The Power of Giving

AZIM JAMAL

HARVEY MCKINNON

“Extremely impressive...very inspiring”

DR. WAYNE DYER

JAICO
The Power of Giving

Corporate Sufi

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PRAISE FOR BOOKS
by Azim Jamal

The Power of Giving (co-authored with Harvey McKinnon)

“Extremely impressive...very inspiring”
Dr. Wayne Dyer best-selling author of The Power of Intention

“The Power of Giving is a must-read. Profit from reading it. Give it to everyone you love.”
Jack Canfield, author of the best seller The Success Principles(TM) and co-author of the “Chicken Soup for the Soul” series

“We’ve needed a book like this for a long time. Now it’s your turn to help. Buy it, share it, download, buy a copy for a friend. This book could change everything.”
Seth Godin, author of Unleashing the Ideavirus, Purple Cow

“What a wonderful book! Most books I want to gobble up in one or a couple of sittings. But this one is so rich, each page so loaded with treasure, I want to dip into it and drink a sip at a time, over and over. A book to cherish.”
John David Mann, coauthor of The Go-Giver

“Those who refresh others are themselves refreshed, and with this news we can all join a chorus and sing praises for this inspiring book!”
Stephen Post, author of Why Good Things Happen to Good People
We dedicate this book to all those who give — of time, of wisdom, of wealth, and of love.

And to our families, for the joy you give us:

Azim: Farzana, Sahar, Tawfiq
Harvey: Marcia, James, Ian
Acknowledgments

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We will give away a portion of our authors’ profits from book sales to charities through the highly respected Tides Foundation (U.S.) and Tides Canada Foundation. So our sincere thanks to Tim Draimin and all the folks at Tides for their great work. Two other friends whose lifelong commitment to philanthropy deserves special recognition are Carol Newell and Joel Solomon. Many thanks for all that you do. You are an inspiration.

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Thank you all
In late December 2004, a natural disaster precipitated the largest humanitarian aid operation in history. The South Asian tsunami killed hundreds of thousands of people and left more than a million others homeless. The disaster ripped families apart. Children lost their parents, parents lost their children. In some families, only one person survived.

The shocking power of nature and the devastation of the tsunami caused another incredible reaction: a worldwide desire to help the survivors. Hundreds of thousands of people living in the affected countries fed their neighbors, gave them shelter, and comforted them in their grief. Foreign visitors ended their beach holidays as volunteers, picking up corpses and trying to help identify the dead.

Across the world, tens of millions of individuals responded to the tragedy by sending immediate donations to aid agencies. Governments responded to their citizens and contributed massive aid for reconstruction. The world pledged $8.5 billion.

You may have made a donation yourself. More than half the citizens of many countries sent a gift. The generous global response made a positive, life-changing difference for many people.

The generosity in response to the tsunami shows how easy it is to give from the heart.
In the world today there are many “disasters” that will kill many more people than the tsunami — they just aren’t as graphic, immediate, or as easy to present on TV. Often there isn’t the local angle to drive media coverage, and the locations are more remote and often dangerous for foreign media. Ethnic cleansing in Darfur, Sudan; the HIV/AIDS crisis; and preventable infant mortality are all disasters in which countless people will die. And yet each of these tragedies has inspired dedicated, courageous people to try and save lives. Like those in the tsunami-affected areas, the unknown victims of war and disease need and deserve our compassion. And we urge you to continue to expand your generosity to include them if at all possible.

You’ll see in this book that we focus on a person’s individual motivations and actions. So in effect, this book was actually written for you. We hope it reads a bit like a conversation. That it feels like we were in a room with you, perhaps drinking tea (strong coffee for Harvey), having a chat about life, about your contribution, and your future. Together we will have some laughs, share ideas, feel inspired by each other, each of us learning something from one another, like good friends do. And all three of us will come out of the room feeling better about ourselves and our world. Inspired to give more. That’s because each of us has the power and opportunity to change our own lives. And in the process, we will contribute to improving our own and other lives as well. There’s one chapter in our book that you may feel has a slightly different focus than the others. It’s Chapter Five, and it’s about your workplace. At the last minute, we decided to add this chapter on corporate giving. Why? Well, most of us spend a significant portion of our lives working, perhaps, one third of our waking hours. The majority of people work at corporations. And we believe a person can have an enormous impact in their workplace, when they apply the ideas and principles outlined in this book. In effect, when you bring these principles to work, you will promote a healthier culture, balance and make a greater contribution to your community.
An article, “Doing good deeds can improve health, make you happier, scientists suggest” by Erin Anderssen, in the Globe and Mail, describes a series of studies supporting our belief that giving also benefits the giver:

- One study revealed that people who exhibit higher levels of altruism get a “helper’s high,” a release of endorphins. This high can “give the immune system a boost, speed recovery from surgery and cut down on those restless nights.”
- Thanks to new brain-scan technology, scientists have also discovered evidence that humans are “hard wired” to take care of and help each other.
- A Florida study of people with AIDS showed that those who volunteered to help others were likely to live longer than those who did not.
- A British poll of volunteers found that half of those surveyed claimed that their health had improved while they were volunteering. Twenty percent of them claimed they lost weight, too, which is a higher success rate than any diet we know. Maybe our next book will be a diet book — although maybe this book is actually a diet book and we don’t know it. Let us know if you lose weight after volunteering.

We have said for a long time that over the years more research will be conducted on volunteerism, altruism and giving. We are confident that the research will overwhelmingly confirm that giving works both ways: that the recipients benefit, as do the donors. And that is good news for all of us. Being generous in spirit and deed is a great comfort to the soul. Whatever we may “lose” in the moment of giving, whether it is time, money, or opportunities, will be more than matched by all we gain. We believe the gains are immense and longer lasting. They include deeper friendships, teaching others generosity, greater personal integrity, a sense of freedom, joy and even love. As Piero Ferrucci says so eloquently “Being kind is the simplest way to become who we really are.”

When you work on developing your giving skills it will benefit your family, your community and yourself. We urge you to share the ideas, and stories in this book, (including copies of the book) as well as your own experiences in giving.
Together, we believe we can build a more caring world.

Thank you.

Harvey and Azim
Introduction

We live in a world of violence, human suffering, and environmental destruction. What can we, as caring beings, do to help heal the wounds of others and reduce their pain? What can we do to heal our personal wounds and diminish our own suffering?

We can give. Everyone has something to give, be it time, money, wisdom, love, or a variety of other things.

We can accomplish miracles through our giving. Giving ideas, skills, and resources can dramatically improve the world we live in. Whatever our circumstances, we can have a positive influence on other lives. Have you ever heard the saying, “We may only be one person in the world. But we may be the world to one person”? Each of us, if we choose, can give hope, love, and healing. And the first person you need to give to might even be yourself.

We believe that giving is a fundamental human need — one that benefits both the recipients of the gift and the giver. While we are alive, giving fulfills us and taps into our innate gifts. The positive impact of giving remains long after we die, as we live on in the memories and good feelings of our friends, family, and community. All else is forgotten.

If you ever think your giving won’t make a difference, please remember Carlie. When she was three, Carlie was a perfectly healthy child. Then one day she came down with a bad fever. Her parents, Russ and Lynette, took her to the hospital, only to discover every parent’s nightmare. Carlie had cancer.

As the cancer treatment started, all her parents could do was pray. Then, near the end of her 10 months of chemotherapy, Carlie’s grandmother gave her a surprise. She asked the Make-A-Wish Foundation to grant Carlie’s dream wish. The largest wish-granting organization in the world, with affiliates in 22 countries, the Make-A-Wish Foundation exists for one purpose: to fulfill the special wishes of children who have been diagnosed with life-threatening illnesses.

Three weeks before Carlie received her dream wish, which was to go to Sea World, she came down with pneumonia and influenza. Six days later, Carlie was
in a coma. The doctors told Russ and Lynette that she had a 20 percent chance of living. Carlie grew worse. After 17 days in a coma, she had lost 98 percent of her lung capacity. She was paralyzed, with 13 tubes in her tiny body. The doctors told her parents she would not live through the weekend. Russ later recalled, “I don’t know if you can imagine how horrible it was to hear this news. Our baby was dying.”
The nurses, who had been told to say goodbye to Carlie on Friday at the end of their shift, were shocked to see Russ still there on Monday morning. But a miracle had happened. Carlie had regained consciousness. She had lost half her body weight — but she was alive. Just 12 days later, Carlie was carried onto a plane to fly to Sea World. She was going to get her wish to swim with dolphins. When Carlie returned after two weeks, she had the strength to run into her grandmother’s arms. Carlie’s recovery was amazing.
Today, five years later, Carlie is a healthy and energetic child. Russ understandably believes he is one of the luckiest people on earth. He feels that his dying child was given life, and he says, “I believe it’s because she wanted her wish so badly that she came back from heaven to get it. When you’re as sick as Carlie was, the only thing that could get you out of bed is a dream — something you desperately wish for.
“I know we were lucky. I know that many kids won’t get a chance to live long lives. But they can have their most cherished wish fulfilled. And as a parent who almost lost a child, I can tell you that you will be giving a wonderful — and very important — gift.”
Carlie’s wish was granted because approximately 170 generous donors sent money to the Make-A-Wish Foundation. They had never met Carlie. They gave without knowing her story, hoping only to help a sick child, and they gave a gift of life. Now Russ and his wife are giving back by volunteering for Make-A-Wish. They also regularly share their story of the power of giving — to help raise more money for more children.
Carlie’s story shows you have the power to give happiness and perhaps even life to children in your own community or thousands of miles away. It only takes the power of your will and your heart.
There are many more — millions more — stories of life-changing gifts that people have generously given to others. Some involve money, others time; all involve compassion and love.

In this book, we hope to inspire you to start giving or to increase what you already give, for we truly believe that you, as well as others, will benefit greatly.

**The Power of Giving**

Giving creates a symbiotic relationship; it benefits both parties. The recipients benefit from your gift. And you benefit personally by virtue of having been a giver. Sometimes it is easy to see the immediate benefits to those you help. Other times, the ultimate benefits of your action may occur many years in the future. It could be that your gift helps the sick, funds a project for your favorite charity, or helps a child learn something valuable. Whatever your gift, your time, money, or effort will have a positive impact.

The other side of the equation is the benefits to you. They may be visible and immediate, or they may be intangible and delayed. You may not even recognize them as benefits. You may gain a tax deduction. You may feel great about your ability to help. You may receive heartfelt thanks. You may see the preservation of something you believe in or change in an area where you have been seeking it. Whatever form the benefits take, giving brings meaning to your life. When you give, you have a chance to make an incredible impact during and often beyond your life. And when you give without expecting a return, you reap even more benefits.

Our personal experience has been that the more we give, the more excitement, energy, and pleasure we derive from our lives. When individuals give, they take important steps on the road to achieving their personal potential — all the while improving the world through their actions.
Why We Wrote this Book

Both of us have been lucky to receive many opportunities to give, which we consider a blessing. In our many years of service we have experienced growth, joy, abundance, and the power of giving.

For the past 25 years, Azim has spent an average of 20 hours a week in voluntary work. He has been the chair of many volunteer organizations, ranging from social welfare boards to youth organizations. He has traveled extensively to Africa, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, the USA, and Asia on assignments for these organizations. He has had many opportunities to serve in war-torn and disaster-stricken places, including helping Afghan refugees in Pakistan. Before Azim became a professional speaker, he gave several hundred inspirational talks around the world in a voluntary capacity, talking about “life balance,” which included the power of giving.

Azim learned to serve from his parents and grandparents. As far back as he can remember he saw them give tirelessly of their time, money, and wisdom to one and all. They did it with a great sense of humility and gratitude that came naturally to them. This left an indelible impression on Azim.

Harvey has worked on “giving issues” for more than 30 years and has been a volunteer with dozens of nonprofits during that time. He’s done everything from stuffing envelopes and cleaning dishes to sitting on national boards of some of the largest global nonprofits. He decided decades ago to dedicate his skills to nonprofits that work on social justice issues, environmental protection, and helping people live better lives. He also donates to many causes and shares his ideas and his time with people working to build better and more caring communities. He has studied giving and has trained thousands of staff people and volunteers from nonprofits active in more than 50 countries.

One of the reasons we became authors and trainers is that we both love learning, acquiring knowledge, and passing it on to others when we think it will help them. We are what Malcolm Gladwell describes, in his book *The Tipping Point*, as “mavens,” people who absorb information and feel compelled to share it with others. This can have an obnoxious side. Looking back, we both see times in our youth when we were certain that our analysis and experiences were the only way
and, of course, we shared them with everyone we met. The arrogance of youth became somewhat tempered as we hit the 50-year mark. Today we are both wiser and more willing to admit that we make mistakes and that we still have lots to learn. However, we retain the energy and enthusiasm for passing on to others the knowledge that we hope will be helpful. We both have received fantastic benefits from the power of giving, so we wanted to share our experience with others. We felt that by working together, the resulting synergy would produce a book that would make a difference in the world. We want to:

- share with you the importance and the power of giving;
- highlight that even a small amount of regular giving can significantly improve your relationships, productivity, and happiness;
- show you how to have a greater impact with your giving;
- show that most people can give a little more and that there are enormous benefits when they do so; and
- emphasize that if everyone gave a little more, our world would be a more peaceful, healthier, and happier place.

**Who Should Read this Book?**

At the risk of sounding overambitious, we believe that everyone should read this book. Even if you aren’t wealthy, you surely have time, skills, knowledge, or other possessions that you can give to others. We hope *The Power of Giving* will inspire all readers, from the person who currently gives a lot to the person who gives nothing. We want to reassure people who already give a lot that, even though at times they may feel frustrated, their giving is still noticed and rewarded. We encourage these people to balance their lives, to learn to receive as well as give, and to give to their families, the less privileged, and, of course, themselves. We hope to inspire those people who currently give nothing to begin the journey of giving by showing them how this process creates a ripple effect that will return many benefits to them — benefits ranging from inner happiness to the chance to achieve their true potential.
How this Book Is Organized

As we worked on this book, it seemed to flow naturally from the sometimes abstract benefits of giving to the nitty-gritty detail of deciding how much to give and who to give it to.
In Chapter One we explain why you should give, showing the benefits you and others receive from it.
Our second chapter focuses on what you can give, whether it is tangible items like time and money, or less concrete gifts like love, hope, or leadership.
In the third chapter we discuss who you can give to — yourself, your family, and your community or a broader target, like refugees on another continent or the entire planet.
Our fourth chapter focuses on how, when, where, and how much you can give.
This chapter includes discussions on giving in hardship, tithing, and how to plan your giving.
Finally, we end the book with a chapter on “giving up” and a request that you personally promote giving among your friends and community.

How You Can Use this Book

We encourage you to read the book cover to cover, highlighting areas that you want to spend more time on.
Also, we suggest you read a page or two at random every night before you go to sleep and first thing in the morning (a few minutes per day). This random reading starts your day with uplifting thoughts that sit in your subconscious mind as you go about your day.

Our Gift to You

We hope that this book will help you become a better giver — more generous, more strategic — and that you in turn will help others to become better givers, too. We believe that if we can encourage and motivate more people to give others
their time, knowledge, resources, and kindness, our world will be a more peaceful and happier place.
We hope we can inspire you to become more involved in your community and to be more generous with your time and money. We hope you’ll be one of those special people who make a major difference, whether to one life or to many. This book is our gift to you and to all those who read it.
Chapter One — Why Give?

There’s no denying that life in the 21st century is demanding. There never seems to be enough time to do all the things that need to be done: keep up with work or studies, spend time with family, earn enough money to pay the rent and buy necessities. With so many challenges to cope with, you may ask yourself, “Why should I expend any effort in giving?” or “I’m already scrambling to deal with all the demands and pressures on me. How will I find time and resources to give more?” or “No one gives to me, so why should I give to others?”

In this chapter we hope to show you that no matter what your circumstances in life, you have the ability to give. As well, giving is good for you. It provides the following benefits:

- It can make a positive difference to others.
- There are emotional, physical, and even financial benefits to you.
- It can help you achieve your full potential.
- It can bring you more meaning, fulfillment, and happiness.

Gifts Were Given to You

Probably the biggest gift you will ever receive is the huge investment your parents made in you. But they are not the only ones who gave to you. During the course of your life you have received many things from other people — teachers, relatives, strangers. Schools and hospitals were built with the hard work and tax dollars of those who preceded you. In fact, virtually everything you use in your life has been made by someone else. The peace that you enjoy has been delivered by the sacrifice of others. When you think about it, you know countless people who have made a difference in your life — some negative, some positive. Why not make a decision to have a positive impact on the lives of others, even if they are strangers?
Consider the following statistics:
One out of every four people in the world is starving.
1.5 billion people in the world do not have enough clean water.
At least 200 million people are suffering the horror of war, imprisonment, and/or torture.
Every few seconds a child dies from a preventable disease.
One-seventh of the world’s population is illiterate.
In the US, the world’s richest country, 3 million people are homeless each year.

There are also great needs within your own community. In the face of such need and desperation, you have two choices. You can decide to help others and change lives, or you can decide to do nothing and lose the benefits of giving. But remember, when people come together to tackle a difficult situation, they receive far more than they can ever imagine.

The Benefits of Giving

What are those benefits of giving? Here are some of the things you can gain by making giving a greater part of your life:
New relationships
A feeling of security
Jobs
Good health
A sense of empowerment, pride, and accomplishment
Happiness
  • Peace and love

The paradox is that when you give expecting a reward, you won’t receive one. When you give with joy, selflessness, and love, you benefit greatly. The attitude you bring to your giving will reflect the benefits you gain. Parents share their shelter, food, and love with their children simply because they love them, and not because they seek their love. Ultimately, the rewards are tremendous. Yet if you give money, time, or anything else with an expectation of a return on
investment, you defeat the purpose of giving. This can be a negative lesson: you
gave and you didn’t feel any better. This lack of “emotional reward” can lead to
not wanting to give. Then you lose, as do those you could be helping.

New Relationships

Psychologists who study babies know that they (like all human beings) crave
interaction with other humans. In fact, babies who are not nurtured by their
parents or other caregivers wither emotionally from lack of bonding. Many of
them never recover.
We believe that this is also true of adults. Without stimulating interaction with
others, their souls shrink. Really, it’s only through connecting with other human
beings that you learn about the world, about yourself, and even about your
destiny. After all, other people are a mirror in which you can see yourself. This
interconnection enables you to reach your full potential and to strengthen your
soul.
The Trappist monk Thomas Merton once wrote, “Souls are like athletes who
need opponents worthy of them if they are to be tried and extended and pushed
to the full use of their powers.” That’s an insightful analogy, for just as your
muscles weaken without physical exercise, so does your soul weaken without its
special kinds of exercise. A great exercise for your soul is the practice of giving.
As with physical exercise, the more you do it, the easier it is, and the stronger
you will become.

Reduction of Fears
Giving can also reduce your fears. That’s because giving promotes social
connections, which provide you with greater security.
Do you live in fear of economic disaster? Do you worry about caring for your
parents or getting your children through college? Do you worry about losing
your good health? Do you fear that crime, war, or terrorist attacks will disrupt
the economy and your security? These are legitimate concerns that many people
share. We live in difficult and uncertain times, but are these fears real?
Research shows that people who watch a lot of news on television overestimate the threats to their well-being. Why? Because television focuses on news that makes the world seem like a more dangerous place than it actually is. Afraid of the world that is portrayed on TV, people “cocoon,” staying in their homes with close family, and do not build bonds with their neighbors. Thus they become more vulnerable.

The best way to confront your fears is to begin the process of making a difference. The root causes of “dangers” are often the result of social problems that have been ignored. But you can make a commitment to do what you can to eliminate the conditions that cause the potential crises. By facing your fears and working to change their root causes, you overcome them.

Giving is a key part of this process because giving reduces self-centeredness. It can make you more connected to others, and this connection will reduce fear and isolation. Author Robert Putnam’s massive research project, which culminated in the book *Bowling Alone*, clearly demonstrates the benefits to staying connected with others — for security, health, happiness, and even income.

Have you ever heard of a job opportunity through a personal connection? Have you ever had neighbors help you out during a difficult situation? Has a friend ever cared for your child when you were exhausted?

These are just a few of the benefits that occur when you are connected with other people. The list is endless.

**Good Health**

Academic research demonstrates that giving to others benefits people physically and emotionally. An article in the May 1988 issue of *American Health* magazine described a study in Michigan that showed regular volunteer work increases life expectancy. The study found that men who did no volunteer work were two and a half times more likely to die during the study than men who volunteered at least once a week. The article described other benefits that the researchers measured. Giving, in the form of volunteer work:
• enhances your immune system,
• lowers cholesterol levels,
• strengthens your heart,
• decreases the incidence of chest pains, and
• generally reduces stress.

The world can be a different and better place if, while you are here, you give of yourself. This concept became clear to Azim one day when he was watching television at an airport terminal while waiting for a flight. A priest was sharing a story about newborn twins, one of whom was ill. The twins were in separate incubators, as per hospital rules. A nurse on the floor repeatedly suggested that the twins be kept together in one incubator. The doctors finally agreed to try this. When the twins were brought into contact with each other, the healthy twin immediately put his arms around his sick brother. This instinctive exchange gradually helped the sick twin to recover and regain his health. The babies’ family and the doctors witnessed the intangible force of love and the incredible power of giving.

**Living to Your Potential**

Rumi, a 13th-century Persian mystic, told of a man who walked past a beggar and asked, “Why, God, do you not do something for these people?” God replied, “I did do something. I made you.” When Rumi wrote these words, he was addressing our ability to choose what we do, our ability to reach our potential. Most people use only a tiny portion of their potential, and many never find their true gift or calling in life. They never find a worthwhile cause to support, a cause that really means something to them and makes a difference in their lives. But when you give to others, or give of yourself to meaningful causes, things change. You expect more of yourself. You discover new feelings of self-worth.
Indeed, you begin to tap into your true gifts and talents. And when you do that, you can achieve your full potential as you help yourself and others. Until 1997, Azim was a professional accountant. In 1993 he also became head of his community’s social welfare board, where he volunteered 20 to 25 hours a week. This work led to an invitation to develop a budget for Focus, a humanitarian agency. He accepted the invitation and went to spend several weeks with Afghan refugees in Pakistan. While in Pakistan, Azim saw many things that shook his soul. One in particular was his visit to an Afghan refugee camp, where he heard stories about how the refugees lived through war after war. Fleeing from Afghanistan with only the clothes they wore, a few of them had even seen their fathers being killed in front of their eyes. Some worked 14 hours a day, making only a dollar a day. Azim met Afghan children who were the same age as his own children. It made him think, “What if my children were in this predicament?” He had heard the statement that we are all interconnected, but for the first time he actually felt what this statement meant. As he was riding back to his hotel in a cab, he sobbed like a baby. That night he could not sleep. He tossed and turned, asking himself how he could really help these people. Finally he realized that he would not be able to make a big impact as a professional accountant because he was not passionate about accounting. In this night of grief and pain, he made a decision to pursue his gift of inspirational speaking and writing. That day in the Afghan refugee camp was a life-altering experience for Azim. As Mahatma Gandhi said, “To find yourself, lose yourself in the service of others.” Azim believes that by losing himself in his voluntary work during that trip, he found himself and got closer to achieving his full potential.

**Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs**

Some people claim they can’t give because they haven’t yet achieved a certain level of self-actualization. They may be basing their claim on Abraham Maslow’s famous Hierarchy of Needs. Maslow was a psychologist who studied human
motivation, leading him to create a pyramid showing what people need to be fulfilled. The base of Maslow’s pyramid starts with our core physiological needs: air, water, food, shelter, warmth, sleep, sex, etc. The second level comprises our security needs: protection from the elements, social order, law, etc. The third level includes our social needs: love, family, relationships, work group, etc. The fourth level consists of our ego needs: achievement, reputation, responsibility, independence, prestige, status, etc. Maslow originally placed self-actualization needs at the top of his five-stage model. These needs were satisfied through personal growth, self-fulfillment, and the resolution of personal potential. Later models placed self-actualization as a seventh stage (above two new levels: cognitive needs — knowledge, meaning, and self-awareness — and aesthetic needs — beauty, balance, and form). Others have added an eighth and final level: our spiritual needs, achieved through transcendence and helping others to achieve self-actualization. Maslow believed that needs must be satisfied in the order of the levels he described. He felt that only after a level had been reached could an individual begin to work on meeting the next level of needs.

| [Eighth Level] Spiritual Needs |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| Seventh Level] Self-Actualization |
| [Sixth Level] Aesthetic Needs |
| [Fifth Level] Cognitive Needs |
| [Fourth Level] Ego Needs |
| [Third Level] Social Needs |
| [Second Level] Security Needs |
| [First Level] Physiological Needs |

Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs
While we believe Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs is fundamentally sound, we’ve seen enough positive signs to know that people can aspire to, and meet, some needs above a level they have not fully achieved. For example, it may be that a person struggling at level three (social needs) may discover that through knowledge (level five), he or she can satisfy some of his level three and four social and ego needs.

We also believe every human being deserves the opportunity to reach self-actualization, and to realize his or her potential. Your giving will help you and many other people come closer to their potential. And finally, we believe that self-actualization will not happen unless most, if not all, of the lower levels are achieved. Therefore to reduce violence, promote equality, and increase people’s fulfillment, we believe we should help people to meet their basic physiological and safety needs. With millions of people in the Western world lacking the means to satisfy their basic needs, and more than a billion worldwide living in similar conditions, there is a lot of work to do. As you may know, there is adequate food, water, and resources to support and shelter every human in the world. But the way they are distributed is obviously unequal. When you help others to meet their needs, you increase the likelihood of meeting your own needs.

When you strive to develop Maslow’s self-actualization characteristics (see diagram), you will bring much joy into your life. These characteristics will confer on you more wisdom, stronger relationships, greater compassion, and internal peace. If you achieve self-actualization, you will be able to see situations with more objectivity and clarity. You will see problems as challenges and as growth opportunities. You will not rely on culture and the environment to form your opinions. You will be able to protect your inner values. You will believe in justice. You will be able to embrace and enjoy all races, cultures, faiths, and differences. You will be accepting, understanding, and compassionate. You will be able to laugh at yourself and the human condition. You will seek experiences that are deep, meaningful, and lasting.
We believe that as you become a more generous and thoughtful giver, you will also develop some or all of these gifts.

Finding Meaning, Fulfillment, and Happiness

All people want to achieve meaning, fulfillment, and happiness. However, thousands of years of human history confirm that these things come not from being self-centered, but rather from making a difference and giving happiness to others. Mother Teresa is a famous example. She found fulfillment when she helped change the expression on dying people’s faces from distress and fear to calmness and serenity. By giving herself to others, she made their undeniable pain a little easier to bear.

The Sufi Nasruddin (a Sufi is a Muslim spiritualist and wise person) tells the story of a person who is drowning. People shouted at the man, “Give us your hand so we can save you!” But the man was hesitant. Finally someone said to the man, “Take my hand,” and the man took it. This man was more familiar with taking than giving. He almost died as a result.

If you find yourself feeling unhappy, try making someone else happy and see what happens. If you are feeling empty and unfulfilled, try doing some meaningful and worthwhile work and see how you feel.

The catch is that you must do this work with passion and enthusiasm. If you are not passionate, it is hard to produce good work. You are less likely to feel fulfilled and happy or to believe your work is meaningful. In the end, you will lose energy for the work, leaving you with poor results.

There is a story of an elderly carpenter who was ready to retire. The carpenter told his employer of his plans to leave the house-building business and live a more leisurely life with his wife, enjoying his extended family. The employer was sorry to see his employee go and asked if he would build just one more house as a personal favor to him. The carpenter reluctantly agreed. He did sloppy work and he used inferior materials. It was an unfortunate way to end a dedicated career.

When the carpenter finished his work, the employer came to inspect the house. Then he handed the front-door key to the carpenter. “This is your house,” he
said. “It is my retirement gift to you.” The carpenter was shocked. If he had only
known he was building his own house, he would have done it all so differently.
So it is with all people. Every person builds his or her own house, his or her own
life, a step at a time, often half-heartedly. Then with a shock they realize they
have to live in the house they have built. If they could do it over, they’d do it
differently. But they cannot go back.
You are the carpenter; your life is your building project. When you treat others in
the way you wish to be treated, you are building with love and care. Always do
your best because the choices you make today build your future.
The more you give of yourself, the more you find of yourself
“A rich life,” writes philosopher and theologian Cornel West, “consists
fundamentally of serving others, trying to leave the world a little better than you
found it.” Every one of us can have a rich life if we choose.
If you are wealthy but unable to share your wealth or give of your possessions
and knowledge, you are not really rich. Conversely, if you are not wealthy but
give of your self, your time, and your knowledge, you are indeed quite rich —
and you will receive far more than you can ever imagine.
Mahatma Gandhi once said, “There is always enough for the needy but never
enough for the greedy.” Have you ever noticed how the needy frequently find a
way to be grateful for the very little they have, while the greedy never seem to
have enough?
If you are worth billions of dollars and have no people or causes to give your
money to, what do you do with your money? How many houses can you live in?
How many cars can you drive? How many meals can you eat? And even if you
indulge in all of these things to excess, what do you do with the rest of your
money?
There is a story of a wealthy businessman who never gave anything to anyone. A
tenacious fundraiser approached the man to ask for a gift to a charitable cause,
but the man refused to contribute. After much persuasion, the fundraiser
eventually asked the wealthy man to pick up some good dirt from his garden
and hand it to him as his gift. Wanting to get rid of the fundraiser and knowing
the dirt was free, the man picked it up and gave it to the fundraiser, who then
left. A few days later, the wealthy man, who was now curious, asked the
fundraiser why he had asked for the dirt. The fundraiser explained, “I wanted you to taste the beauty of giving, even though it is only dirt you were giving. Once you taste the beauty of giving something small, you will eventually give something big.”

Of course, it would have helped if the miserly man from our story understood that the more you give, the more you receive. This may sound like a paradox — but it’s true. The more you give of yourself, the more you find of yourself. When you make a positive difference in the lives of others, you make a positive difference in your own life. Giving is a “win-win” proposition.

Author Earl Nightingale tells a story of a man who went to his empty fireplace and said, “Give me heat and I’ll give you the wood.” But giving does not work that way. In fact, giving functions under the universal law of cause and effect. You need to work for the wood before you get the heat. In other words, our rewards will always match and follow our service or, in the words of the Bible, You will always reap what you sow.

“When all is said and done,” says author Og Mandino, “success without happiness is the worst kind of failure.”

How can you find that happiness? It all comes back to giving. If you want to have happiness, you need to give happiness. If you want wealth, you need to give wealth. If you want love, you need to give love. For it is only in giving that you receive. Giving enriches your life with meaning, fulfillment, and happiness. It allows you to unleash your potential and create breakthroughs. In fact, it is a privilege to give. So give of your time, your knowledge, your wisdom, your wealth, and your love — and experience the power and beauty of giving.

**Giving Is a Beautiful Experience**

We want to end this chapter with two stories about the beauty of giving. A kindly stranger had a profound effect on Azim’s cousin, Salim, when he was in hospital a few years ago. Salim was both sick and depressed when one day a woman he didn’t know visited him. She noticed that the flowers in his room were unkempt and asked Salim, “Do you mind if I fix the flowers for you?” He said, “Of course not.” She came back with the flowers, beautifully rearranged.
Then she made him a cup of tea. Her actions touched his heart, and Salim started to come out of his doldrums. The two of them became friends.
Not long after, the woman’s husband died, and Salim was able to comfort her. Their friendship has been a pillar of support for each of them, but it was only after she gave freely that Salim was moved to give back freely to her, too.
The second story also takes place in a hospital. Each holiday season you can see thousands and thousands of paper doves hanging suspended in the atrium of Toronto’s Princess Margaret Hospital, one of the world’s leading cancer research centers. It’s a magical sight. The dove is a symbol of hope. Each dove honors a person lost to cancer or living with cancer, or a special person who helped someone with his or her battle against cancer.
Caroline van Nostrand, who works for the Princess Margaret Hospital Foundation, organizes the Dove fundraising campaign. Two years ago, during the Dove dedication ceremony, a man named David approached Caroline as she was standing in the atrium. David told her he had dedicated a dove in memory of his wife, Nancy, who died of cancer. He told Caroline he was touched by the holiday season campaign, and he asked her if he could have his dove returned to him — to remember the event and the spirit of his contribution. Her eyes filled with tears when David told her about his wife. But she also felt it would be impossible to find Nancy’s dove amid the thousands of others in the atrium. She told David she would try, but warned him he would likely have to wait until all the doves were taken down.
About 15 minutes later, David approached Caroline again and told her that, since Nancy died, he had felt her presence in his daily life. He told Caroline that he still talked to her and sought her counsel from time to time. On this particular afternoon, he stood in the middle of the atrium and asked silently, “Nancy, where’s our dove?” To Caroline’s amazement, less than 30 seconds later — and from among more than 4,500 doves — he found Nancy’s. David said that his wife had led him right to it.
Caroline says, “It’s stories like this that make my work here so rewarding. Stories like these that make our doves so important for people living with cancer.”
At the core of all giving is compassion and love — and it grows when you become a better giver.
Ask yourself, when I give, how do I feel? Do I feel energized, happy, and fulfilled? Or do I feel deprived, shortchanged, and less well-off? What are my past experiences with giving? Were they happy or sad? What has been my best experience of giving? What has been my worst experience of giving? Your responses to the questions above will give you some clarity about how you feel about giving. We hope that by reading this chapter you’ll be encouraged to continue to give irrespective of your past experiences.

### Key Points from Chapter One

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<tr>
<th>Point</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tr>
<td>There is much sadness in the world, but there are also unlimited ways to make a positive difference.</td>
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<td>You can gain tremendous benefits from giving. Among these benefits are new friends, a feeling of security, better health, happiness, and a sense of pride. You are at your best when you make a difference and contribute.</td>
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<td>Passion for a worthwhile cause helps you tap into your creativity.</td>
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<td>You only need so much as an individual to be happy. Therefore, to live to your potential and create abundance, you need to do something larger than yourself — thus the need to give.</td>
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<td>You are a conduit — the more you allow giving to flow through you, the more abundance flows back into your life. The more you give, the more you receive.</td>
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<td>Giving is a beautiful experience.</td>
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Each of us has many gifts to share – time, love, kindness – even if we don’t have money.

*The Power of Giving* will help you find where your own giving can have the greatest impact. It will inspire you. You’ll realize the best way to find happiness is to give happiness. You’ll discover the more you give, the more you have. You’ll see that giving can make our world a more peaceful, harmonious and productive place.

Bestselling authors Azim Jamal (*Seven Steps to Lasting Happiness*) and Harvey McKinnon (*Hidden Gold*) have written a profound guide to help give you the power to create abundance – in the lives of others and in your own life as well.

All profits from this book will be donated to charities and to promote giving. For more information visit www.thepowerofgiving.org

*Azim Jamal* is one of the finest international inspirational speakers and bestselling authors. For two decades, he has traveled worldwide speaking to more than one million people living in 26 countries about business, balance and beyond. Many more millions have received his message through the media and other sources.

Learn more about the Corporate Sufi series at www.corporatesufi.com

*Harvey McKinnon* is a fund-raising expert, inspirational speaker, author and trainer, who has helped raise hundreds of millions of dollars for non-profits from Amnesty International to UNICEF. He has produced several award-winning documentaries and has served on many business and non-profit boards.