

Giving as an Act of Faith: Consciously Opening Doors to Prosperity

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A Quick Meditation on Money*

- 1) Close your eyes and take a deep breath in, then let it slowly out.
 - 2) Think about your financial situation for a few moments, and see what thoughts and feelings arise.
 - 3) Next, notice your body's sensations, your physical responses to those thoughts and feelings.
 - 4) Slowly open your eyes and write down what you experienced.
- (*Even if you believe that you know what the results of this exercise will be, try to open up and allow the inner truth of the moment to reveal itself fully to you.)

Personal and Economic Faith

It can be very uncomfortable to contemplate finances today. In the current economy, it is very easy to get tense and worry about how to get by. Worries and fears for the future can lead to limited giving and spending. But not using or sharing what we have also closes the door on many ways of receiving at the same time.

The economy is driven and supported by the same thing as a healthy personal life. Faith. If people feel they can spend, the economy improves and profits increase, bringing down prices as competition increases, which leads to new jobs being created. Opportunities for improvements in our individual lives then abound. Faith in the financial scheme of things leads to spending, and the results benefit everyone.

Likewise, if we have problems and challenges and want to move out of fear and a sense of lack, toward a better life filled with love and happiness, we must find our faith, our sense of hope, in order to move forward. Faith leads us naturally forward into feeling opened to offering up acts of generosity and loving kindness toward others, which make us feel wonderful inside. That internal radiance in us reaches out to those around us like a beacon in the night, signaling to that place of inner knowing in others that this person before them has something of value to offer. People will want to be a part of that glowing goodness, so they will respond back positively, opening doors which otherwise might have remained closed.

Achieving the Equinox's Truth of Balance

At the recent Autumn Equinox, day and night were of equal length, in balance with one another. Now in November we Americans give thanks for what we have. We can take advantage of this time of year to pause and take stock of our personal harvest from the busy summer months, what we have gained that will help see us through the coming days. In seeing what we have and what we have recently gained, we recognize our wealth. And, in giving thanks for all that we are and all that we have, we bring ourselves

to a healthy understanding of ourselves. Our gratitude, (a way of giving) balances our blessings (what we are receiving). Thus we achieve equinox, balance.

In rebalancing ourselves from a sense of lack to a sense of abundance, we realize that we have what we need to take the next steps toward the changes we can make in our lives. Have you ever heard the phrase “the rich get richer”? It is true! To get, you must first know what you have, and then be willing to give it away in order to generate more. In giving, we plant seeds that grow into an abundance of receiving throughout our lives.

To truly be able to allow this flow of giving and receiving to fully function, we need to re-examine our ideas about what is of value. We need to be willing to let go of our short list of ideas of what we want to receive, and be willing to take in all the gifts that come our way, and in turn, offer them to others, continuing the flow and growth of prosperity for all.

Wealth is a matter of perspective. It requires creative thinking, trust, faith, and belief. If we shift our narrow perceptions of what we have, we open ourselves to the true value of each person, especially ourselves. We must throw the doors wide open to receive things as gifts that we may have overlooked in the past as unworthy or of little value. As we widen our perspective to include more and still more possibilities, they become endless, leading to more and more opportunities as we grow and expand our consciousness. We move from getting caught up in the details of the moment to allowing the bigger picture to guide us.

Self Examination leads to Change

Now that all sounds good, but how do we get there from where we are now? How do we move from the tendencies toward poverty consciousness to the radiance of prosperity mindedness?

We start by giving from the heart. Giving even what seems like the smallest things with a generous spirit will open us up in ways we may not expect: Holding a door for a stranger. Saying thank you, more often. Smiling generously. Speaking our appreciation out loud to those in our lives. Giving these gifts will open us up, and bring us smiles and thank-yous in return, not to mention the good will we have invested in the future. Allow this habit of giving to grow, and then start to include giving materials things as well starting with simple things: Flowers. A card. Cookies. Things you don't use that friends would appreciate having. Personally made things to show your thanks to people you appreciate. All these are examples of riches you may freely give that will in some way come back to you in time.

Next, explore and expand your sense of your own value in very specific terms. No matter what you think right now, we are ALL of great value. Take those general concepts and truths that you accept about yourself, and test them for truth. Discover who you are, what you are, and everything you have inside yourself that is of value. Think about them all very clearly and write about them, or if you need help with the digging, explore them with someone you trust. Clear out any misconceptions and old patterns of shame and limitation

that stand in your way. Name all your many gifts, and celebrate them for yourself, so that they hold as much loving, positive energy as possible. Get them up into your conscious mind.

And then, begin to share your gifts freely with the world. By looking candidly at ourselves, we can find what we have to offer one another and this world, and use everything that we are to benefit ourselves and others. As each moment comes, openings for the gifts we hold will open before us. And in the openness of giving you will be offered more opportunities to receive than you'll know what to do with. Let the Divine nature of open-hearted living guide your heart and mind to take what you need and give all you can.

The On-Going Practice

Discovering your personal balance point is an on-going practice, since we all change and grow, our capacities growing with us. But it is imperative to both give and receive for the body, mind and spirit to be truly well. I find it useful to use the four changes of season to re-examine my personal and spiritual way in the world and check on my balance point. Being out of balance slows or stops the flow of spiritual energy between people. Money is a form of spiritual energy exchange. Think back to your body's responses during the meditation at the beginning of this article. Feeling worried about money, or anything for that matter, creates a tension in us that is subtly noticeable to others. This can cause others to automatically have their guard up around us, perhaps without even consciously knowing why. This, of course, stands in the way of any positive change as we must interact with others for change to occur.

So, to re-open a closed off feeling in yourself, simply give. Give when you feel least like giving and others will feel welcome and safe to give back. You will feel lighter and those around you will respond without knowing why. As we recognize our need for balance and correct it, moment to moment, our capacity for giving increases as we open up. And that selfless openness increases our ability to attract all the incredible bounty that life is just waiting to give us when we are ready to receive.