

COUNSELING CORNER

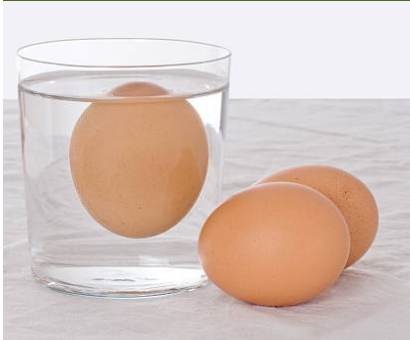
Monthly School Newsletter from Lutheran Counseling Services

Car Conversations

In the car, classroom or dinner table, try some of these ideas to build this trait in yourself, your family or your class.



- Discuss Proverbs 11:25 *A Generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.* Talk about how generosity refreshes, and give examples of when you have been generous and felt refreshed in the process.
- As a class or family, grab an egg, small container to fit the egg, water and salt. Use [these directions](#) to talk about what a classmate or family member may feel like when not supported. Discuss ways to be generous towards others by freely giving resources and support in the class or family. Talk about what it would be like to live in a generous family, go to a generous school, or live in a



Generosity

Defined by researchers ([American Psychological Association](#)) as

“the quality of freely giving one’s support or resources to others in need”,

generosity has long been studied. While generosity is aimed at others, there are many benefits to the giver as well. These include:

- Reduced blood pressure and decreases in dementia risk, anxiety, depression and chronic pain. ([University of British Columbia](#))
- Boosted happiness through increased endorphins, dopamine and oxytocin. ([The Paradox of Generosity](#))
- Decreased stress levels ([Science Daily](#))
- Increased marital satisfaction ([Journal of Marriage and Family](#))
- Increased life expectancy. ([US news and world report](#))

So how can we live longer, happier, less stressed, and healthier lives by being generous? Being generous can be boosted by building more positive thinking and positive emotions into our lives. When we are in a positive state and we feel good, it makes it more likely that we will be generous and enhance the positivity of others around us with our actions and choices.

In a positive snowball effect, being generous towards others can also boost our own happiness, which in turn increases the likelihood that we will be generous again. Over time and repetition, this can change the generosity of a culture (or classroom or family). Choosing a way to be generous that makes a positive impact in someone else’s life is a great start. This can be anything from a thoughtful note or text

generous neighborhood. Plan ways to increase generosity in these and other areas.

- To make generosity a practice, write generous activity ideas on slips of paper, chaining them together. Take one paper a day and find a way to follow the prompt to be generous that day. Talk about how easy or difficult it was to keep generosity going. Did small acts of generosity lead to a focus on other ways to be generous?
- Consider some of these ideas to practice generosity:
 - Donate favorite non-perishable food items
 - Spend time doing an activity someone else likes
 - Share a talent you have
 - Pick up trash, sweep a sidewalk, plant flowers
 - Choose a charity to support as a class/family
 - Share a toy, book, food
 - Make something for someone else
 - Thank someone for being generous to you
- Images courtesy of [Pexels.com](https://www.pexels.com)

message, to joining in an activity that has meaning to someone, like supporting their favorite charity.

In *The Paradox of Generosity: Giving We Receive, Grasping We Lose*, the authors promote 5 practices of generous people:

- Voluntary financial giving
- Volunteering time
- Relational Generosity (generous with attention and emotions)
- Neighborly generosity (kind acts towards those around you)
- Personal importance of generosity

Additionally, the main quality of generosity that had an impact (boosted the above benefits) was that it became a regular practice. The research in the book clearly showed the limitations of one-time acts of generosity. Instead, they propose that making a habit or lifestyle of being generous had the most positive impact.

Focus this month (and beyond) on ways to practice the above areas of generosity and see how it impacts others' lives as well as your own.

References:

Smith, C., & Davidson, H. (2014). *The paradox of generosity: Giving we receive, grasping we lose*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199394906.001.0001>



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