

# People of A Practice

Week 4



Identify an area in your life in which you believe you are “poor” or “don’t have enough.” How have you come to that belief? How accurate is that belief? How do you know?

When someone asks you for something (time, money, attention, etc.), how do you respond? What feelings arise? Do your reactions differ depending upon who is asking for what? What judgments — about them and about yourself — are present in your response?

What are you afraid of giving away? Why?

Which aspects or actions in your spiritual life are *self* oriented (“I do this for me.”)? Which are *other/s* oriented (“I do this for someone else.”)? How are they related? Are they in balance?

Review the stages of generosity on the reverse. At which stage are you? Are you at different stages with different things (time vs. money, etc...). What would it mean for you to commit to growing to the next stage?

*“A crucial goal of spiritual life is to equip oneself to serve effectively. Even the supreme goal of enlightenment is sought, not for oneself alone, but to better serve and enlighten others.”*

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There are three stages of generosity described in Buddhism:

- 1) *Tentative or “Miserly” Giving*: We give away what we no longer want, or we offer other gifts hesitantly with mixed feelings, fearful that we might later miss what we’ve given. This giving is more concerned with our own fears than the needs of another.
- 2) *Kindly or “Brotherly/Sisterly” Giving*: We give willingly, happy to share our blessings with others, motivated by their well-being as well as our own. Thoughtful and friendly, it is giving what we would like to receive.
- 3) *Royal Giving*: It has become effortless and spontaneous to give the best of what is ours to maximize the happiness of others. The well-being of others has become as important as our own, and their happiness can only increase ours. At this stage, is evident that generosity has become a spiritual practice and serving others has become a joyful privilege.



Helpful books related to this week’s topic:

*Essential Spirituality: The 7 Central Practices to Awaken Heart and Mind* by Roger Walsh (John Wiley & Sons, 1999)

*The Soul of Money: Transforming Your Relationship with Money and Life* by Lynne Twist (W.W. Norton & Co., 2003)

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