

# Celebrating our giving nature

by Mark Pavilons

?There is no exercise better for the heart than reaching down and lifting people up.? - John Holmes

We humans, despite our flaws, tend to be giving sorts. I'm not sure if it's by design, but it seems our generous nature is inherent and comes from within.

And that's a very good thing.

Not only is it one of our species' redeeming factors, it has likely saved us from demise.

Giving feels good, so being generous is a win-win situation.

Giving involves the voluntary transfer of resources, whether tangible or intangible, from one to another. Generosity refers to the quality of being kind and generous. It's the willingness to give more of something, such as money or time, than is strictly necessary or expected. In essence, generosity is the spirit that fuels the act of giving.

Gambulls, an online gaming company, set out to identify the world's most generous countries by analyzing both financial contributions and social acts of kindness.

Kenya is the world's most generous country, earning a score of 99. Kenyans are the most likely to help a stranger, with 82% of respondents saying they had assisted someone they did not know. 52% of adults reported volunteering their time for a cause, while 56% donated money to charitable organizations. Kenyans also leave an average of 10% in restaurants and 3% in hotels.

Ukraine takes second place with a score of 97. Ukrainians are generous with money, with 67% of adults having donated, about 11 percent more than in Kenya, though they tip the same in restaurants, leaving 10%. Acts of kindness are also common, with 77% stopping to help a stranger in need.

Canada takes 5th spot, behind the U.S., with a generosity score of 92. Like the U.S., Canadians are the second-best tippers, leaving an average of 17.5% in restaurants and the same 3.5% in hotels. They also donate at nearly the same rate, with 60% of adults giving to charity.

That's reassuring, especially in these times. I do find it a little odd that Kenya and Ukraine ??ountries with their own conflicts and challenges ??ive the most.

Christian teachings tell us giving should be done with thoughtfulness, sacrifice, generosity, and joy. ?Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.? Thoughtfulness, generosity, freedom, and joy are all part of giving. We are to be ?cheerful? in our giving.

Most of us have felt it, I'm sure. Whether it's donating to a cause, or being generous at special events, the joy is in the act and desire to make others happy.

At the heart of many acts of giving lies altruism ? the selfless concern for the well-being of others. Closely tied to altruism is empathy, our ability to understand and share the feelings of another.

When we see someone in need and can imagine ourselves in their shoes, it often sparks a desire to help.

In many cultures, giving is seen as a virtue, and there's often social pressure to engage in charitable acts.

I remember during my youth, I was more apt to pull over and ask a stranger if they needed a ride, if I saw someone walking at the side of the road. We often picked up hitchhikers.

Similarly, if someone appeared to have car trouble, we'd stop and offer what we could.

Alas, I believe these acts are few and far between these days, and that's a sad commentary on society.

A kind gesture can reach a wound that only compassion can heal. - Steve Maraboli

Our values and beliefs also influence our propensity to give. For some, giving might be tied to religious or spiritual beliefs. For many, it may just be a desire to make the world a better place.

We are constantly bombarded by solicitations to donate here and there. Many of us do, online or in person. We pick and choose.

Some find a cause or charity close to their heart, or in their own community.

You give but little when you give of your possessions. It is when you give of yourself that you truly give. - Kahlil Gibran

Locally, there are many such organizations, including one of my favourites, the King Township Food Bank. Their upcoming annual fundraiser *ip & Savour* returns October 23. It's a great opportunity to help those in need, which, unfortunately, have reached record numbers.

When I became connected to the King community, the work of the Food Bank came calling. It was grassroots giving at its finest, and I was happy to lend a hand. I volunteered as MC for the gala for more than a decade. My wife and I will be attending again this year, so be sure to say hello.

I also admire the work of the local Lions Clubs, who never tire and never falter. They are to be commended, and supported.

The middle class tends to be the biggest givers with the biggest hearts. That's not to say that our affluent citizens aren't front-and-centre of major fundraisers and non-profits. Developers and many large corporations have stepped up to the plate, and are continual donors and sponsors for local events. Many are solid backers of the efforts of the King Chamber of Commerce.

And that's what makes this community both generous and giving.

We recently gave thanks, and hopefully that involved family gathered around a large dinner table. Part of being thankful is the ability to give.

Let's keep up the good work, as a community, and a country.

Acts of generosity are simply the best!

You have not lived today until you have done something for someone who can never repay you. - John Bunyan