

The Gift with No Giver

Anonymous Giving as a Portal to Higher Consciousness

By Dan Ofstedal – August 18, 2025 ¹

“Give it away, give it away, give it away now”—Red Hot Chili Peppers, “Give it Away”

The Gateway of Giving

Look in the back of any orchestra program or on a hospital donor wall, and you'll often see a simple entry: "Anonymous." I like to think these donors understand something profound—that their greatest gift is not their money, but the gift they give themselves: the chance to let go of ego. In choosing anonymity, they transform their giving from a transaction into a spiritual practice, from an act of charity into an expression of higher consciousness.

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Giving, whether anonymous or not, is a doorway to a higher state of consciousness. When we give—whether time, money, love, or support—we step beyond the boundaries of our small ego self and touch something greater. This act of extending ourselves for others' benefit (and ours) naturally moves us from a place of lack, scarcity and self-protection toward one of abundance and connection.

In Buddhism, the practice of *dāna* (generosity) is revered as one of the fundamental spiritual practices. The act of giving cultivates qualities that dissolve the ego's grip: compassion, non-attachment, and recognition of our interconnectedness. In Hinduism, the Bhagavad Gita teaches that giving is a form of sacrifice that purifies the giver, aligning them with divine consciousness.

Modern spiritual teacher Ram Dass captures this beautifully: "When you give without attachment, you're not just helping the other person — you're burning off your own ego." Every act of genuine giving becomes a small death of the self-centered mind and a rebirth into wider awareness.

Beyond the Amount: The Consciousness Behind the Gift

The transformative power of giving lies not in the magnitude of our gift, but in the consciousness we bring to it. This truth is powerfully illustrated in one of Jesus's most profound teachings:

Luke 21:1–4 (NIV)

As Jesus looked up, he saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. "Truly I tell you," he said, "this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."

The widow's two small coins represent something far greater than their monetary value. Her offering came from a place of complete surrender and trust—she gave not from her surplus, but from her heart.

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Jesus honors her not for the amount, but for the *consciousness behind her gift*: a quiet generosity born of faith and detachment from material security.

This principle echoes across spiritual traditions. In the Qur'an, we read: "It is not their meat nor their blood that reaches Allah: it is your piety that reaches Him" (22:37). The gift becomes sacred not through its size, but through the purity of intention behind it.

The Hindu concept of sattvic giving reinforces this truth. As the Bhagavad Gita teaches:

"Charity given without expectation of return, at the proper time and place, to a worthy person — that is considered sattvic giving, the purest form." (17:20)

Whether we give a fortune or a few coins, whether we volunteer for hours or offer a single moment of genuine attention, the spiritual impact is determined by the depth of our surrender, not the scale of our sacrifice.

The Pinnacle: Anonymous Giving and Ego Transcendence

While all conscious giving elevates our awareness, anonymous giving represents the culmination of this spiritual practice. When we give without any possibility of recognition, we transcend the ego's most persistent desires: to be seen, thanked, and admired.

Jesus speaks directly to this highest form of giving in the Sermon on the Mount:

Matthew 6:1–4 (NIV)

"Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them... But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."

Here, Jesus describes more than mere humility—he outlines a pathway to spiritual maturity. When we give anonymously, we also give ourselves the opportunity to disengage completely from the ego's hunger for credit. We give without strings, without the possibility of recognition, and in doing so, we open ourselves to something deeper than external praise: inner peace, alignment with the divine, and freedom from our self-centered ego-mind.

This wisdom appears across traditions. The Qur'an affirms: "If you disclose your charity, it is well; but if you conceal it and give it to the poor, it is better for you" (2:271). In Buddhism, a teaching from the Dhammapada says: "The one who gives without expectation, without seeking praise, shines like a flame that cannot be hidden."

The great Jewish philosopher Moses Maimonides identified anonymous giving as a higher form of charity: "one who gives charity to the poor in such a way that the giver knows not to whom he gives, and the receiver knows not from whom he takes." This mutual anonymity creates pure generosity, untainted by personality or expectation.

Modern teacher Eckhart Tolle explains why this practice is so transformative: "The ego lives through comparison and recognition. True giving is free of the need to be seen." When we give anonymously, we practice the ultimate spiritual discipline: acting from love while allowing the personal self to disappear entirely.

This all points to the higher truth: who we truly are is not our ego or our sense of identity. We are part of something greater, which goes by many names: the universe, divine mind, universal consciousness, God, the infinite, etc.

The Practice: Moving Toward Egoless Giving

This understanding invites us into practice. We can begin by examining our motivations: When we give—time, money, advice, help—do we sometimes hope to be thanked, seen, or appreciated? Of course, there's nothing wrong with receiving gratitude, but *our attachment to it* reveals the ego's involvement in our generosity.

A simple suggestion: The next time we have an opportunity to give—whether a donation, an act of kindness, or a helping hand—try doing it anonymously. Don't tell anyone, even friends or family. Don't seek thanks. Just give. Then observe what arises.

Does the ego protest? Does it want to be noticed? Or does something deeper feel quiet, content, and free? In that inner stillness, we discover what the mystics have always known: when we give without seeking reward, we don't lose ourselves—we find our true Self, the consciousness that exists beyond the need for recognition, *connected to everything*.

Let anonymous giving become not just an occasional practice, but a pathway—a route to discovering the peace that comes with letting go of ego and awakening to higher consciousness.