

## The Ability to Receive



My youngest daughter Promise was given the opportunity to spend six months in Costa Rica working part-time at my friend Susan's Yoga Retreat and exploring the country.

It has been a difficult gift for her to accept. It's not because she is ungrateful, far from it. It is because like many of us, Promise is a Giver who finds it extremely difficult to receive.

- Do you live in the land of quid pro quo?
- Do you think that, if someone does something nice for you, you are obligated to do something in return?
- Have you ever considered that simply allowing another to do for you is payment enough?

Every Giver I know LOVES to help others. S/he realized a long time ago how good it feels. And yet, too many of us rob others of these same good feelings.

Vulnerability is the culprit. When something truly bad happens to you, especially in childhood, you associate the feeling of vulnerability with real danger. That is true for Promise, as it is for my other daughter Shade and it is something I have been working to overcome for many years. To protect ourselves from danger, we avoid ever being in the position of "owing" another. Within this bubble of fear-based relationships, we become adept at doing for others and assiduously avoid being in a position to receive.

Danger is real. Fear is a choice.

Being a Giver only would be fine except we often become resentful because we are doing all the giving. We don't recognize that we set it up that way.

The Law of Attraction dictates that you get more of what you focus on. If you are continually focused on giving, you will attract more opportunities to give. Not bad but lopsided.



To begin putting yourself in “receive” mode, it is important to focus on the gifts you receive every day. You will find they are numerous and you did not have to do a thing to “earn” them: the sun coming up, a body that can get you where you want to go and smiles on people’s faces, to name just a few examples.

I cannot carve my daughters’ paths for them, much as I think I would like to. I recognized some time ago that the path I would carve is unlikely to be one that either of them would want. What I can do is tell my own stories and let them take away whatever it is they hear in my experiences.

My own story about receiving has to do with how I came to attract Bill into my life. For years I have worked at spiritual growth and “letting go.” I wanted to manage and control everything and operated under the illusion that it was actually possible. I yearned to be successful on all levels but could not seem to get there.

My path has not been an easy one. Some friends who had become incredibly successful by setting goals and steadfastly driving toward them became frustrated when I resisted their proven methodologies. They were trying to be helpful but driving toward something has never been my way.

I was internally frustrated, often berating myself for not being able to stick to one thing at a time certain that it was this inability that was holding me back.

And then one day I came to recognize that what was holding me back from all the things I’d ever wanted was my inability to receive. I had a proven track record as a Giver but I had been unwilling to let others give to me even though I desperately wanted them to. I immediately set a goal that I have (mostly) been able to stick to ever since: I would allow people to do for me and give to me.

Several months after this revelation, I posted my profile on several Internet dating sites. What I said I wanted was “a man with whom I would have a contest: who could spoil the other the most.” And that’s precisely what I attracted in Bill.

As I write this, I realize there is still more “letting go” for me. As you know if you’ve been following my blog, Bill has been very ill with cancer. Only yesterday, our friends here in Hawaii called to say they would come over and put our trash cans on the curb for pickup in the morning. I fought them. “Don’t be silly,” I said, “I can do that.” But you know what? I finally relented (okay, they twisted my arm until I cried, “Uncle!). It felt good. These are friends who have felt helpless to do anything for us when we are on the mainland, even though they really want to. This was one of many things they have done for us while we are here. And I know it makes them feel good because they are both Givers.

What needs to shift inside for you to become a Receiver?

If you have already accomplished it, how did it happen?