

## A candle loses nothing when it lights another

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Have you ever noticed how a lit candle’s ability to shed light doesn’t diminish when you use it to light another candle? One lit candle becomes two lit candles and they both will burn with equal intensity and brightness.

Nothing speaks to others more loudly or serves them better than generosity from a leader. True generosity isn’t an occasional event. It comes from the heart and permeates every aspect of a leader’s life, touching his or her time, money, talents, and possessions. Effective leaders, the kind that people truly want to follow, don’t gather things just for themselves; they do it in order to give to others. To be a generous leader, here’s what you can do:

1) *Be grateful for whatever you have.* It’s hard for anyone to be generous when they’re not satisfied with what they have. Generosity rises out of contentment, and that doesn’t come with acquiring more. If you’re not content with a little, you won’t be content with a lot. And if you’re not generous with a little, you won’t suddenly change if you become wealthy.

2) *Put people first.* The measure of a leader is not the number of people who serve him or her, but the number

of people he or she serves. Generosity requires putting others first. If you can do that, giving becomes much easier.

3) *Don’t allow the desire for possessions to control you.* People can be divided into three groups: “Haves, have-nots; and have not paid for what they have.” More and more people are becoming enslaved to the desire to acquire. Author Richard Foster writes, “Owning things is an obsession in our culture. If we own it, we feel we can control it; and if we can control it, we feel it will give us more pleasure. The idea is an illusion.” If you want to be in charge of your heart, don’t allow possessions to take charge of you.

4) *Regard money as a resource.* Someone once said that when it comes to money, you can’t win. If you focus on making it, you’re materialistic. If you try to but don’t make any, you’re a loser. If you make a lot and keep it, you’re a miser. If you make it and spend it, you’re careless. If you don’t care about making any, you’re unambitious. If you make a lot and still have it when you die, you’re a fool--for trying to take it with you.

The only way to really win with money is to hold it loosely--and be generous with it to accomplish things of value. As E. Stanley Jones said, “Money is a wonderful servant but a

terrible master. If it gets on top and you get under it, you will become its slave.”

5) *Develop the habit of giving.* In 1889, millionaire industrialist Andrew Carnegie wrote an essay called “Gospel of Wealth.” In it he said that the life of a wealthy person should have two periods: a time of acquiring wealth and one of redistributing it, and not just through income tax. The only way to maintain an attitude of generosity is to make it your habit to give--your time, attention, money, and resources. The very act of letting go of money, or some other treasure, does something within us. It destroys the demon greed. If you’re enslaved by greed, you will struggle trying to lead.

So, are you a generous leader? Do you continually look for ways to add value to others? Are you giving money to something greater than yourself? And to whom are you giving your time? Are you pouring your life into others? Are you helping those who cannot help you or give anything in return? Writer John Bunyan affirmed: “You have not lived today until you have done something for someone who can never repay you.” If you aren’t giving in the small areas of your life, you’re probably not as generous a leader as you could be.

~ The End ~