

# A LIFE OF SERVICE

THE PULSE OF SPIRIT  
DECEMBER 1, 2014



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Reciprocity is how we respond to what we have been given. The paradigm shifts for a person when they appreciate what has come to them and when their life is about serving at the same level at which they have been blessed.

I don't know if you've had the experience of being around people who see something they want and who think they can just grab at it. They may see someone who has a position or role, or perhaps some kind of authority. And then they attempt to fabricate some of that for themselves. I knew a man who made sure whenever there was a celebrity or political figure present, or an important happening in Loveland, he was there. He would make sure he was seen and had his picture taken as he shook the hand of the important dignitary. And then he'd leave. He didn't really care about the event or contributing to whatever cause might have been supported. He would just make sure he was seen. Most of us who knew him knew exactly what he was doing. He was trying to get power or position without reciprocating, without offering something that would make it real. In his mind, he gained power and influence by shaking the hand of an important person. Something was taken, nothing was given and no one was believing it.

Power by association is part of the current paradigm for many people. At a certain superficial level it works. People crash parties, become groupies and join

prestigious organizations. We have true power when we take responsibility for it and have dominion over it. We have to be ourselves and we have to let the paradigm shift, so that when we are ourselves we are in our own power and we are connected to the power of the cosmos. That source of power is fueled in our own experience by our service to our world.

The greatest thing I have ever learned about how to become more myself is to surround myself with people whom I respect. Here is what I found. Those people demonstrate great qualities I would like to emulate. I watch them and drink in, as much as possible, the wisdom of how they actually live their life. I drink in the wisdom of how it is that they are choosing to express themselves and to be with people. Each time, I have discovered that their lives are about service. It is because of this quality of service that they have gained my respect.

For years I have said one of the people I most wanted to be like in my life was the grandmother on *The Waltons*, an American TV show from the '70s. She was so calm, so compassionate, and she was always caring. She was always wise because she was unmoved while in the midst of another person's crisis. She had enough stability that she could offer wisdom and blessing into the lives of the multitude of Walton children, their parents, and everybody on the mountain where they lived. I did my

best to pay attention to what it was she was doing that I admired so much. I realized an important aspect of her was that she listened. She was still. She was not self-absorbed. She loved the people in her world and wanted them to succeed. Those were things that I thought were great ways to be in my world. I didn't try to be her. I tried to figure out how she got to be that way.

It has come to me repeatedly that it is in the service of people that more of me is revealed. As I love people, more of me understands what it means to live a magnificent life.

I have learned that when you are not feeling quite like yourself, when you feel frustrated, when you don't know what to do, *Do something for somebody quick!* That's advice I learned forty years ago from my friend Dr. Bill Bahan. As soon as you are doing something for somebody else, you are pouring out service, and you become more yourself by pouring out your love. So in doing something for somebody quick, you initiate a cycle of being open to serving. You take yourself out of yourself—out of your feeling of lack, out of your *I want that* tendencies. You may be thinking, *I want that power, I want that prestige. I want people to know I shook this guy's hand. I want to look like I've achieved something.* You may even want something so understandably desirable, relief or comfort. But how do all those desirable qualities come into your life? When you live a life of service and let them come to you on a creative basis.

What is required to truly be of service is to humble yourself. Not just to the invisible, which is really easy because there's no exterior challenge, but to humble yourself around people who you serve, all of them. There are people who are younger than me and older than me that know things—a lot of things—that I don't know. And unless I'm humble I can't learn and I can't serve, and if I'm not serving I cannot come into the magnificence of life. I may settle and think this is as good as it gets.

Service has not only to do with being humble; it is also

pouring out a blessing. I remember the first time I saw Riley Lee, the Shakuhachi flute master, play his flute in the Dome Auditorium at Sunrise Ranch. The flute pieces themselves might have been scored on a piece of paper, but there was humility and connection present as he played. How do I know? I asked him. I asked, "That just wasn't a memorized piece, was it? That was your spirit surrendered to the larger spirit coming through that flute." Riley just looked at me and said, "Exactly." Beautiful spirit in that man!

Here are some meaty quotes about service. They touch on what's important for me about getting out of yourself so you can be yourself, getting out of your own great ideas and your belief system, your paradigm, so that you might actually be able to own your life, own what you know is true because you reveal it and you test it for its authenticity and viability and substance.

Mahatma Gandhi:

*The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.*

Martin Luther King Jr.:

*Everybody can be great...because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.*

A heart full of grace makes serving like breathing. It is our nature.

Carl Jung:

*You are what you do, not what you say you'll do.*

A lot of people talk about serving, taking care of humanity, loving people. Talk is cheap. What do you do? How do you serve?

This is from Gordon Hinckley, who wrote *Standing for Something: 10 Neglected Virtues That Will Heal Our Hearts and Homes*:

*The best antidote I know for worry is work.  
The best cure for weariness is the challenge  
of helping someone who is even more tired.  
One of the great ironies of life is this: He or  
she who serves almost always benefits more  
than he or she who is served.*

You become great. And now I can see the human mind saying, “Well, I better start serving so I can be great.” The grabbing and getting part of this has to die, because as soon as you start doing that you’re not serving anyone but yourself.

Albert Schweitzer:

*I don't know what your destiny will be, but  
one thing I know: the only ones among you  
who will be really happy are those who have  
sought and found how to serve.*

And the last one is Marian Edelman:

*Service is the rent we pay for being. It is the  
very purpose of life and not something you  
do in your spare time.*

The greatness and the satisfaction of living a life is known intimately and powerfully when you let yourself out so that you might commune with all of humanity, so that you serve all of humanity through the opportunity right in front of you. The way that happens is by serving people and serving your highest, all at the same time. You are connected to everything through the one thing in front of you—the person, the opportunity, the challenge, the day.

I remember, when I was growing up, challenging people who were professing that their lives were about service. I had a little of that *prove it* attitude in me. It forced me to also own my life and whether it was revealing what I was saying.

As we humble ourselves and pour out our blessings, we start to see the world totally differently. We see the power that comes when we love and serve this world, knowing that our love pours forth easily when it is born from the highest love for the Creator, allowing that spirit to fill every moment of our lives.

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