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THE MAGAZINE THAT MOVES YOU!



The Good Conductor

Present Seeds, Future Blossoms

Parenting from the Heart

Teaching service

CONTENTS

FROM THE EDITOR

- 3 **The Good Conductor**
- 4 **Remembering Martha**
- 5 **Present Seeds, Future Blossoms**
- 6 **The Problem of Pride**
- 8 **Parenting from the Heart**
Teaching service
- 10 **When Nobody Noticed**
- 11 **Who's It For?**
- 12 **Notable Quotes**
The purpose of life

One of the central questions that people everywhere have struggled with for millennia is the mystery of what gives life meaning. Everyone wants to be happy and feel fulfilled, but how can we tell what true happiness and fulfillment is and where it comes from?

The ancient Greeks believed that the source of happiness was internal and could be cultivated by living a worthwhile life. They called this eudemonia, which Aristotle described as taking part in activities that draw on our talents and challenge our abilities, acting in ways that benefit others, and guiding our lives by principles and virtues. It isn't enough to simply possess an ability or talent—eudemonia requires it to be put into action with kind deeds.

Living an honest and principled life dedicated to helping others sounds good, but it's not always easy. Our imperfect human nature often gets in the way. Still, the more we learn to put the well-being of others at the center of our thoughts and actions, the more meaning and purpose our lives will have.

I hope the articles and true stories in this issue of *Motivated* will inspire you, and will contribute to making your life both meaningful and worthwhile.

Christina Lane
For *Motivated*

Issue Editor

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The Good Conductor

By Abi May, adapted

British writer Bernard Hare tells the true story of an incident that changed his life, transforming him, as he described it, “from a selfish, potentially violent hedonist* into a decent human being.”

Back in 1982 when he was a student living in London, he was informed that his mother had been taken to the hospital and was unlikely to survive the night. He left immediately to make the journey up to the north of the country.

The trip would require a change of trains, and he realized from the timetable that he would be twenty minutes too late for the connection. It was late evening and these were the last trains of the day. The chances of getting all the way to the hospital without resorting to hitchhiking or car-theft were slim.

He was in such a state of anxiety and distress that he did not welcome the gentle inquiries from the train conductor, who was trying to find out what was the matter with this obviously distraught

young man. He discovered a little later, however, that the same conductor to whom he had responded so curtly radioed ahead and arranged for the connecting train to be delayed to give Bernard time to catch it. This unexpected act of kindness made it possible for him to be at his mother’s side when she died.

When Bernard realized what the conductor had done, he sought him out on the train to offer his heartfelt thanks. The conductor replied, “Not a problem. If you feel the need to thank me, the next time you see someone in trouble, you help them out. That will pay me back amply. Tell them to pay you back the same way and soon the world will be a better place.”

Bernard continued, “Even now, I can’t think of [my mother] without remembering the Good Conductor on that late-night train to Peterborough. ... [I’ll] give you the same advice the Good Conductor gave me. Pass it down the line.” ❧

*hedonist: a person who believes that the pursuit of pleasure is the most important thing in life; a pleasure-seeker.



By Joyce Suttin, adapted

Remembering Martha

My neighbor Martha passed away this week after a long battle with emphysema. I found myself thinking about her a lot these past few days, and I will miss Martha.

When my husband Dan and I moved into the neighborhood, Martha invited us over for tea and cookies. We sat in her immaculate living room and talked about our family and the volunteer work we had been doing in Mexico. It felt like home, and I was thankful to have a neighbor like Martha who was concerned that we'd feel welcome.

I've looked out my window nearly every day for the past eight years and said a prayer for Martha. I've felt a responsibility to keep an eye out for her well-being and be there for her if she needed me.

Martha was alone, you see. She had no children, and her husband had already passed away. As her health declined this past year, Dan would collect her newspaper each morning and place it by her door so she could easily reach it. One day I noticed her gardener mowing her lawn. Then the sound got louder, and I realized he was mowing our lawn as well. Martha motioned to

me from her doorway and told me she was thanking us for Dan's kindness.

I admired Martha's impeccable garden and was honored when she asked me to take care of her plants while she went on vacation. Martha's plants were like her pets. She lavished love and care on them and they thrived.

The other day, Martha's best friend came over. We talked for a few minutes, and she explained that Martha had set up a trust and the bank would be taking over her house. I asked about the plants and she advised me to collect them and look after them, because once the officials from the bank came and locked up the property, the plants in the backyard would be lost. Once again, I felt honored. Martha's plants had brought her so much joy, and now they would bring joy to my family and me.

Martha taught me a lot, and I want to be sure that her legacy of kindness and friendship, like her plants, lives on. In the future, I will make a point of welcoming people into our neighborhood. I won't pry or be invasive, but I'll let them know I'm here if they need anything. We all need a good neighbor from time to time. ❧

Present Seeds, Future Blossoms

By Peter van Gorder, adapted

Walking through a botanical garden in Kolkata, India, I was enthralled by the vibrant and vivid colors of the flowers. For a few hours, I felt like I'd been transported away from the hustle of the city and into a world of beauty. On my way out, I popped into the office to compliment the staff on the good job they do in arranging and caring for the plants.

The director was in that day, and he was happy to share information about the place. I learned that William Carey started this institution—the oldest of its kind in India—in 1820, with a goal of helping the local people in a practical way. He saw the local farmers using inferior seeds and ineffective farming techniques, and he wanted to improve their livelihoods and help them to realize, as he put it, “the capabilities of the soil to enrich a nation to an almost indefinite extent.”

Carey's vision was a whole lot greater than just planting and exhibiting pretty flowers. He gathered near-extinct species of plants and nurtured them in the society's garden so they'd be preserved for the future. He also included maize, cotton, tea, sugar cane, and cinchona* from various countries and introduced the concept of plantation farming to this part of India. He was successful in imparting this vision to others, and the

society he created helped pioneer the introduction of a wide array of cereals, cash crops, fruits, vegetables, and other trees and plants.

I was struck by how Carey's legacy lives on almost two centuries after he had his initial idea. When he started this garden, it was a completely out-of-the-box concept and it is likely that he faced many challenges and much opposition. Yet, Carey persevered.

The garden has survived wars, riots, droughts, and disasters. The vast land area it sits on is now prime real estate in the center of the city, and I'm sure there are quite a few people who would like to see it turned over to more profitable development schemes. To attempt a project like this today in this location would be a monumental—if not impossible—task, but Carey's foresight and hard work all those years ago made it possible for people today to enjoy a little taste of heaven on earth.

It made me realize that what we do now can have a huge impact on the future and the generations to come. We sometimes don't fully appreciate the magnitude of our influence. Everything we do to help someone will have a ripple effect down through the ages into eternity, but it takes breaking the ground and planting that first seed to make a garden. ◀◀

*Cinchona: an evergreen tree, the bark of which is used to produce quinine, an anti-malarial alkaloid.

The Problem of **PRIDE**

By John C. Maxwell, adapted



When you think of the word pride, does it strike you as positive or negative? There are certainly many positive types of pride. It's good to "take pride in our work." We like it when someone tells us, "I'm proud of you." And nearly everyone wants to live in a neighborhood where people display "pride of ownership." All

of these expressions communicate a positive kind of pride: dignity, respect and honor, traits that we all can embrace.

But pride isn't always positive. Pride can also mean conceit, arrogance, or superiority. This kind of pride is based on self-centeredness, and it's destructive.

Selfish pride is especially destructive to relationships. That's because the opposite of loving others is not hating them but rather being self-centered. The great writer and apologist C.S. Lewis had this to say about pride:

“The point is that each person's pride is in competition with everyone else's pride. It is because I wanted to be the big noise at the party that I am so annoyed at someone else being the big noise.... Now what you want to get clear is that pride is essentially competitive, is competitive by its very nature, while the other vices are competitive only, so to speak, by accident.

“Pride gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than the next man. We say that people are proud of being richer, cleverer, or better looking than others. If everyone else became equally rich, or clever, or good looking, there would be nothing to be proud about. It is the comparison that makes you proud: the pleasure of being above the rest.”

So how do we solve the problem of pride? I believe there are several steps we can take to counteract our tendency toward self-centeredness.

1. Recognize and admit your pride.

C.S. Lewis said about acknowledging pride: “If anyone would like to acquire humility, I can, I think, tell him the first step. The first step is to realize that one is proud. And a biggish step, too. At least, nothing whatever can be done before it. If you think you are not conceited, you are very conceited indeed.” You will not solve a problem that you don't know exists.

2. Express your gratitude. Henry Ward Beecher said, “A proud man is seldom a grateful man, for he never thinks he gets as much as he deserves.” There is something about saying “thank you” that takes our eyes off ourselves and puts them back on the blessings we've received and the people who've blessed us.

3. Practice servanthood. A truly great person is always willing to be little. But pride fights against servanthood, because a proud person demands to be served. Serving others requires us to focus on their needs rather than our own, and this also reminds us of how we are part of something bigger than ourselves.

4. Laugh at yourself. There's an old saying, “Blessed are they that laugh at themselves, for they shall never cease to be entertained.” Once you begin to look for the humor in your behavior and situation, you find it everywhere. Proud people take themselves way too seriously. By laughing at yourself, you begin to see how absurd we can all be sometimes.

If your pride pushes you toward performing with excellence, doing your best, and finding joy in the accomplishments of others, it's probably helping you become a better leader. But if there's even a hint of competition or self-promotion in it, it's probably having a negative effect on your relationships. That can hurt both your life and your leadership. If that's true, do what I try to do: I shift my focus onto others and follow the tips above. ◀◀



Teaching **Service**

By Carolyn MacInnes, adapted excerpts

If your kids ever wonder what it means to serve, send them to me. I've seen it in action.

I've seen it all my life—in an Iowa couple named George and Ruth. Before I could even read, I watched them empty bedpans, prepare sponge baths, and feed Ruth's elderly mother. During my teen years, after a drunk driver demolished our car with my whole family inside, I watched them build a mini-hospital in our living room. They made meals, washed sheets, scrubbed dishes, and administered medications for months.

In the 61 years of George and Ruth's marriage, they regularly delivered meals to shut-ins, scraped plates at functions and hugged strangers in nursing homes. Today, George is 91 and Ruth is 86, but they don't seem to notice. They

still fold bulletins, stuff envelopes for good causes, and squeeze the shoulders of neighbors in their assisted living apartments.

George and Ruth haven't ended world hunger. They haven't cured AIDS. They just see needs, and quietly, tenderly meet them. My grandparents put God's great love into action.

Their actions not only changed who I was—they changed who I want to be.

Love in Action

Have your kids seen you in action? It's great to talk about feeding the hungry and doing good, but those accounts are just bedtime stories to children who don't witness servanthood in action in their world.

That realization prompts me to

examine my definition of “service.” See, I’m a doer. I count my day successful if I’ve marked everything off my checklist. If you’re like me, you may even battle a production mentality in the realm of serving. Teaching classes, taking someone a meal, or writing a check to charity are all good activities. But are we cheerful givers?

Our kids aren’t tracking the number of our activities or judging how “good” those works may seem. They’re watching to see if our hands are working in tandem with our hearts.

Rewards for Service

Maybe you’ve experienced those feelings of accomplishment and satisfaction after helping someone ... but that’s just the beginning. Numerous studies link mental and physical health benefits with service. Other research suggests that kids with a mindset to service have higher GPAs, better reading comprehension, sharper critical thinking and problem solving skills, higher levels of creativity, and a greater understanding of and appreciation for others. Kids who are given opportunities to serve others also tend to make healthier lifestyle choices and develop better social skills than those who don’t volunteer.

Aspects of Service

It’s never too early to begin cultivating service-like traits. If we start by teaching and modeling basic kindness, we lay a foundation for communicating the value of work and charity. Some worthwhile aspects of service to teach include:

1. Empathy and compassion: Around the time they start talking, children are capable of empathy. When psychologists studied young children whose parents were physically or emotionally hurt, they observed that the kids either sought to solve the problem or offered comfort and kindness to the parent. It’s critical that we nurture this inherent concern for others.

2. Good work ethic: Idleness leads to ruin. Work is not a punishment, but a means by which we develop character. People who comprehend the purpose of work—and who find satisfaction in a job well done—are most likely to behave in ways that will improve their world.

3. Volunteering, serving, and giving: We never lose when we give of our time and money. People who understand and act on this principle set themselves up to receive abundant blessings in return, in this life and the next!

4. Discernment in service: Compassion must be tempered by wisdom. Kids need to recognize that even if their motives are pure, other people’s may not be. Teach them ways they can protect themselves while giving their time and money as wisely as possible.

My ultimate goal is to live and act as my grandparents did, and to pass that legacy down to my own children. The earlier kids see us putting love in action, the greater chance we have of equipping them for a lifetime of compassion and service. ❧❧

When Nobody Noticed

By Iris Richard, adapted



It was a dull and rainy day as I sat at the window of a small brick row house in Leicester, England, watching the rain form small rivers on the window pane. A friend, who was away for some time, was letting me stay at his house while I helped care for a terminally ill loved one. It was a half-hour bus ride from the house to the Leicester Royal Infirmary, where I spent most of my days.

I had saved up for this trip, taking a two-week unpaid leave from work, and allowing for a few extra days in

case I needed to stay a bit longer before another relative arrived to take my place. However, two weeks had already turned into three, and the relative was still delayed. I was beginning to run short on cash. I secretly started worrying as to how much longer I was going to be able to continue on my present shoestring budget.

That evening, I called my friend Myriam and explained the situation.

“I’m on my way!” she said. “I can take a week off from work and will be glad to join you.”

I picked Myriam up at the bus terminal the following evening. It was pouring rain, but I was so thankful to see her that I hardly noticed.

Not only did Myriam help out financially—she did a grocery shopping and rented a car, which made it easier for us to get to and from the hospital and to take our patient on short outings—but she also provided much-needed moral support. I had reached an emotional low, after daily witnessing the suffering in the cancer ward.

“How will I ever repay you?” I asked when I hugged Myriam good-bye.

“Don’t worry about that! I’m just glad I was able to help.”

When I had thought nobody noticed my desperate situation, my friend’s heart was touched by my need, and she responded and came to my rescue. This experience reminded me of how much good there is in so many people.

The next time I feel that nudge in my heart to help someone in need, I know I’ll feel more inspired to act on it, remembering how much Myriam’s help meant to me. ◀◀

Who's It For?

By Gene Kato, adapted



There have been times when I've felt I was playing a game of pretending to be a good person; for instance when I was volunteering for relief work after the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami in Japan. Part of me sincerely wanted to help and make a difference, but I also knew it was what I should want to do, and I was happy to be seen as someone who wanted to help.

At the time, I threw my heart and soul into relief work. It was nice to feel like I was serving. It was even nicer to be recognized for it. Soon I began questioning why other people weren't doing as much as I, and I found myself looking down on others. It didn't take too long before things started to unravel.

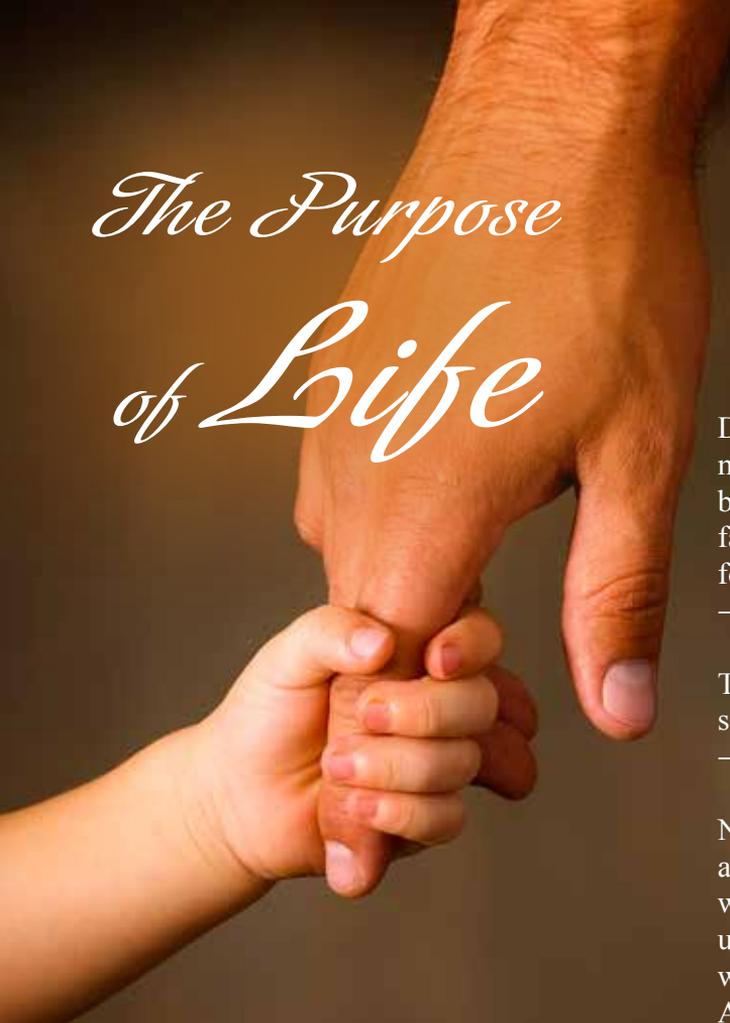
The breaking point came one morning when, ironically, I overslept. I was meant to be a driver in a convoy that was leaving for Tohoku at 6 AM, but my alarm failed, and I was awakened by a phone call at 6:15. I jumped out of bed, scrambled around to get ready as fast as possible, wondering

how I could have let this happen. My girlfriend was planning on coming along as well, but I was in such a rush that I didn't wait for her.

As I drove off, I had a sneaky suspicion that something wasn't right, but I also had a raging headache and a carload of eager volunteers talking nonstop, so I brushed it off. An hour down the road, however, I received a series of irate SMSs from my girlfriend ending with "I hate you."

I had a five-hour drive to think about it, and the more I did, the more I too hated myself. Over the previous months, I had "left behind" other people too, because they couldn't keep up or because I wanted to be all by myself out front.

I called my girlfriend that night and asked her to forgive me. I like to think that a few things changed that day. Not so much in what I did, but in the way I did it. I still have many goals, but I want to accomplish them lovingly and kindly. That's the only way that what I build will last and mean something. ◀◀



The Purpose of Life

Do more than belong: participate. Do more than care: help. Do more than believe: practice. Do more than be fair: be kind. Do more than forgive: forget. Do more than dream: work.
—William Arthur Ward

The purpose of life is to contribute in some way to making things better.
—Robert F. Kennedy

Never forget that you are one of a kind. Never forget that if there weren't any need for you in all your uniqueness to be on this earth, you wouldn't be here in the first place. And never forget, no matter how overwhelming life's challenges and problems seem to be, that one person can make a difference in the world. In fact, it is always because of one person that all the changes that matter in the world come about. So be that one person.
—Richard Buckminster Fuller

Never underestimate the difference YOU can make in the lives of others. Step forward, reach out and help. This week reach out to someone that might need a lift.—Pablo

Go into the world and do well. But more importantly, go into the world and do good.—Minor Myers

The vocation of every man and woman is to serve other people. —Leo Tolstoy

We don't have to engage in grand, heroic actions to participate in the process of change. Small acts, when multiplied by millions of people, can transform the world.—Howard Zinn

Since you get more joy out of giving joy to others, you should put a good deal of thought into the happiness that you are able to give.
—Eleanor Roosevelt

The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well.—Ralph Waldo Emerson