



Being Generous: The Art of Right Living

Lucinda Vardey, John Dalla Costa

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This extraordinary little book has the power to heal and foster relationships, console and empower individuals, create community and help save the world by providing a spiritual ecology for our daily lives.

Think that's a bold claim? It is, but it's also true. We can all be generous with our money when an occasion like Christmas rolls around, or when disaster strikes as it did with the Boxing Day tsunami of 2004. But Lucinda Vardey and John Dalla Costa say that this kind of giving segregates generosity, and makes it a special activity only for special times. If we're truly going to help this troubled world, as individuals we must investigate other possibilities for being generous as well, by helping those we interact with every day: our children, colleagues, parents, friends and the homeless men and women we encounter when out and about in our cities. We learn that the four most generous words in the English language are "I'm sorry" and "Thank you." We learn that if we ask, "What do you need?" we may be surprised how readily we can provide assistance, and how a single generous act may turn into something that circulates to include many.

Lucinda and John are a married couple who have committed—they say “humbly and imperfectly”—to making generosity a central practice in their daily lives. What they refer to as their art of right living, within family, work and community, is both a mode of being and a value that infiltrates all others. Generosity inspires and guides them, and continually tests and teaches them. This book is filled with true stories they've collected about generosity in action. Being Generous is their gift to readers, written to enable and encourage us to follow the generous way.

She was famous for her work with the poor in the streets of Calcutta. One day a beggar by the road ran up to her with a small coin—financially worthless to anyone but him. It was his day's take on a long, hot and humid day, and he wanted to give it to her. She pondered what to do. If she took the money then he would have nothing at all, but if she rejected him, it would not only hurt him but insult his generosity. She stretched out her hand—he, who never had the chance to give, could give to Mother Teresa. The joy on his face said everything to her.

The Lesson: Saying no to another's offer denies them the joy of giving. Accepting what they wish to give—even if you don't need it—is what practising true generosity is about.

—from **Being Generous**

From the Hardcover edition.

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