

Giving

No matter what your circumstance in life, you have the ability to give back, and giving benefits all those involved both physically and emotionally. When giving to others makes us feel good, those feelings translate to our biology and the region of our brain associated with pleasure, social connection, and trust is activated, creating a 'warm glow' affect. Scientists also believe that altruistic behavior releases endorphins, producing the positive feeling known as the 'helper's high'. These same biological responses will also decrease the negative effects of bad stress.

In her book *"The How of Happiness: A Scientific Approach to Getting the Life You Want"*, Sonja Lyubomirsky tells us that being kind and generous leads us to perceive others more positively and more charitably, fostering a heightened sense of interdependence and cooperation in our social community. The act of giving also promotes a sense of trust and cooperation strengthening our ties to others, as well as creating the likelihood of being rewarded our self by others.

Researchers have found that giving inspires observers to behave generously later – seeing altruism spread by as many as three degrees. There is also evidence that the act of giving may release the hormone oxytocin inducing feelings of gratefulness, warmth, euphoria and connection to others.

All people want to achieve meaning, fulfillment, and happiness in life. However, thousands of years of human history confirm that these things come not from being self-centered but rather from making a difference and giving happiness to others. So, if you find yourself feeling unhappy, try making someone else happy and see what happens. Or if you are feeling empty and unfulfilled, try doing some meaningful and worthwhile work and see how you feel.

"A rich life", writes philosopher and theologian Cornel West, "consists fundamentally of serving others, trying to leave the world a little better than you found it." Every one of us can have a rich life if we choose.

Our new-found **skill of Positive Presence – the skill of adjusting and creating a positive and energized mindset within our self through conscious thought processes** –provides us with the necessary mechanism enabling us to focus on that which will bring us the greatest positive returns in terms of achieving peak performance, for building and maintaining good relationships, and for experiencing good health.