

Giving “Equally” To Yourself

What It Really Means

Most people in all cultures learn to give to others who are less fortunate. The giving is often in the form of philanthropy, charity work, dedications, bequests and gifts to public charities, schools, museums, the performing arts, and other not-for-profit institutions. Societies memorialize those who gave their time, energies and wealth to the public or to the poor. It doesn't matter whether you are rich or poor. John D. Rockefeller was rich and he gave millions to charities and to public causes. Mother Theresa was poor but she gave her life to the poor in India. With all these inspiring examples of people giving, it is not surprising that people open their wallets and hearts to others. Parents give to their children. Couples give to one another. Friends give to their friends and to strangers. Children learn from all of this to share and to give.

With all this giving going on, you would expect everyone to be happy and content. But the truth is that most people who give something of themselves to others still have a feeling of emptiness inside. There is a dissatisfaction inside of them as though something was incomplete. They may feel exhausted or experience nagging emotional, mental or physical discomforts. Why is that?

The answer is that their lives are not in balance. Although they have been giving to others, they have not given anything to themselves? A mother who gives “everything” to her children has nothing left to give to herself. And, if she has nothing left to give to herself, then what can she possibly give to others? The standard instructions on a airplane flight is that if there is an emergency and the breathing masks drop down, first put the breathing mask on yourself and make sure it works before putting it on your children. Likewise, in the case there is a water landing, first put on your life vest before assisting your children. The reason for these instructions are obvious. If you can't breath, how can you assist others?. If

you can't save yourself, how can you save others? That is why you have to take care of yourself first.

This same rule applies in living your life. Giving to yourself means that for everything that you do or give to others, you give an equal part for yourself. This means taking care of yourself by eating properly, exercising daily, getting enough sleep and rest, and devoting quality time to yourself for meditation and introspection. It's your life and you deserve it. The power to give comes from within. When you take care of your personal needs first, you will lead a more balanced and satisfying life, and you will have more to give to yourself and to others.

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