

Chapter Four: GIVING

The simple concept of Giving can be used to enhance joyfulness in a myriad of ways. You can give to yourself, to a stranger, to a loved one, to the land or ocean.

The miraculous thing about practicing Giving is that it can take us from a feeling of lack and emptiness to a joyful realization of our abundance and generosity. It can take us out of the prison of our minds, where we ruminate and worry, and into our hearts, which are spacious and connected to the Infinite.

You may be someone who actually gives too much to others. So, even out the balance by giving more to yourself. Along with *Owning Your Gifts* (gratitude), Giving is a joyfulness-generating machine that never runs out of fuel.

It's fitting that the color associated with Giving is green, because Giving takes us rapidly from a stale, arid place to a lush, growing place full of new life. See if it isn't so.

Questions for Yourself

What would you like to receive right now? Can you give it to yourself?

Do you have an abundance of some good quality? Who would appreciate it?

Do you have gifts to offer the world that are not being appreciated or used? What might you do to create outlets for these gifts?

Meditation

I'm breathing in the color green – the delicate green of new spring leaves, the abundant green of hundred-dollar bills, the soft emerald green of summer lawns, the deep sparkling green of an ocean, the iridescent green of a bird's wing.

I'm entering a very pleasant place, a green and lush clearing in a lovely forest, and in this place I find all the gifts that I can offer the world: loving attention, wisdom, skills, moral support, friendship, practical assistance.

Without feeling a need to do anything at all right now, I'm resting peacefully with all this abundance, resting in the security of knowing that I can at any time give to myself or others from this abundant store of plenty and love.

When I'm ready to return, I come back refreshed, feeling full and generous.

Journaling

If any insights occurred to you about the gifts you have to offer the world, you might wish to write a few lines about them.

Joyfulness Games for GIVING

- Give a silent blessing to every being you pass. It could be a bow, or silently saying “I wish you well,” or “bless.” See how many different beings you can bless in the next five minutes.
- Give the amazing, powerful gift of nonjudgmental listening to someone. Don't interrupt, give advice, or let your attention wander.

- If you see a being in pain, breathe his/her pain in and breathe out a gift of love and healing to him or her.
- Light a candle for the world and sit in peacefulness with the candle for five minutes, sending its light to the whole planet.
- Do an anonymous good deed for someone.
- Give yourself a nice treat, a hug, or a self-massage.
- Send a check, even a tiny amount, to an organization you support.
- Give your wholehearted awareness to an animal or plant or piece of land. Draw it, take its photo, write a song for it or a poem about it. Lavish loving attention on it.
- In a crowded place, especially if there is stress, practice sending loving-kindness to a stranger. Holding him/her gently in your awareness, send loving messages: "I wish you well. I wish you happiness. I wish you peace."
- If you see someone else, even a rival, succeeding in an area where you would like to succeed, don't succumb to envy or resentment! Practice the Buddhist concept of *mudita*, appreciative joy at others' good fortune. "I rejoice in your happiness!" Even if you have to say this through gritted teeth at first, try your best to say it from your heart and keep practicing – it is powerful!

Covenant for GIVING

I hereby covenant to give attention, time, presents, money, treats, massages, love, or good advice to anyone who needs it, starting with myself.

I will start by giving _____

to _____.

Signed: _____ Date: _____