



A Life of Service

by Dr. Phyllis and Rev. Carrol Davis



“It is more blessed to give than to receive.” Why? This is probably an expression you have heard most of your life. Is it true? If it is true, why is it true and how does it work?

Service takes our focus off of our own problems and re-channels the energy into something or someone that is bigger than ourselves. Most twelve-step programs ask newcomers to do something to contribute: move the chairs, set up refreshments, greet newcomers. What the newcomers do not usually understand is that service will benefit them more than the people they are serving.

Jesus Christ came to serve; not to be served and He is the Christians’ example of perfect love. “Perfect love casts out fear,” we are told in the scriptures. Mahatma Ghandi, Mother Theresa, Christ, all had this in common: A life of service.



In our own experiences of working a twelve-step program, we have found this phenomenon to be true. If we believe we need more money, we choose to give more away. If we feel lonely and uncared for, we find someone else to pour love and attention into their life. If we feel unneeded and unimportant, we volunteer our time to a worthy cause. The strange thing that happens is that without thinking about our problems or spending any energy worrying about a solution, the problem is either resolved, goes away or is not as important as we first believed.

If you are feeling unappreciated, write a note to let someone else know how very special they are to you and what it has meant to have them in your life. Make a list of all of the things you are grateful for. It is very hard to maintain an attitude of oppression and depression when you focus on gratitude.

Spending time in the service of worship with songs and music lifts the worst of spirits. Some say that disease, oppression, depression, fear, and anger, are the result of demonic spiritual attacks. We are not trying to prove nor disprove the theory; however, we have found that listening to Christian music and reading scriptures out loud does change not only our mood, but the mood of others that are listening.

We have a service dog that accompanies us when we do therapy with some clients with learning disabilities. He is deathly afraid of thunder and lighting. We have had him since he was a new puppy and know of no logical reason for the fear, yet in the early morning hours of a thunderstorm, he is nearly inconsolable. Christian music, rescue remedy, and hugs from Mom and Dad, quiet him back to sleep.

“Make a list of all of the things you are grateful for.”

Having a pet to care for, a special friend, a volunteer job, or a project that takes care of the needs of others has a healing effect on everyone. This is one of those principles that must be practiced to be believed. Pick one or two suggestions and try them out for thirty days. Mark your calendar when you start and mark your calendar at the end of thirty days. Make a note in your journal at the beginning of the experiment. Write down the problems that are troubling you, your thoughts and feelings, fears and doubts. During the thirty days, if the problem resurfaces, write down your thoughts and put them in a box. We call it a God Box ... just a literal way to hand your troubles over to your “Higher Power,” whom we choose to call God. At the end of the thirty days, write down any changes in your life’s circumstances, thoughts, and/or behaviors. If your changes are positive, you might want to pass the exercise along to a friend. We would love to hear from you and how your acts of service changed you. You may find yourself living a life of service and loving every minute.

© Rev. Carrol graduated from Furman University, ordained in 1975. Honored in Who's Who, Dr. Phyllis E. graduated from the Union Institute. Davis & Davis were awarded the Christian Authors Award for “Stop the Violence Seven Stages to Sanctify.” Participants give the book, “Journey of the Soul Cracked Pots and Broken Vessels,” and workshops five star reviews as they journey to resolve challenges of living life in a fallen world. www.thejourneypathwaystohealing.net