

Special Issue

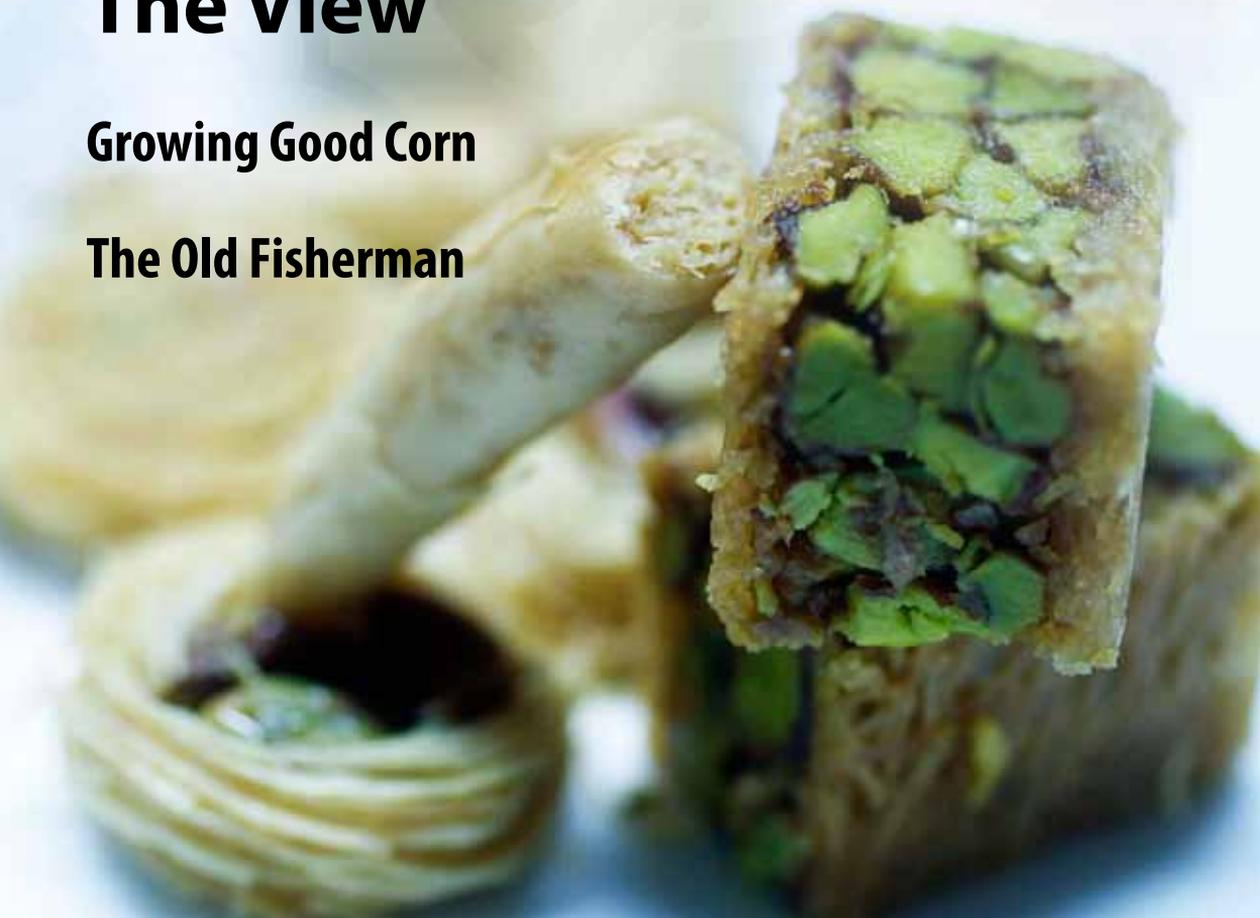
# MOTIVATED

THE MAGAZINE THAT MOVES YOU!

## **The View**

**Growing Good Corn**

**The Old Fisherman**



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Helping others

We can safely say that Eid is a colorful and special event full of happiness, as relatives and friends visit each other to feast and celebrate together.

However, the purpose of Eid is not only for celebration and for recreation. It is also a time to share of our abundance with those in need, to care for those who cannot afford a meal, or buy new clothes and gifts—a time to add the color of happiness to the Eid of those who have fallen on hard times.

Even if we cannot afford to give much, we can always do something to brighten the lives of those less fortunate. We can invite someone to join us for Eid dinner, for example, or prepare some small gifts for the children of a poor family.

This issue of *Motivated* is filled with articles on the joy of giving and helping others, and includes some innovative ideas of how to help others when on a tight budget.

Giving to others will not only brighten Eid for someone else, but it will also brighten our own. The blessings of giving always come back to us, not only on Eid, but also throughout our life. Eid Mubarak!

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# Growing Good Corn

Shared by Steve Goedier on <http://www.LifeSupportSystem.com>

A farmer grew award-winning corn. Each year he entered his corn in the state fair where it won a blue ribbon.

One year a newspaper reporter interviewed him and learned something interesting about how he grew it. The reporter discovered that the farmer shared his seed corn with his neighbors. "How can you afford to share your best seed corn with your neighbors when they are entering corn in competition with yours each year?" the reporter asked.

"Why sir," said the farmer, "didn't you know? The wind picks up pollen from the ripening corn and swirls it from field to field. If my neighbors

grow inferior corn, cross-pollination will steadily degrade the quality of my corn. If I am to grow good corn, I must help my neighbors grow good corn."

So it is with our lives. Those who choose to live in peace must help their neighbors to live in peace. Those who choose to live well must help others to live well, for the value of a life is measured by the lives it touches. And those who choose to be happy must help others to find happiness, for the welfare of each is bound up with the welfare of all.

The lesson for each of us is this: if we are to grow good corn, we must help our neighbors grow good corn. ◆◆



# the view

By Nyx Martinez

I stared past the rusty window frame, out of the bus. The day was off to a gloomy start and so was I. Lost in thought, recalling things that would have been better left forgotten, I sank into a dark mood. Sad, isn't it, how when we're feeling down we tend to busy our mind with thoughts that only waste our time and further sap our spirits?

The bus rolled to a halt—again. Manila traffic! I glanced at my watch. 6 a.m. Too early for traffic to be moving this slowly. I had a deadline to meet and hadn't gotten much sleep the night before. Angrily, I turned back to the window.

A young street vendor was selling black boots that he had shined to a dazzling finish. I could almost read his mind, feel his hopes. Today would be good. Perhaps he'd earn a few more pesos than yesterday and have a better meal tonight. Just maybe.

A prospective buyer stopped. He wore faded jeans and a worn shirt. Slung over his shoulder was an imitation JanSport backpack. He held up a pair of boots and admired

them. Someday, maybe someday, he seemed to be thinking, I'll have enough money to buy some boots like these.

I wondered what his daily earnings came to. Two hundred, maybe three hundred pesos?—About US\$6, tops. The boots cost twice that much. His money was needed elsewhere. He probably had a family back home who needed to eat, and debts to get out from under. His money was spent before he earned it. The boots would have to wait.

The man looked wearily at the vendor. His eyes said it all. Not today. And probably not tomorrow. The two made small talk as if they were old friends. They laughed and shared another story before my bus inched down the block and stopped again.

This time, I found myself staring at a wrinkled old woman selling candy. She sat on a low bench, half obstructing the sidewalk, as the thronging crowd moved around her. Her eyes revealed sadness, about what I didn't know. Maybe the simple fact that today would be just like yesterday and the day

before, like all the days that had turned into years, a day just like she knew tomorrow would be.

She would sit on that stool from sunrise to sundown. A few people would buy bits of candy, but nobody would notice her. After dropping coins into her callused hand, they would hurry off, strangers still. The day would move on with them. The old woman would grow older and not any happier for it.

As I watched, the corners of her mouth fell even more. She stared off into the distance as a glistening drop formed in her eye and ran down her cheek. I had to look away.

A traffic controller was busy at the corner hurrying pedestrians across the intersection. Was he, too, carrying some unseen sorrow? Was he also haunted by thoughts that would have been better left forgotten? If something was bothering him, he couldn't afford to let it show. He had work to do, traffic to move, order to keep.

A twenty-something woman crossed the street at his signal, and I tried to imagine the world through her eyes. What was her story? Where was she

going? What was her name? ... Why did I even care?

My mind snapped back to my own situation and I realized that something had struck a chord inside, against my own will it seemed. It was odd that I should be feeling someone else's emotion. Or was it? Was it okay to be calloused to the feelings of others, to go through my days as if all the nameless people in the crowds around me were mere props in my world? No. Each stranger was someone's mother, someone's child, someone's husband, someone's brother, someone's someone. And they all mattered.

The bus eventually picked up speed and I got on with my day. But in those few glimpses out the bus window, God had given me something that I hope I never lose—empathy, a heart for what others are going through and a desire to help make their world a little brighter.

Out of life's window, my view may change every day, but there will always be people in need passing there. What can I do for them? Real compassion doesn't just observe and then turn away. And neither should I. ◀▶



# *The Old Fisherman*

By Mary Bartels Bray, adapted

Our house was directly across the street from the clinic entrance of Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore. We lived downstairs and rented the upstairs rooms to outpatients at the clinic.

One summer evening, as I was fixing supper, there was a knock at the door. I opened it to see a truly awful looking man. “Why, he’s hardly taller than my eight-year-old,” I thought as I stared at the stooped, shriveled body. But the appalling thing was his face ... lopsided from swelling, red and raw. Yet his voice was pleasant as he said, “Good evening. I’ve come to see if you have a room for just one night. I came for a treatment this morning from the eastern shore, and there’s no bus ‘til morning.”

He told me he’d been hunting for a room since noon but with no success. “No one seemed to have a room. I guess it’s my face ... I know it looks terrible, but my doctor says with a few more treatments...”

For a moment I hesitated, but his next words convinced me. “I could sleep in this rocking chair on the porch. My bus leaves early in the morning.”

I told him we would find him a bed, but to rest on the porch. I went inside and

finished preparing supper. When we were ready, I asked the old man if he would join us. “No thank you. I have plenty” he said, as he held up a brown paper bag.

When I had finished the dishes, I went out on the porch to talk with him for a few minutes. It didn’t take long to see that this old man had an oversized heart crowded into that tiny body. He told me he fished for a living to support his daughter, her five children, and her husband, who was hopelessly crippled from a back injury.

He didn’t tell it by way of complaint. In fact, every other sentence was prefaced with thanks to God for a blessing. He was grateful that no pain accompanied his disease, which was apparently a form of skin cancer. He thanked God for giving him the strength to keep going.

At bedtime, we put a camp cot in the children’s room for him. When I got up in the morning, the bed linens were neatly folded and the little man was out on the porch. He refused breakfast. But just before he left for his bus, haltingly, as if asking a great favor, he said, “Could I please come back and stay the next time I have a treatment? I won’t put you out a bit.

I can sleep fine in a chair.”

He paused a moment and then added, “Your children made me feel at home. Grownups are bothered by my face, but children don’t seem to mind.”

I told him he was welcome to come again.

On his next trip he arrived a little after seven in the morning. As a gift, he brought a big fish and a quart of the largest oysters I had ever seen. He said he had shucked them that morning before he left so that they’d be nice and fresh. I knew his bus left at 4:00 a.m. and I wondered what time he had to get up in order to do this for us.

During the years he came to stay overnight with us, there was never a time that he did not bring us fish or oysters or vegetables from his garden. Other times we received packages in the mail, always by special delivery ... fish and oysters packed in a box with fresh young spinach or kale ... every leaf carefully washed. Knowing that he must walk three miles to mail these, and knowing how little money he had, made the gifts doubly precious.

When I received these little remembrances, I often thought of a comment our next-door neighbor made after he left that first morning. “Did you keep that awful looking man last night? I turned him away! You can lose roomers by putting up

such people!”

Maybe we did lose roomers once or twice. But oh! If only they could have known him, perhaps their illness would have been easier to bear. I know our family will always be grateful to have known him. From him, we learned what it was to accept the bad without complaint and the good with gratitude to God.

Recently I was visiting a friend who has a greenhouse. As she showed me her flowers, we came to the most beautiful one of all ... a golden chrysanthemum, bursting with blooms. But to my great surprise, it was growing in an old dented, rusty bucket.

I thought to myself, “If this were my plant, I’d put it in the loveliest container I had!” My friend changed my mind.

“I ran short of pots,” she explained,” and knowing how beautiful this one would be, I thought it wouldn’t mind starting out in this old pail. It’s just for a little while, until I can put it out in the garden.”

She must have wondered why I laughed so delightedly, but I was imagining such a scene in heaven. “Here’s an especially beautiful one,” God might have said when he came to the soul of the sweet old fisherman. “He won’t mind starting in this small body.”

All this happened long ago ... and now, in God’s garden, how tall this lovely soul must stand. ◆◆





# How to Help a Fellow Human Being Today

By Leo Babauta, adapted excerpts

**T**oo often, the trend in our society is for people to live separate from each other, to be cut off from the great mass of humanity, and in doing so be dehumanized a little bit more with each step we take.

Cars have taken us off the streets, where we used to greet each other and stop to chat. Cubicles have taken away a bit of the humanity in working, as have factories and even computers to some extent. Television has planted us firmly in our living rooms, instead of out with other people. Even movie theaters, where many people get together, cut us off from true conversation, because we're staring at a big screen.

While I'm not railing against any of these inventions (except perhaps the cubicle), what we must guard against is the tendency to focus on ourselves to the exclusion of our fellow human beings—the tendency towards helping ourselves rather than giving and helping our brothers and sisters in need. I'm not saying we're all like that, but it can happen, if we're not careful.

Helping a fellow human being, while it can be inconvenient, has a few humble advantages:

- It makes us feel better about ourselves;
- It connects us with another person, at least for a moment, if not for life;
- It improves the life of another, at least a little;

- It makes the world a better place, one little step at a time;
- And if that kindness is passed on, it can multiply, and multiply.

Let's take just a few minutes today, and do a kindness for another person. It can be something small or the start of something big. Let's put a smile on someone's face.

Don't know where to begin? Here's an extremely incomplete list of ideas, just to help you get started...

- 1. Smile and be friendly.** A simple smile can make a big difference, and make someone's day a little better.
- 2. Call a social welfare organization to volunteer.** Just look up the number, make the call, and make an appointment to volunteer sometime this month. Volunteering is one of the most amazing things you can do.
- 3. Donate something you don't use.** Or a whole box of somethings. Drop them off at a needy institute—others may be able to put your clutter to good use.
- 4. Make a donation.** There are many ways to donate to organizations in your local community. Instead of buying yourself a new gadget or outfit, spend that money in a different way.
- 5. Redirect gifts.** Instead of having people give you birthday or holiday gifts, ask them to donate gifts or money to a certain charity.

**6. Stop to help.** The next time you see someone pulled over with a flat tire, or someone in need of help, stop and ask what you can do. Sometimes all they need is a push, or the use of your cell phone.

**7. Teach.** Take the time to teach someone a skill you know. This could be teaching your Grandma to use email, teaching your child to ride a bike, or teaching a co-worker a valuable computer skill.

**8. Comfort someone.** Often a hug, a helpful hand, a kind word, a listening ear, will go a long way when someone suffered loss or tragedy.

**9. Help someone get active.** A person in your life who wants to get healthy might need a helping hand—offer to go walking or running together, or join a gym together. Once they get started, it can have profound effects.

**10. Do a chore.** Help someone with a small or big chore, like cleaning up, washing a car, doing the dishes, or cutting a lawn.

**11. Send a nice email.** Send a quick note telling someone how much you appreciate them, or how proud you are of them, or just saying thank you for something they did.

**12. Show appreciation, publicly.** Praising someone on a blog, in front of coworkers, in front of family, or in some other public way, is a great way to make them feel better about themselves.

**13. Donate food.** Clean out your cupboard of canned goods, or buy a couple of bags of groceries to donate to an institution that needs it.

**14. Create a care package.** Soup, reading material, tea, chocolate, anything you think the person might need or enjoy. Good for someone who is sick or otherwise in need of a pick-me-up.

**15. Offer to babysit.** Sometimes parents need a break. If a friend or other loved one in your life doesn't get that chance very often, call them and offer to babysit sometime.

**16. Care.** Find ways to express to others that you care, to your partner, a child, a family member, a friend, a co-worker, or a complete stranger. A hug, a kind word, spending time, showing little kindnesses, being friendly, it all matters more than you know. ◀▶

How far that little  
candle throws his  
beams! So shines  
a good deed in a  
weary world.

—William Shakespeare



# flowers for a stranger

From [www.helpothers.org](http://www.helpothers.org), adapted

I went to the hospital to visit a friend in the Intensive Care Unit. I stopped by the gift shop and got a small flower arrangement to take to him. When I got there, the nurse told me I couldn't bring flowers into the ICU so I left them on the counter feeling rather disappointed.

After my visit, I retrieved the bouquet and headed for the elevator. I saw a woman leaning up against the wall looking tired and stressed and as though she'd been crying. I asked if she was okay. She sighed, and told me she could really use some emotional support and assurance, but of course, she understood that everyone was too busy saving lives to do that.

We chatted for a minute and I kept wondering why the elevator was taking so long. Then I realized, I was meant to be there with her at that moment. I handed the flowers to her and said, "I think you might need these more than I do right now." I patted her shoulder and told her to take care of herself. Her face lit up and tears came to her eyes as she thanked me.

As I left the parking garage, I handed the attendant my ticket. Instead of charging me \$4 she accidentally charged me 40 cents and just waved me on my way, and told me not to worry about it. The money saved covered the cost of the flowers. ◆◆

# remembering why it's worth helping

From [www.helpothers.org](http://www.helpothers.org), adapted

Just recently, I had been wondering if there was much point in doing little acts of kindness. So often they get ignored, and occasionally they come back to bite you!

Then, just last week, after a long day of travelling, dragging suitcases behind me, I found myself delayed at a bus station. The bus was running four hours late, and I wasn't in the best of moods.

That's when a woman asked me if I had any spare change to help her get a bus ticket.

"Oh, sure," I said, more than a little sarcastically. "How much would you like?"

As I spoke, I mentally kicked myself for my attitude and reached into my bag for some money. As I handed her five dollars I heard her stomach rumble. This was no gentle, lady-like murmur. This had the growl of real hunger!

I reached back into my bag and brought out a Danish pastry I had bought earlier. I handed it to her with a smile I hoped would make up for my earlier tone of voice. Getting a good look at her now, I realized she was exhausted, like she had had several months of hard days!

As she took the Danish, a look of relief washed over her and I thought she was going to cry. In her appreciation, she tried to give me all she had to spare—an

unused bus ticket for another town! I don't live in that town and the ticket will probably never be used, but I took it in the spirit it was given.

She went to get her ticket and I went back to reading my book.

A few minutes later she came back over, apologized, and told me she was still five dollars short. I grabbed some singles from my bag—and slipped a twenty in there as well. Of course, the voice in my head told me I was being a fool.

She thanked me and went back to the counter. I went back to my book again.

Five minutes later she came back again and tried to return my twenty. When I said that it was for her so she could get something else to eat besides the Danish, that I was completely serious and wasn't taking it back, she started crying and hugged me.

From now on, when I wonder if it is worth trying to help someone I will remember that woman. Maybe I really am making a difference for someone.

Sure, sometimes my efforts might not be noticed, and sometimes they might still come back to bite me, but it's worth all of that for the times we actually do help another human being! ◀▶

# helping others

NOTABLE  
QUOTES



Being good is commendable, but only when it is combined with doing good is it useful.—*Author Unknown*

Live simply that others might simply live.—*Elizabeth Ann Seton*

I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. And I will not let what I cannot do interfere with what I can do.  
—*Edward Everett Hale*

The willingness to share does not make one charitable; it makes one free.  
—*Robert Brault*

It is the greatest of all mistakes to do nothing because you can only do little—do what you can.—*Sydney Smith*

Nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could only do a little.—*Edmund Burke*

The true meaning of life is to plant trees under whose shade you do not expect to sit.—*Nelson Henderson*

If you can't feed a hundred people, then feed just one. Never worry about numbers. Help one person at a time, and always start with the person nearest you.—*Mother Teresa*

Wherever a man turns he can find someone who needs him.  
—*Albert Schweitzer*

He who gives when he is asked has waited too long.  
—*Sunshine Magazine*

Nobody can do everything, but everyone can do something. —*Author Unknown*

Generosity is not giving me that which I need more than you do, but it is giving me that which you need more than I do.—*Khalil Gibran*

I've seen and met angels wearing the disguise of ordinary people living ordinary lives.—*Tracy Chapman*