

GENERATIONS OF GENEROSITY

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We make a difference every single day.

- The ways we drive in traffic and behave at the grocery store make a difference.
- Every time we smile at someone who is having a bad day (or a good day), we make a difference.
- Each time we make an ethical business decision or donate our time, energy or money, we make a difference.
- We make a difference as we model loving kindness.

Many of these values were taught to me *by my* family as well as learning from others. I grew up in the late 40s and 50s in Duluth, Minn. and can remember a special table in the house where my mom grew up. The table was near the kitchen and was always set with a clean oil cloth cover and flowers. When I asked who used it, Grandma Langston told me she would be feeding the hungry men that came to her home. Many were out of work and would come to ask for odd jobs or a meal. Grandma fed them, often not knowing if she would have enough for her and Grandpa's own needs. She said that God **always** provided **more** than enough.

Growing up, I watched my father work long, hard hours for the Missabe Railroad. His job was moving iron ore and taconite from the mines to the loading docks. He told us about a family he would see each week, with several children, living along the RRY right-of-way between Proctor and Virginia. Dad said that they were poor and did not have enough to eat. So he would not eat his lunch and shared it with them as the train stopped to take on water. At Christmas my parents ate less and went out less so they could provide some new clothes for these children. While they did this, my family never seemed to go without. Mom said that God would provide.

I remember asking my dad why he was so generous. He said, "*Being generous is like breathing ... I'll show you what I mean. Breathe in - try it! Now, hold it! Hold it ... Ok, let it out.*" Dad said being generous is like breathing—if you continue to only take things in (breathe in)... and never give out or share (breathe out) you won't live or survive.

Ego tells us to live out of scarcity. Ego makes us worry that there will not be enough. Ego is afraid that we will not be taken care of. Ego wants to horde more than it really needs.

Gratitude reminds us that the resources around us are not ours to hold onto for very long in the best of circumstances. Gratitude reminds us that the real joy of life is **becoming a blessing to those around us**. Gratitude reminds us to invest ourselves and our resources in ways that **multiply the blessings** that we know are spiritually life changing.

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