



Share Like you Mean It

Well, ohhhhh kaaaay, you can haaaave it. Buuut, well, allllll riiiiight, heeeeeeere.....whateeeeeeverrrrrr! Have you ever felt this way, had these thoughts? Somewhere in the back of your mind there might be these (Biblical?) adages rummaging around, such as; “to those who give, all shall be given” and “to give is divine”, but it’s easy to rationalize them into oblivion, isn’t it, by discounting their origins or their validity. I mean, ya know, what would happen if the adage was wrong and you really GAVE - A LOT - and nothing was given to you in return? Your convenient (fear-based) rationalization stops there, of course, and gives you a Class 1A++ rated reason to dismiss that tired old adage.....BUT, if you just took it a half step further, you would see that we, here in the developed world, live in an obscenely materialistic society and even if you DID GIVE A LOT and got nothing in return (from God?) for your trouble, you would still have storage units full of stuff and you would certainly be filled beyond the brim once again with replacement stuff, toot sweet, and unabashedly by your own hand, so what’s the problem? Why not give a lot? Share your wealth!

What good does it do to hoard anyway? Let’s take three big areas of hoarding; money, power and, let’s say, weapons and see where we get with it.

Here’s Joe. He has “all the money in the world” (as it probably says on his business card). And here is Fred. Fred has peanuts. Joe doesn’t know what to wear today because he has enough clothes to reach to the moon and back. Fred is looking for quarters for the laundromat. Joe does not share his wealth, but prefers to hoard it, assuming he will live forever and SOME DAY accomplish his goal of being the richest man on Pluto as well as on Earth - and we all know how that’s gonna end up. Fred lives hand to mouth with every waking minute devoted to the task of making his mortgage payment and health insurance premium for his family of five. Joe’s life does not breed comfort in Fred. Nor does it breed trust. It breeds frustration and resentment.

Now here’s Jane. She has “all the power in the world” (as it probably says on her business card). And here is Karen. Karen has peanuts. Jane likes to do what all powerful people like to do - mold the universe to her liking (and, hell, why not, to her image as well!) because it makes her happy and makes her feel superior. Karen is lucky if she can get her kids on the school bus in the mornings. Jane is so powerful that she acquires big positions and big accolades, which usually lead to bigger positions and bigger accolades. Karen is trying unsuccessfully to negotiate an eviction notice for non-payment of rent. Jane does not use her power to help Karen or any other less fortunate person. This does not breed happiness or respect in Karen. It breeds anger and hatred.

And here is Tom. He has “all the weapons in the world” (as, you know, it says on his business card). Paul has peanuts. Tom can annihilate anyone anywhere in the world any time he wants to. Paul has trouble complaining about the neighbor’s barking dog. Tom relishes his position as king of the mountain and enjoys his own brilliance in combat as well as his aptitude for “trial by fire”. Paul is a peacenik and Tom’s macho weaponry breeds extreme fear and agitation in him.

So here’s a serious question for you hoarders out there: do you want to be the object of anger, resentment, frustration, agitation, distrust and anger? Or might you prefer to be LOVED instead. Is this a hard choice? I think not because EVERYONE really just WANTS TO BE LOVED.... even if it appears otherwise (and people are quite good at hiding this very deep and abiding need..... if you don’t see it, it might be behind their 60-inch TV in the 14th bedroom on the 4th floor of their vacation villa in the French countryside). This “armor” of greed and fear-mongering and grandiose gestures of power and control are protecting a very soft underbelly. You know it’s true. And we know it too. It’s ok to be loved yourself, and it’s definitely OK to love others! Sharing your excess is love. And there’s nothing that makes people feel more loved than to have the help or sustenance they need to live a normal life and provide for their family. Wanna be loved? Share something.

Maitreya, the World Teacher* (and Head of our Spiritual Hierarchy) says, “Sharing is divine. When you share, you recognize God in your brother.” And He also says, “Take your brother’s need as the measure for your action, and solve the problems of the world. There is no other course.” Those words are very beautiful and

profound, I'm sure you would agree, but the devil is in the details isn't it? Kind of like trying to get a camel through the eye of a needle. Maybe we just need some serious practice.

Some of you are probably a bit peeved by my characterization of you maybe being a hoarder. After all, you give a percentage of your earnings to charity and you volunteer at your church, and you are a good, kind person. But I think our minds have been skewed by a fear of scarcity combined with the new-agey ideal of "abundance". It's almost like you're "not cool" unless you have drawn abundance to yourself. Kind of like the ideal that says you are "not cool" unless you are having sex twice a day with your spouse after 40 years of marriage. Our perspectives on what we truly need (as opposed to what's "cool" or unnecessary) are so bizarrely out of whack that, when faced with the idea of letting some of that (sometimes) hard earned money go to others (for free), we are constantly saying, "we don't have the money", or "we can't afford it" when we DO have *tons* of money. It might not be LIQUID, because we have so many investments, but if we LIQUIDATED anything, we would have a windfall here and a windfall there. Maybe we don't REALLY need to save that extra speedboat for our kids, especially since they hate boating. Maybe we could sell it and give the money to someone who truly needs it. Why hoard it when people all around you and around the globe are suffering. One speed boat would feed a lot of people!

We have all just lost touch with what we truly NEED as opposed to what we truly WANT. Here is a fun exercise for you. Every time you almost get to the register or almost get to that click on the computer to buy something that you really WANT but don't really NEED, turn around and put that same exact amount of money into a "sharing fund" instead. You'll be surprised at how fast such a fund would fill up - because the truth is, here in the developed world, we have pretty much every darn thing we could ever hope to want or need already, so it might be hard to actually make it to the register.....or the "buy with one click" button.

And here is another little bit of amusement for you: What if some big Bank Account Fairy decided to create a level playing field in the bank account of every U.S. household? By dividing America's net worth evenly amongst it's population, every household would end up with somewhere in the neighborhood of \$265,000 in their bank account. Think how horrifying that would be for those Richie-Riches who are used to riding in limos to go to the grocery store, and can turn on their hot tubs from their cars as they are driving home, and whose daughters add real diamonds to their fingernail polish. And think how blissful it would be for those Hand-To-Mouth people who are buried in credit card debt because they're too tired or sick to work that THIRD job to make ends meet, and those sad people who are constantly self-medicating because life is so depressing without a real bed to sleep in, or those young married couples who never had a prayer of acquiring a downpayment for a starter house. The outcome of this leveling of the playing field would be interesting, because the Hand-To-Mouth folks are so used to penny-pinching that they could make that \$265k last a LONG time, whereas the Richie-Riches would not get past their next payment on that 40,000 acre vineyard they just bought in Napa. I wonder if the Hand-To-Mouth folks would be willing to share with the Richie-Riches.... Hmm.....

There are some folks who avoid sharing because it means TOGETHERNESS. Yuk. It means sharing your bus seat with a STRANGER. Stranger Danger! Someone who maybe has white skin! Or black skin! Or yellow! Or someone who reeks of cigarette smoke or is too obese or too anorexic looking. It means sharing your restaurant table with someone who's missing teeth or looks like you could catch rabies from them, or talks too much or eats meat when you are a vegetarian. The thing is, you'll probably survive this momentary TOGETHERNESS and be back in the safe confines of your own space before you know it. And you would do well to ponder the fact that you are a pretty weird person, too. And you probably went through some unwholesome stages in your life where you had an interesting "aroma" or you looked like the other person in the bus seat should be inoculated against you. None of us were or will be immune to the vagaries of being homo sapiens: looking like crap from our past or future days as a hippie or a goth or from disease or stress or old age or depression - or maybe just having a big nose. We are all in the soup TOGETHER, and you might have to share a seat with one of these interesting people later on, when you're 85 and have dicey bladder issues, so we might as well practice our service work while on that bus seat or restaurant chair and see if we can get the weirdos to smile and feel good about themselves! Share the love! Then you can go home to your safe recliner and eat a bunch of fried onions so you can add to your waistline and have special breath for your bus ride tomorrow.

In the amazing book *Material World*, by Peter Menzel, published in 1994, families around the world, of all different levels of prosperity, offered stats of their daily routines, food they ate, jobs, living expenses and were photographed with all of their possessions outside of their homes, with their favorite possession on their lap. What an extraordinary book. Truly. I think it should be required reading in every classroom - especially the page with the photograph of the family in some far-off jungle sitting in front of their hut with their small collection of possessions. They all have smiles on their faces and the father is very proud of the cow that's his favorite possession standing next to him. In the notes for this family they say that they are very happy and have everything they need. Hmmmm. Maybe there needs to be an exchange program, enforced, which dictates that anyone making over \$200,000/year has to switch places with such happy families for a month - and bond with their cows. If that doesn't work to show them that they might not need ALL the THINGS they own, maybe they should try moving the contents of their entire houses and multiple storage units TWICE in one year (without hiring movers), like I did. THEN they'll understand the joy of simplification!

The idea of someone else (government, for instance) telling you what to do with your \$stuff\$ can be a wicked idea in the minds of some. The young man I saw on the bus many years ago was one such person who angrily exclaimed, "I don't want my hard-earned money going to feed anyone else's kid!". It doesn't really matter what form of government it is, they all have the effect, in one way or another, of telling you what to do with your \$stuff\$. Seems like there have always been elected officials telling us what to do. These officials might be ones you tried to get elected or ones you tried NOT to get elected. It's always a race to see if you can get that special person elected who you think is gonna let you get away with all the \$stuff\$ you wanna get away with. But no matter which one gets elected, they are all gonna have "sacrifices" for you to make, aimed at your hard-earned \$stuff\$.

And why do we need these governments telling us what to do with our \$stuff\$? Maybe it is because we suck at taking care of each other without LAWS. And your parents were your first government, right? Try to hoard your toys (\$stuff\$) from your siblings and see where that gets ya! And they were your first introduction to a socialist system of sharing the wealth (\$stuff\$), as they shared their paychecks with you greedy little, self-absorbed children (as all good children are!). As far as adult society is concerned, at least we've had the good sense to keep government around for this altruistic purpose of taking care of each other (since mom is not around to box your ears anymore), and even if the current form of government always seems to be rubbing a certain percent of the population the wrong way.

This system of having a government kind of works, because we haven't killed ourselves off yet. Well, not YET! But any one of the almost 800 million people on this planet who are malnourished will tell you that WE ARE KILLING **THEM** OFF!! And they would all sign a petition (if they had the strength and a Facebook account) asking for a law requiring EVERYONE ON THE PLANET to share their \$stuff\$ with their family members across the globe! Socialism, Democracy, Communism, Social Democracy.....WHATEEEEVERRRR. Just send some friggin' FOOD! To hell with the red tape and to hell with everyone's ideal of utopian society. Just open your heart and send some food. Simple. Regardless of who's standing over you with a gavel.

Maitreya says, "Without sharing there can be no justice, without justice there can be no peace". There are many quotes from famous people stating that there can be no peace without justice, from the likes of Martin Luther King, Desmond Tutu, Kofi Annan to many others, including Angelina Jolie. There is even a hashtag for it. But the key ingredient in the justice equation is sharing, because how can there be justice when the rich are parading their wealth before the poor - when someone dies of starvation every second and when one in six people are malnourished? After contemplating the prospect of sharing our personal \$stuff\$ and our bus seats, maybe we're ready to tackle the biggie - sharing the resources of the world, so that everyone can have what they need to be healthy and happy - and maybe even a little extra \$stuff\$ for that rainy day.

* See OMG series: Article #1 "OMG!"

