



**GENEROSITY**  
**QUOTES & STORIES**

# QUOTES

## **(USED for the Spring 2023 Generosity Temp quiz)**

“That day, I learned that I could be a giver by simply bringing a smile to another person. The ensuing years have taught me that a kind word, a vote of support is a charitable gift. I can move over and make another place for someone. I can turn my music up if it pleases, or down if it is annoying. I may never be known as a philanthropist, but I certainly am a lover of mankind, and I will give freely of my resources.” – Maya Angelou  
/ Author, A Letter to My Daughter

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## **(USED for the Spring 2023 What is Generosity “answer”)**

“True generosity has nothing to do with how much money you have, how much you volunteer, or how much you give – true generosity has everything to do with what’s in your heart. Mother Teresa said it well: ‘It is not how much we give but how much love we put into giving.’” – Excerpts from HOPE, SHE WROTE: 5 Characteristics of Generous People

“Do everything in love.” – Corinthians 16:14

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## **(USED for Spring 2023 Generosity Temp Quiz)**

“No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.” – Matthew 5:15-16

“Give something, however small, to the one in need. For it is not small to one who has nothing. Neither is it small to God, if we have given what we could.” – St. Gregory Nazianzen / 4th-century Archbishop of Constantinople and theologian

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## **(USED in Fall 2023 Spire Quote from article by Jeremy Jinkins)**

Tom Are, a retired pastor, once said this when reflecting on being a part of the church, “When I joined the church, I did not so much join God as I joined a people who have a unique and eternally important mission in this world. That fellowship and mission deserve my financial support.” PCW is not so much an institution, but a community that God breathes life into so that we can be the body of Christ for our local community. How can you participate? One important way is to consider the many stories of how this church has changed lives, and make your recurring gift to support our shared work.

**(USED 9/7/2023)**

“Our God is a God of abundance, and He created us full of abundance. Gratitude and generosity go hand in hand; the more we appreciate our lives, the more we want to give to others.

Let's celebrate all that God has given us and "...trust in God alone Who loves us and enriches us with abundant gifts. And so we will seek to move...

In attitude from scarcity to abundance

In lifestyle from Consumption to renewal

In finance from debt to freedom"

– Excerpt from a Hudson River Presbytery prayer

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**(USED 9/14/2023)**

Where Grace happens Generosity happens. – Max Lucado / American author and minister

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**(USED 9/21/2023)**

“The world says, the more you take, the more you have. Christ says, the more you give, the more you are.” — Frederick Buechner / American author, Presbyterian minister, preacher, and theologian

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**(USED for October 2023 Small Group Packets)**

“Generosity stories, kindness stories, are the ones we all must tell most to keep our hearts and spirits alive in this most complicated and difficult and amazing life.” – Sylvia

Boorstein / Author

**(USED for 10/1/2023 Small Group Packets)**

“... you might ... think of generosity as a one-way transaction. As the giver, you feel the need to be independent and self-sufficient. You want to refuse the help, recognition, and support that might make your efforts more effective — or might even serve your needs.

Truthfully, this generosity hurts. It is not honoring to God. Paul’s famous “body of Christ” metaphor makes it clear that God did not design any of us to operate independently.

“The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I don’t need you!’ And the head cannot say to the feet, ‘I don’t need you!’” — 1 Cor 12:21, NIV

The irony of refusing help is that it can burn you out and make you a worse giver. The energy you have to help others can slowly deplete if you do not humble yourself to accept love from others, too. Selflessness is a beautiful trait, but it does not mean that you must not receive. Receive with the willingness to give back, giving thanks and recognition to God, for He is the reason you are able to give.” – Nicklaus Bartelli / Author “Myths of Generosity: I Need All the Right Character Traits to be Generous”

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**(USED for 10/8/2023 Small Group Packets)**

“The modern English word ‘generosity’ derives from the Latin word ‘generosus’, which means ‘of noble birth.’ Most recorded English uses of the word ‘generous’ up to and during the Sixteenth Century reflect an aristocratic sense of being of noble lineage or high birth. To be generous was literally a way of saying ‘to belong to nobility.’ During the 17th Century, however, the meaning and use of the word began to change. Generosity came increasingly to identify not literal family heritage but a nobility of spirit thought to be associated with high birth— that is, with various admirable qualities that could now vary from person to person, depending not on family history but on whether a person actually possessed the qualities.” – Science of Generosity, University of Notre Dame

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**(USED for 10/15/2023 Small Group Packets)**

“Basically, all the generous folks I know, share virtually the same inner qualities, that I have tried to emulate.

All of them have a joy of life. Now, not only are they happy to be alive, but they are very happy that other people are alive, as well.

Generous people seem to feel the same pain, as experienced by other people, when they are suffering, and in need. It is as if the generous person takes it as a personal affront, when someone else is hurting.

Generous people want to heal the hurt. Generous people want fill the lack, and satisfy the need. Generous people are eager to help.

And, generous people simply radiate such a powerful love, not only are they willing to sacrifice, but their love is so strong, it even denies the sacrifice is a sacrifice.” – James T. Bawden

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**(USED 10/29/2023 in Worship At Home email)**

“Do Good. Be Rich in Good Deeds. Be Generous. Be Willing to Share.” – 1 Timothy 6:18

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**(USED for 10/22/2023 Small Group Packets)**

“We need, above all, to see giving as a part of our spiritual life. We must recognize that like prayer, fasting, Scripture reading etc., giving is something which contributes to our growth in God’s image and likeness. When we do this we not only grow personally, but we provide our Church with the resources necessary to fulfill the mission which Christ has created it to perform.” – OrthodoxWiki, The Theology of Giving

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**(USED 11/9/2023)**

We believe the world was made by a God who is a community of persons who have loved each other for all eternity. You were made for mutually self-giving, other directed love. Self-centeredness destroys the fabric of what God has made.

– Tim Keller / Founding Pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in NYC, preacher and author

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**(USED 11/16/2023)**

“Always give without remembering and always receive without forgetting.” – Brian Tracy / Motivational public speaker and self-development author

**(USED 11/23/2023)**

“Give away your life; you’ll find life given back with bonus and blessing. Giving, not getting, is the way Generosity begets generosity.” – Luke 6:38

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**(USED Nov 30, 2023)**

It is people who are engaged with their faith and engaged with the church that give. –  
Erik Ely / Generosity Consultant

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**(USED Dec 2023)**

“Generosity is giving more than you can, and pride is taking less than you need.” –  
Khalil Gibran / Lebanese-American writer, poet and visual artist

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**(USED Dec 2023)**

“If you want to be holy, be kind.” — Frederick Buechner / American author,  
Presbyterian minister, preacher, and theologian

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**(USED Dec 2023)**

“The life you live is the lesson you teach.” – Marie Humphrey / Speaker and author

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**(USED Jan 2024)**

“Give until it hurts.” – Tim Keller / Founding Pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church  
in NYC, preacher and author

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**(USED Jan 2024)**

Spread love everywhere you go. Let no one ever come to you without leaving happier.”  
– Mother Teresa / Albanian-Indian Catholic nun and the founder of the Missionaries of  
Charity

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**(USED Jan 2024)**

“We ourselves feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean. But the ocean  
would be less because of that missing drop.” – Mother Teresa / Albanian-Indian  
Catholic nun and the founder of the Missionaries of Charity

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**(USED Feb 2024)**

“I’ve learned that you shouldn’t go through life with a catcher’s mitt on both hands; you  
need to be able to throw something back.” – Maya Angelou / American author and  
scholar

**(USED Feb 2024)**

“No one has ever become poor from giving.” – Maya Angelou / American author and scholar

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**(USED Feb 2024)**

“I just give from my heart. I never know what I’m going to do or why I’m gonna do it. I just see a need and if I can fill it, then I will.” – Dolly Parton / American singer-songwriter, actress, and philanthropist

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**(USED Feb 2024)**

“Money is but one venue for generosity. Kindness is an even more valuable currency.”  
— Alan Cohen / Bestselling author of inspirational titles and New York Times contributor

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**(USED Mar 2024)**

“I am afraid the only safe rule is to give more than we can spare. If our giving habits do not at all pinch or hamper us, I should say they are too small. There ought to be things we want to do but cannot do because our giving expenditures exclude them.”  
– C.S. Lewis / British writer, literary scholar, and Anglican lay theologian

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**(USED Mar 2024)**

“If you are not generous when it’s difficult, you will not be generous when it’s easy. Generosity is a function of the heart, not the wallet.” – Wayne Dyer / American self-help author and motivational speaker.

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**(USED Mar 2024)**

“I was in darkness, but I took three steps and found myself in paradise. The first step was a good thought, the second, a good word; and the third, a good deed.” – Friedrich Nietzsche / German classical scholar, philosopher, and critic of culture

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**(USED Mar 2024)**

“Each of us must rededicate ourselves to serving the common good. We are a community. Our individual Fates are linked; our futures intertwined; and if we act in that knowledge and in that spirit together, as the Bible says: “We can move mountains.”” – Jimmy Carter / American politician and humanitarian who served as the 39th president of the United States

**(USED May 2024)**

“I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples.” – Mother Teresa / Albanian-Indian Catholic nun and the founder of the Missionaries of Charity

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**(USED May 2024)**

“You cannot do a kindness too soon because you never know how soon it will be too late.”— Ralph Waldo Emerson, American essayist, lecturer, philosopher, abolitionist and poet

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**(USED June 2024)**

“Everything you have is to give.” – Ernest Hemingway / Author

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**(USED June 2024)**

“The whole world is short staffed. Be kind to those who show up.” – Unattributed

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**(USED June 2024)**

“Never look down on anybody unless you’re helping them up.” – Jesse Jackson / Political activist, Baptist minister and politician

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**(USED July 2024)**

“As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.” – Colossians 3:12-13

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**(USED July 2024)**

“The charitable say in effect, ‘I seem to have more than I need and you seem to have less than you need. I would like to share my excess with you.’ Fine, if my excess is tangible, money or goods, and fine if not, for I learned that to be charitable with gestures and words can bring enormous joy and repair injured feelings.” –Maya Angelou / American author and scholar



**(USED August 2024)**

“If you’re in the luckiest one percent of humanity, you owe it to the rest of humanity to think about the other 99 percent.” – Warren Buffett / Businessman, investor, and philanthropist

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**(USED August 2024)**

“The only ones among you who will be really happy are those who will have sought and found how to serve.” – Albert Schweitzer / Theologian, humanitarian, philosopher, physician, Nobel Peace Prize winner

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“One of the most important things you can do on this earth is to let people know they are not alone.” – Shannon Alder / Life coach, author, therapist

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“You give but little when you give of your possessions. It is when you give of yourself that you truly give.” – Kahlil Gibran / Writer, poet and visual artist

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# STORIES

**(USED June 2024)**

*Story 20 Excerpt from Zen Shorts by Jon J Muth*

“My uncle Ry lived alone in a small house up in the hills. He didn’t own many things. He lived a simple life. One evening, he discovered he had a visitor. A robber had broken into the house and was rummaging through my uncle’s few belongings. The robber didn’t notice Uncle Ry, and when my uncle said “Hello,” the robber was so startled he almost fell down.

My uncle smiled at the robber and shook his hand. “Welcome! Welcome! How nice of you to visit!” The robber opened his mouth to speak, but he couldn’t think of anything to say,

Because Ry never lets anyone leave empty-handed, he looked around the tiny hut for a gift for the robber. But there was nothing to give. The robber began to back toward the door. He wanted to leave.

At last, Uncle Ry knew what to do. He took off his only robe, which was old and tattered. “Here,” he said, “Please take this.”

The robber thought my uncle was crazy. He took the robe, dashed out the door, and escaped into the night.

My uncle sat and looked at the moon, its silvery light spilling over the mountains, making all things quietly beautiful. “Poor man,” lamented my uncle. “All I had to give him was my tattered robe. If only I could have given him this wonderful moon.”

## (USED Jan 2024)

In March of 2022, I was diagnosed with breast cancer. As a single mother of two boys, one with autism, this was devastating and petrifying news. Not surprisingly, my family rallied around me. My sister-in-law drove from the city to meet me at every initial appointment. My sister took her vacation time to stay with me after surgery. My 84-year-old mother came and made me soup and toast during chemo – the usual suspects.

My sister started a meal train and asked me for emails of the people I most thought would want to participate and would have the time and energy. So many people signed up: friends, neighbors, church friends, the band from Wired (one band member signed up 11 times – my sister said, “Is that person a saint or what?” LOL), work colleagues, etc., but what surprised me the most were the people I hardly knew.

One day, I came home to a basket of begonias with a card and a bracelet that said “Warrior” – to this day, I have no idea who left it. My new neighbor, who works full time and has three small children, signed up twice and texted me weekly to see how I was doing. My warrior sister, Kate, who had just gone through it herself, dropped off a box of goodies, made dinner, and gave us a gift card to Bareburger (a huge hit!). A mom from Franklin, whom I hadn’t seen in ages, who has a special needs child and works full time, dropped off a pot of tulips (no note, just placed on my porch when I got home from chemo).

I thought about myself and my generosity (or lack thereof). How often did I use my “busyness” as an excuse not to be generous? My lack of funds? My own special needs child? How often did I think of doing something for someone, but it slipped my mind, or I was just genuinely exhausted? Most people want to be generous, but time and life get in the way. I realized in these small gestures from busy, overwhelmed people that being generous doesn’t take much. How long does it take to send a text? To grab a pot of tulips from Trader Joe’s? To write a check for \$10 or \$100 if you have the means? To check in and say, “Thinking of you.” I learned that all the gestures– big and small – mean so much. I realized it’s important to do what you can. Did you make it from Target to the car and forget the gift card? Run back in. Meant to send a text but forgot? Write yourself a Post-it to send it tomorrow.

Yes, giving can sometimes be a pain or annoying. Writing a check can undoubtedly be painful and scary. But it means so much to the person you’re giving to, and of course, most of all, it means so much to God.

– PCW member Leslie Crowe

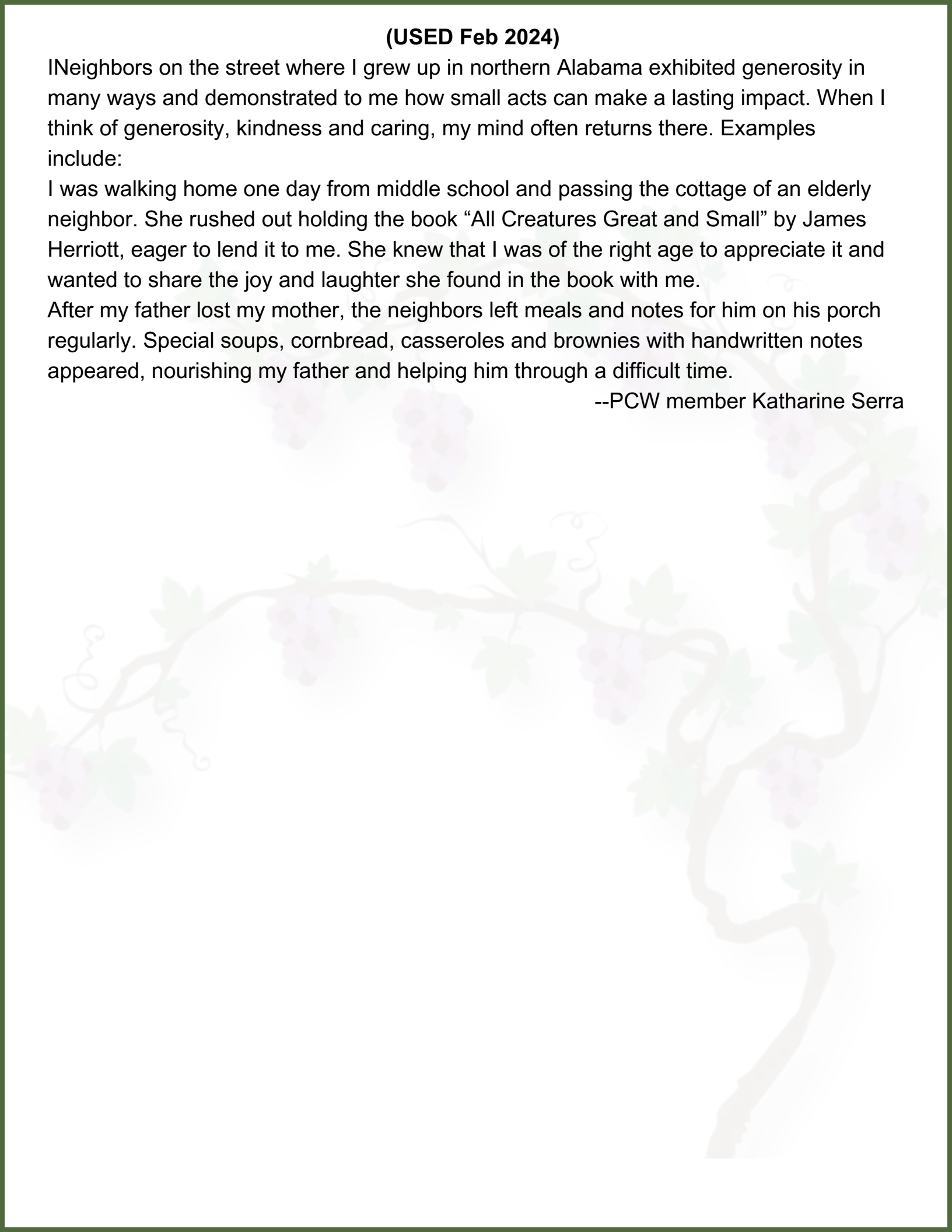
**(USED Feb 2024)**

Neighbors on the street where I grew up in northern Alabama exhibited generosity in many ways and demonstrated to me how small acts can make a lasting impact. When I think of generosity, kindness and caring, my mind often returns there. Examples include:

I was walking home one day from middle school and passing the cottage of an elderly neighbor. She rushed out holding the book "All Creatures Great and Small" by James Herriott, eager to lend it to me. She knew that I was of the right age to appreciate it and wanted to share the joy and laughter she found in the book with me.

After my father lost my mother, the neighbors left meals and notes for him on his porch regularly. Special soups, cornbread, casseroles and brownies with handwritten notes appeared, nourishing my father and helping him through a difficult time.

--PCW member Katharine Serra



(USED Mar 2024)  
Story 13/Telephone Operator:  
From Reader's Digest

<https://www.rd.com/article/boy-telephone-operator-friendship/>

**How a Boy and His Telephone Operator Formed a Lovely, Lasting Friendship**

*Paul Villiard*

When I was quite young, my family had one of the first telephones in the neighborhood. I remember well the polished oak case fastened to the wall on the lower stair landing. The shiny receiver hung on the side of the box. I even remember the number: 105. I was too little to reach the telephone, but I used to listen with fascination when my mother talked to it. Once she lifted me up to speak to my father, who was away on business. Magic!

Then I discovered that somewhere inside that wonderful device lived an amazing person—her name was “Information Please,” and there was nothing that she did not know. My mother could ask her for anybody’s number; when our clock ran down, Information Please immediately supplied the correct time.

My first personal experience with this genie-in-the-receiver came one day while my mother was visiting a neighbor. Amusing myself at the tool bench in the basement, I whacked my finger with a hammer. The pain was terrible, but there didn’t seem to be much use crying, because there was no one home to offer sympathy. I walked around the house sucking my throbbing finger, finally arriving at the stairway. The telephone! Quickly I ran for the footstool in the parlor and dragged it to the landing. Climbing up, I unhooked the receiver and held it to my ear. “Information Please,” I said into the mouthpiece just above my head.

A click or two, and a small, clear voice spoke into my ear. “Information.”

“I hurt my fingerrrr—” I wailed into the phone. The tears came readily enough, now that I had an audience.

“Isn’t your mother home?” came the question.

“Nobody’s home but me,” I blubbered.

“Are you bleeding?”

“No,” I replied. “I hit it with the hammer, and it hurts.”

“Can you open your icebox?” she asked. I said I could. “Then chip off a little piece of ice, and hold it on your finger. That will stop the hurt. Be careful when you use the ice pick,” she admonished. “And don’t cry. You’ll be all right.”

After that, I called Information Please for everything. I asked her for help with my geography, and she told me where Philadelphia was, and the Orinoco, the romantic river that I was going to explore when I grew up. She helped me with my arithmetic, and she told me that my pet chipmunk—I had caught him in the park just the day before—would eat fruit and nuts.

And there was the time that my pet canary passed away. I called Information Please and told her the sad story. She listened, then said the usual things that grown-ups say to soothe a child. But I was unconsoled: Why was it that birds should sing so beautifully and bring joy to whole families, only to end as a heap of feathers, feet up, on the bottom of a cage?

She must have sensed my deep concern, for she said quietly, “Paul, always remember that there are other worlds to sing in.”

Somehow I felt better.

Another day I was at the telephone. “Information,” said the now familiar voice. “How do you spell fix?” I asked.

“Fix something? F-i-x.”

At that instant, my sister, who took unholy joy in scaring me, jumped off the stairs at me with a banshee shriek—“Yaaaaaaaaa!” I fell off the stool, pulling the receiver out of the box by its roots. We were both terrified—Information Please was no longer there, and I was not at all sure that I hadn’t hurt her when I pulled the receiver out.

Minutes later, there was a man on the porch. “I’m a telephone repairman,” he said. “I was working down the street, and the operator said there might be some trouble at this number.” He reached for the receiver in my hand. “What happened?” I told him.

“Well, we can fix that in a minute or two.” He opened the telephone box, exposing a maze of wires, and coiled and fiddled for a while with the end of the receiver cord, tightening things with a small screwdriver. He jiggled the hook up and down a few times, then spoke into the phone. “Hi, this is Pete. Everything’s under control at 105. The kid’s sister scared him, and he pulled the cord out of the box.”

He hung up, smiled, gave me a pat on the head, and walked out the door.

All this took place in a small town in the Pacific Northwest. Then, when I was nine years old, we moved across the country to Boston—and I missed my mentor acutely. Information Please belonged in that old wooden box back home, and I somehow never thought of trying the tall, skinny new phone that sat on a small table in the hall.

Yet, as I grew into my teens, the memories of those childhood conversations never really left me; often in moments of doubt and perplexity, I would recall the serene sense of security I had when I knew that I could call Information Please and get the right answer. I appreciated how very patient, understanding, and kind she was to have wasted her time on a little boy.

A few years later, on my way west to college, my plane put down at Seattle. I had about half an hour between plane connections, and I spent 15 minutes or so on the phone with my sister, who lived there now, happily mellowed by marriage and motherhood. Then, really without thinking what I was doing, I dialed my hometown operator and said, “Information Please.”

Miraculously, I heard again the small, clear voice I knew so well: “Information.”

I hadn’t planned this, but I heard myself saying, “Could you tell me, please, how to spell the word fix?”

There was a long pause. Then came the softly spoken answer. “I guess,” said Information Please, “that your finger must have healed by now.”

I laughed. “So it’s really still you,” I said. “I wonder if you have any idea how much you meant to me during all that time ... ”



“I wonder,” she replied, “if you know how much you meant to me? I never had any children, and I used to look forward to your calls. Silly, wasn’t it?”

It didn’t seem silly, but I didn’t say so. Instead I told her how often I had thought of her over the years, and I asked if I could call her again when I came back to visit my sister after the first semester was over.

“Please do. Just ask for Sally.”

“Goodbye, Sally.” It sounded strange for Information Please to have a name. “If I run into any chipmunks, I’ll tell them to eat fruit and nuts.”

“Do that,” she said. “And I expect one of these days, you’ll be off for the Orinoco. Well, goodbye.”

Just three months later, I was back again at the Seattle airport. A different voice answered, “Information,” and I asked for Sally.

“Are you a friend?”

“Yes,” I said. “An old friend.”

“Then I’m sorry to have to tell you. Sally had been working only part-time in the last few years because she was ill. She died five weeks ago.” But before I could hang up, she said, “Wait a minute. Did you say your name was Villiard?”

“Yes.”

“Well, Sally left a message for you. She wrote it down.”

“What was it?” I asked, almost knowing in advance what it would be.

“Here it is; I’ll read it—’Tell him I still say there are other worlds to sing in. He’ll know what I mean.’”

I thanked her and hung up. I did know what Sally meant.

**(USED Dec 2023)**

**Story 3/Kenya:**

Today, I was traveling in Kenya and I met a refugee from Zimbabwe. He said he hadn't eaten anything in over 3 days and looked extremely skinny and unhealthy. Then my friend offered him the rest of the sandwich he was eating. The first thing the man said was, "We can share it."

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**(USED May 2024)**

**Story 6/Keanu:**

Online tribute written by Sandra Bullock [with a few additions from other sources]  
This is Keanu Reeves. He was abandoned by his father at 3 years old and grew up with 3 different stepfathers. He is dyslexic. His dream of becoming a hockey player was shattered by a serious accident. His daughter died at birth. His wife died in a car accident. His best friend, River Phoenix, died of an overdose. His sister battled leukemia. No bodyguards, no luxury houses. Keanu lives in an ordinary apartment and likes wandering around town and often seen riding a subway in NYC.

[Reeves once gave up his seat on the New York City subway to a woman with a large bag]

[When riding the NYC subway, Reeves was alone in a car with a woman who clearly recognized him. She did not want to bother him so she left him alone. When he was getting off the subway, he walked over to her and said, "Nice conversation."]

When he was filming the movie "The Lake House," he overheard the conversation of two costume assistants, one crying as he would lose his house if he did not pay \$20,000 – On the same day, Keanu deposited the necessary amount in his bank account. In his career, he has donated large sums to hospitals including \$75 million of his earnings from "The Matrix" to charities.

In 2010, on his birthday, Keanu walked into a bakery & bought a brioche with a single candle, ate it in front of the bakery, and offered coffee to people who stopped to talk to him.

In 1997 some paparazzi found him walking one morning in the company of a homeless man in Los Angeles, listening to him and sharing his life for a few hours.

In life, sometimes the ones most broken from inside are the ones most willing to help others. This man could buy everything, and instead every day he gets up and chooses one thing that cannot be bought: to be real.

Keanu Reeves, The One

**(USED July 2024)**

***Story 2/Wheelchair:***

Today, a boy in a wheelchair saw me desperately struggling on crutches with my broken leg and offered to carry my backpack and books for me. He helped me all the way across campus to my class and as he was leaving he said, "I hope you feel better soon."

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**(USED July 2024)**

***Story 1/Firefighter:***

Today, after my 72 hour shift at the fire station, a woman ran up to me at the grocery store and gave me a hug. When I tensed up, she realized I didn't recognize her. She let go with tears of joy in her eyes and the most sincere smile and said, "On 9-11-2001, you carried me out of the World Trade Center."

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**(USED August 2024)**

The night before my father moved out of his home of almost 50 years, the doorbell rang.

A new neighbor came to share that at the holidays, my father had placed sprigs of holly from his yard in a small vase and set it at her door with a note of good wishes. He had done this for all the neighbors on the street. The woman said that this small, heartfelt gesture was the most meaningful gift of all she received.

Acts of generosity do not have to be large and dramatic to have an impact.

– PCW Member Katharine Serra



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