

The Giver's Harvest



While ago, I watched a very moving news report about a 10-year-old boy named Charlie who was dying of a rare thyroid cancer. Although you'd think the young boy had enough to worry about on his own, and that he probably wouldn't be thinking too much about other people, that was not so—he was. In fact, he asked his mother if he could spend his allowance money, which he'd been saving up, to buy gifts for other children on the cancer ward.

remove the thyroids of at-risk children before they become cancerous.

Charlie's story illustrates a very important concept: we do not live on this earth alone—everything we do affects the world around us. The fact that people *do* include service to others as part of their lives is uniquely human. In the book, *Animal Behavior: Readings from Scientific American*, Thomas Eisner and Edward O. Wilson writes:

“A vertebrate society is little more than a loose

things that stops people from becoming true peak performers is their ego.

“I always define ego as ‘Edging God Out,’” says Blanchard. “That means putting yourself in the center. People who are ‘value driven’ are able to set worthy goals that help themselves as well as others. People who are ‘ego-driven’ are always trying to evaluate themselves by how other people see them.”

“In my seminars, I ask how many people present have children. A lot of them raise their hands. Then I ask a series of questions: ‘How many of you love your children?’ They all laugh and put their hands up. ‘How many of you love your children only if they're successful—and if they're not, you don't.’

Nobody puts a hand up. ‘You mean you love your kids unconditionally?’ They all answer yes. Then, I ask them this: ‘What would happen if you accepted that love for yourself? If you realized that God didn't make junk? And you knew that no matter what you did, you were still okay, you were still loved?’

That unconditional acceptance and love for the self, according to Blanchard, is what permits people to do the things that are driven by their values. It allows them to give of themselves, because they know that their goodness is already taken care of: from that harvest, everyone benefits. ▲

“It's a universal law—we have to give before we get. We must plant the seeds before we reap the harvest. The more we sow, the more we reap. And in giving to others, we find ourselves blessed. The law works to give us back more than we have sown. The giver's harvest is always full.”

—From *The Best of Success*, compiled by Wynn Davis

When a reporter asked little Charlie why he had done that, he gave a simple answer: he told the reporter that it made him feel really good. And, he said, it helped him forget about his own illness.

Charlie can teach us all a lesson. Not only did he do a good deed for other children, he made himself feel better by giving of himself. And in the end, Charlie gave even more than he could have imagined: through his illness, doctors were able to discover the gene mutation that caused his rare form of cancer. This may, in turn, make it possible to test other children who come from at-risk families—and

confederation of families and individuals. Even when they exist as subordinate members of societies, vertebrates remain relatively selfish and aggressive.

“The single outstanding exception to this trend is man himself, who has retained the basic vertebrate traits, but has managed to balance them with coalitions, contracts, vastly improved communication, and long-range planning that includes premeditated acts of altruism.”

This ability to give service to others begins with how we serve ourselves. Ken Blanchard, author of *The One Minute Manager*, says that one of the

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