition, when members of your team give from the heart, contribution amounts may soar. Here are suggestions aimed at engendering meaningful community participation.

1. Let employees take the wheel.
   - Let a meaningful portion of the company's community activities be employee-driven. This would be for the whole spectrum of endeavours, including any work with charities, youth sports, religious activities or fun runs.

2. Involve staff in your outreach efforts.
   - In turn, let employees take the wheel and lead company outreach efforts. For example, if you're passionate about the work of a local food bank, donate generously and invite your employees to do the same.

3. Be active.
   - Look for opportunities to integrate giving into your everyday life. For example, you could volunteer at a homeless shelter or contribute to a local school.

4. Switch things around.
   - If you enjoy donating to a certain organisation on a regular basis, keep on doing so. Continuity can instill pride and ownership.

5. Empower others to give.
   - Let employees take the lead in giving and empowering them to make a difference.

By BRIAN FIELKOW
editor@leaderonomics.com

MEANINGFUL CHARITABLE GIVING OR EMPTY RITUAL?

1. Employees are often asked to support a charity adopted by the company's executive. It can be an opportunity for employees to become more engaged with the community. It can also be an opportunity for employees to learn more about a cause that matters to them.

2. In addition, when members of your team give from the heart, contribution amounts may soar. Here are suggestions aimed at engendering meaningful community participation.

3. Corporate culture and management adviser Brian Fielkow is the author of Driving to Perfection: Achieving Business Excellence by Creating a Vibrant Culture, a how-to book based on his 25 years of executive leadership experience at public and privately held companies. He is also owner and president of a logistics company in Houston. For more leadership insights, visit www.leaderonomics.com.

4. The key is to look for ways that other people see you as a giver, taker, or matcher. If you visit www.giveworkand.org and answer a few questions for readers, you can rate yourself and ask others to evaluate you anonymously.

5. If you decide to give in the direction your favourite strategy is what one of America's top networkers calls the five-minute favour. The key is to look for ways that other people see you as a giver, taker, or matcher. If you visit www.giveworkand.org and answer a few questions for readers, you can rate yourself and ask others to evaluate you anonymously.

6. Grant's book (available via Amazon, Barnes&Noble.com, and other retailers) is a must-read for anyone who wants to challenge you to follow a different path in giving.

7. When it comes to your community work, I encourage you to follow a different path in giving. It's not about giving to people in need. It's about giving to others in need. It's about giving to others who need it.

8. Empower others to give.
   - Let employees take the lead in giving and empowering them to make a difference.

9. Here are suggestions aimed at engendering meaningful community participation.

10. Employees are often asked to support a charity adopted by the company's executive. It can be an opportunity for employees to become more engaged with the community. It can also be an opportunity for employees to learn more about a cause that matters to them.
10 HABITS OF GENUINELY GIVING PEOPLE

By JEFF HADEN
editor@leaderonomics.com

THINK about people you truly respect. Think about people you truly admire. Think about people you love to be around. Love to be around them – and you would love to be more like them. So what sets them apart from everyone else?

They give: generously, selflessly, and without expectation of return. They give because their happiness comes from seeing other people be happy. They give because their success comes from seeing other people succeed. Here’s how:

1. THEY GIVE THE GIFT OF PRAISE
Everyone, even relatively poor performers, does something well. That’s why everyone deserves praise and appreciation. It’s easy for most of us to recognise great employees; after all, they do great things. (Of course it’s very possible that consistent praise is one of the reasons they’ve become great.)

Relating few of us work hard to find reasons – and ways – to praise the person who simply meets standards. They know that a few words of recognition especially when that recognition is given in public, could just be the nudge that inspires a good performer to become a great performer.

Exceptionally giving people often see the good in another person before that person sees it in herself, providing a spark that just might help her reach her true potential.

2. THEY GIVE THE GIFT (AND IT’S A GIFT) OF ASKING FOR HELP
When you ask for help, several things happen. You implicitly show you respect the person giving the advice. You show respect that person’s experience, skill, and insight. And you show you trust that person, since by asking for help you’ve automatically made yourself vulnerable.

While it’s relatively easy to ask for help, it’s harder to ask for help when the assistance is personal.

I once went to a meeting to talk about layoffs; by the time I got back to the plant, word had already spread that cuts were coming. One of my employees said, “So, layoffs, huh?” I didn’t have to confirm it, he knew I said, “I have no idea what to tell our employees. What would you say?”

He thought and said, “Just tell everyone you tried. Then talk about where we go from here.” Simple? Sure, but powerful too. He later told me how much it meant to him that I had asked for his opinion and taken his advice.

Unfortunately life, I didn’t do it often enough. Genuinely giving people frequently ask for help, in part because they realise the person who provides that help receives a lot in return in terms of self-respect, self-esteem, and self-worth.

They receive one of the greatest gifts of all: knowing they made a difference in someone else’s life.

3. THEY GIVE THE GIFT OF PATIENCE
For some people, we’re willing to give our all. Why? They care about us, they believe in us, and we don’t want to let them down. Showing patience is an extraordinary way to let people know we truly care about them. Showing patience and expressing genuine confidence is an extraordinary way to let people know we truly believe in them.

Showing patience is a wonderful gift – because, ultimately, it shows how much you care.

4. THEY GIVE THE GIFT OF PRIVACY
Everyone shares. Everyone likes and tweets. Lives have increasingly become open books. Gradually, we’ve started to feel we have a right to know more about others than we ever did.

Sometimes we don’t need to know a right to know. Often we don’t have a right to know. Often the best gift we can give is the gift of privacy, of not asking, not prying – yet always being available if and when another person does want or need to share.

Truly giving people not only respect another person’s privacy, they help them guard their privacy – because they know it’s not necessary to know in order to care.

5. THEY GIVE THE GIFT OF OPPORTUNITY
Every job has the potential to lead to greater things. Every person has the potential, both professionally and personally, to accomplish greater things.

The best bosses take the time to develop employees for the job they someday hope to land, even if that job is with another company. The best friends take the time to help other people find and seize opportunities.

Many people have the ability to feel another person’s pain and help them work through that pain. A few, a special few, have the ability to feel another person’s dreams and help them work towards achieving those dreams – and to help open doors that might otherwise have remained closed.

6. THEY GIVE THE GIFT OF SINCERITY
Lip service is easy to pay. Professionalism is easy to display. Much more rare are the people who can be highly professional yet also openly human. They’re willing to show sincere excitement when things go well. They’re willing to show sincere appreciation for hard work and extra effort. They’re willing to show sincere disappointment – not in others, though, in themselves. (They openly celebrate. They openly empathise. They openly worry.

In short, they’re openly human (even if they’re bosses).

They openly love to be around. They openly respect. Think about people you truly care about. They openly believe in us, and we don’t want to let them down. Showing patience is an extraordinary way to let people know we truly care about them. Showing patience and expressing genuine confidence is an extraordinary way to let people know we truly believe in them.

Showing patience is a wonderful gift – because, ultimately, it shows how much you care.

7. THEY GIVE THE GIFT OF TOUGH LOVE
I’m not perfect. You’re not perfect. We all want to be better than we are. Yet we all fall into habits and patterns and develop blind spots. That’s why we all need advice, guidance, and sometimes a swift kick in the pants.

It’s relatively easy to provide feedback during evaluations. It’s relatively easy to make one-off comments. It’s a lot tougher to sit someone down and say, “I know you’re capable of a lot more… and I can help you.”

Think about a time when someone told you what you least wanted to hear and yet most needed to hear. You’ve never forgotten that moment. It changed you. (And it changed that person.)

Go change someone else’s life.

8. THEY GIVE THE GIFT OF RESPECT
Some employees aren’t outstanding. Some are far from it. They aren’t as smart. They don’t work as hard. They make bigger mistakes. (Some employees ultimately deserve to be let go.)

Still, regardless of their level of performance, all employees deserve to be treated with respect. Sarcasm, eye rolling, and biting comments all chip away at a person’s self-respect.

Truly giving people allows others to maintain a sense of dignity even in the worst of circumstances.

After all, I may have the right to fire you but I never have the right to demean or humiliates you.

9. THEY GIVE THE GIFT OF FREEDOM
There often is a best practice, so most leaders implement and enforce processes and procedures.

For employees, though, engagement and satisfaction are largely based on autonomy and independence. You care the most when it’s yours.” You care the most when you feel you have the responsibility and authority to do what is right. Great bosses create standards and guidelines but then give employees the autonomy and independence to work the way they work best within those guidelines. They allow employees to turn “have to” into “want to” which transforms what was just work into something much more meaningful: an outward expression of each person’s unique skills, talents, and experiences.

10. THEY GIVE THE GIFT OF PURPOSE
Fulfillment is often found in becoming a part of something bigger. We all love to feel that special sense of teamwork and togetherness that turns a task into a quest, that turns a group of individuals into a real team.

Anyone can write mission statements. Much tougher is creating a mission that makes a real impact. Even tougher is showing other people how what they do affects their customers, their business, their community and themselves.

Giving employees the gift of caring – along with the gift of knowing why to care...
3 WAYS VOLUNTEERING DEVELOPS LEADERSHIP

1 YOU LEARN A LOT. QUICKLY
When I was involved in a new local radio station, I bought my media and PR skills to the table. Every volunteer has their set of strengths... but invariably, new skills are picked up along the way. From others' expertise, I learnt about funding applications, administration, event management, radio production, on-air presenting, basic finance, and how to make several types of tea!

2 YOU BUILD CONFIDENCE – AND PASSION
Having spent my career as a journalist, and advising others what to say, the idea of presenting a radio show terrified me. It wasn't so much the presenting itself, but simultaneously juggling all other associated skills – it's a tough gig! After a while though, I began to grow in confidence and presenting became second-nature.

3 YOU BUILD A NETWORK AND SOLID CONNECTIONS
When volunteering, you meet a number of people who are able to offer unique insights and help you expand your existing skills and knowledge base. Networking and building relationships is a key leadership trait and even if, like me, you prefer back-seat roles, having a few key connections and relationships can nevertheless be enormously beneficial.

LEADERSHIP IN VOLUNTEERING

HONING LEADERSHIP QUALITIES BY DOING GOOD

By SANDY CLARKE

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NE of the great things about Malaysia – besides not caring about the weather, and the awe-inspiring Olympic athletes – is the desire of the nation’s people to help others whenever and however they can.

The qualities that struck me the most when I first visited the country in 2011 was the generous hospitality of Malaysians, the enduring commitment to family values, and the strong community spirit that exists here.

Moving here in 2015, I soon became aware of some of the social issues that cause many people to face problems through no fault of their own, which is sadly something that exists everywhere. But I was also inspired by the amount of work that goes on to help alleviate the plight of those who struggle to help themselves, and by the care and determination that goes into offering a helping hand to our fellow human beings.

And this is where the sense of community thrives, in the recognition that by lifting other people up, we meet them eye-to-eye and help them to rise even further. There’s also the humbling realisation that it’s purely by the grace we have received that we’re in the fortunate position to help others, and therefore we should. It could so easily have been ourselves looking for the outstretched hand of support and compassion.

_MULTIPLIER EFFECT OF HELP

As someone who has been involved in volunteer initiatives, I know first-hand just how much of a difference it can make to people when they receive the support and services that offer them much-needed help. At the same time, I also know very well the numerous benefits that come to the person who volunteers their time, skills and resources.

There’s something about giving in a direct way that not only facilitates a connection between ourselves and the other: those we help also help us in turn by offering a way for us to reconnect with ourselves, to remind us of our core values, of what’s important to us, and to have a deep sense of gratitude for blessings we so often fail to count.

Of the many fantastic initiatives that exist here in Malaysia, I was inspired by one that describes itself as “a match-maker of goodwill” – such a wonderful goal, and one that’s much needed in a world that seems to be constantly battered by division and mistrust. Of course, it’s the bad news that sells – but there is a wealth of good that goes on, and truckloads of good deeds are carried out every day here in Malaysia.

HELP YOURSELF GROW TOO

As well as the many benefits that come with helping others, volunteering is perhaps most valuable in terms of allowing those who volunteer to develop wide-ranging skills, build confidence, and learn to thrive outside their comfort zones. In a nutshell, those who volunteer inadvertently develop leadership qualities within themselves, and the more benevolent and resourceful leader a country has, the better its chances to thrive for generations to come.

Having worked as a political press officer for many years, I once heard a common refrain from people who were desperate to see change within their communities and across the wider society. It would go something like this. “Someone should really do something – we need to strengthen our ties in the community,” or, “Why doesn’t somebody do something to change things around here – there’s so much potential.”

While it’s right that people should expect their representatives and key community figures to roll up their sleeves to help others, after sympathising with people’s concerns I usually ask, “Why don’t you be that someone?” It seemed that a lot of people didn’t even consider that they could be the ones to make the difference, that they could create change, that they could help others. After all, people in communities know the needs of their communities better than anyone else.

FIRST STEPS NEED NOT BE BIG STEPS

Quite often, there’s a misconception that in order to effect change, a person needs to be a Martin Luther King Jr or a Mother Teresa – in other words, if it’s not a big change, it’s not significant enough to make the effort. On the contrary, the likes of Mother Teresa and Martin Luther King created major changes through small acts of change that added up over time. These were people just like anybody else, and any one of us are just as capable of creating the kind of change we want to see in the world.

It starts wherever we are, in our streets and communities, churches, mosques and temples, community halls, schools and universities. There is always so much to do that, sometimes, it can seem a little overwhelming to know where to begin. But when one person is helped, he or she in turn may be able to help five more, and those five might each help 10 more, and on it goes – all because we decided to give something back and help others to unlock their own potential so that they might help others in turn.

Whether you have a lot of time to spare or a little, it all adds up to making a worthwhile dent in the difficulties and suffering that are experienced daily.

Many of us can be found talking a lot about the need for change, and I’ve been on both sides of the fence to know that shouting at the politicians, authorities and figureheads of institutions serves only to widen divisions and encourage hoarse throats.

If we wish to help others through positive social change, we shouldn’t forget that, along with the rights we enjoy, there are responsibilities we are each expected to uphold if a civilised and fair society is to thrive.

In volunteering our services, we offer a very valuable gift: our time and consideration to others. In reflecting on this, I’m reminded of St Francis’s instruction to his brothers – “preach by your deeds” – and of John F. Kennedy’s plea that we should, “Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country.”
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