

USG SGM ~ Generosity ~ November 2023

drawn from Soul Matters materials, see the full packet for more of all of these elements
www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com



Chalice Lighting We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give. - *unknown*

Check-in *Share your highs and lows since we last met focusing on what drains you and what lifts you up. We give each other the gift of listening without asking questions or offering advice to allow people the safety to share what's in their hearts.*

Intro: First of all, it's transformative. Generosity doesn't just brighten our days; it changes how we relate to life. Let's be honest, life can harden us. And before it does that, it often hurts us. So we can't be blamed for viewing it as a threat. Like some kind of dangerous obstacle course. Or a giant game of King of the Hill, where the winners take all and the rest of us are thrown to the bottom, bruised and empty-handed. No matter which metaphor fits, it's almost impossible to think our way out of it on our own. But then these seemingly small or sentimental gestures come our way. A person notices we forgot to bring our bus pass and pays for us before we have to ask. The neighbor shovels our part of the driveway while she does hers. The nurse takes a half hour to sit with us while we wait for the results. It wasn't her job, and she doesn't have the time, but she did it anyway. In those simple moments, the world suddenly feels less cold. A crack sets in. Our obstacle course, winner-take-all view of life gives way to something softer. We may still hurt, but it also feels as though life itself is trying to help. That's what generosity does. It transforms.

Spiritual Exercises Option A: Give Generosity to Receive it!

When we are feeling the poorest, that's the time to give a gift. - Dhyani Ywahoo

It's a great spiritual truth: We experience what we long for, when we generously give it away. Jesus put this insight at the heart of his ministry: "You must lose your life to find it." We lift it up every time we say, "To give is to receive."

So, if you are struggling with a lack of something in your life right now, turn this truth into your spiritual exercise this month. Don't try to find encouragement; give it to others. Don't tackle your problem head on; look for others with the same struggle and find a way to offer them help. If you are feeling "poor," figure out a gift you can give. Hungering for someone to listen to you, generously listen to others. Long to belong, create community for others. Looking for affirmation, double down on giving positive comments to others.

The key to this exercise is to do it more than once. We suggest doing it for a week, starting each morning of that week with an intention to keep an eye out for opportunities to generously give others what you long for. Here's a great [article](#) to focus and inspire you. Come to your group ready to share if this old formula worked.

Option B: Life's Generosity on a Scale of 1-10

Sometimes we lose touch with how generously overflowing life is, even when parts of our life are hard. When this happens, we need something to help us step back and renew our perspective. This is what this exercise is all about.

Look over the list below and rate how abundant or scarce each of these are in your life, on a scale of 1 (scarce) to 10 (abundant). Place your rankings to the right of each item. Then make time to reflect on the results. What surprised you? How did you feel after finishing it?

What insights or feelings arose as you ranked and thought about each item? 1. Friends 2. Long-time friends 3. Moments of beauty 4. Moments of micro-aggression 5. The ability to exercise 6. Financial comfort 7. Children who love you 8. An animal to love 9. People who have forgiven you 10. Sunsets

Quotes for Inspiration/Readings

Generosity is not a down-payment on love. - *Netta*

Attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity. - *Simone Weil*

All you are unable to give possesses you. - *Andre Gide*

I have found that among its other benefits, giving liberates the soul of the giver. - *Maya Angelou*

If we cultivate generosity, the mind will stop sticking to things. It's as if we've made a tight fist that is slowly opening... Our world opens up because we can let go. - *Sharon Salzberg*

If today's church does not recapture the sacrificial spirit of the early church, it will lose its authenticity, forfeit the loyalty of millions, and be dismissed as an irrelevant social club with no meaning - *Martin Luther King*

I tell my students, When you get these jobs that you have been so brilliantly trained for, just remember that your real job is that if you are free, you need to free somebody else. If you have some power, then your job is to empower somebody else. This is not just a grab-bag candy game." - *Toni Morrison*

Questions *Pick the one question that speaks to you most and let it lead you where you need to go. The goal is to figure out what being a part of a people of Generosity means for you and your daily living.*

1. How has your definition of generosity changed since you were younger?
2. How has your enjoyment of generosity changed since you were younger?
3. Who taught you the most about being a generous person?
4. Has being generous ever led to you becoming "richer"?
5. Has generosity ever healed you?
6. What's been your hardest act of generosity?
7. Some say that attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity. Who needs the gift of your attention?
8. Some say that giving liberates and frees the giver. How might Life be trying to free you by asking you to give?

Sitting in Silence *Take a few moments to sit quietly and reflect upon your thoughts.*

Sharing/Deep Listening *Respond with your thoughts and experiences with the topic. We create a safe space by listening deeply and not responding. When sharing, connect with what is true for you. When listening, give the speaker your full attention rather than thinking about what you will share.*

Reflection and Gratitude *This is a time to respond briefly to something another person said or to relate additional thoughts that may have occurred as others shared. Consider lifting up one comment or experience for which you are particularly grateful.*

Singing: Click [here](#) for the Spotify playlist on Generosity
Click [here](#) for the YouTube playlist on Generosity

Extinguishing the Chalice: We are cups, constantly and quietly being filled. The trick is, knowing how to tip ourselves over and let the beautiful stuff out. - *Ray Bradbury*