

The Secret Law of Abundance

You want to be happy. You want to feel good. You want to feel needed and loved. We all do. But are you getting what you want and need? Find Bill Allin at [http: billallin.com](http://billallin.com)

The secret of the law of abundance is this: In order to receive and appreciate the good things of life, you must first give.

- Norman Vincent Peale, inspirational writer and speaker (1898-1993)

I confess that I have never heard of the "law of abundance" other than in this quote. The number of citations on Google is so great I conclude that many authors and speakers have used it for their own particular objectives, to lend greater credence to their arguments. The fact that Dr. Peale calls this law "secret" is nothing more than hyperbole.

However, the weakening of the first part of the quote takes nothing away from the second and more significant part. " In order to receive and appreciate the good things of life, you must first give."

This sounds counterproductive to anyone who was raised in a strongly capitalist society, where "Pay yourself first" is the prime rule for entrepreneurs and "Take as much as you can get" is the general rule for both business and personal lives.

Surely it doesn't make sense to give away what you have earned in order to get more of "the good things of life." That's true. At least it's true if you believe that the most important things in life--the "good things"--are either money or what can be bought with money.

Can money buy happiness? This debate has been ongoing for so long that it bores most people. No, many people say, but I'd like to suffer with more of that kind of unhappiness.

Does tickling a child make that kid happy? Does laughter alone give evidence of happiness? The feeling we get when someone tickles us comes from the same source as pain, from the same nerves, along the same pathways. Tickling and pain are essentially the same sensation, only pain is felt with greater intensity. If tickling and pain come from the same source, then the laughter from tickling by someone cannot be misconstrued as happiness. Happiness and pain/tickling must be different.

The joy people have from getting money, from keeping money and from spending money are all like tickling. They are all transient, all insubstantial, all subject to change in a flash. As with the sensation from tickling, the joy of money stops in a flash when the motivation stops.

A close friend expressed grief to me recently, explaining how much his "nest egg" investments in the stock markets had dropped so much in value as a result of the recession in the US. Not a single other factor in his life has changed except for the current value of his investments, but he has lost sleep over it. The fact that history shows that stock markets always recover and move to greater values means nothing to him because the value of his stocks today is much lower than it was a year ago. The tickle he felt a year ago has become his pain of today.

That's not happiness. Nor should it rightly be considered worthy of unhappiness, pain or grief. Money is no more one of the good things in life than the shirt you are wearing right now. You might miss your shirt if you lost it or it wore out, but you know that you can get another. You can always make arrangements to get more money as well, though it might take longer than buying a new shirt.

Dr. Peale said that "you must first give." That involves at least one person other than yourself. Giving to yourself is like emotional masturbation. You must give to others in order to receive and appreciate the good things of life. We even enjoy sex more when we work to make it more enjoyable for the other person. That benefit takes thought and effort, but it shouldn't cost money.

No one understands why the "law of abundance" works this way--give in order to receive more in return. It likely has something to do with our fundamental nature as social creatures. We must need each other and depend on

each other to feel secure, even though logically it would seem that someone who doesn't need anyone else should be more secure. Those who feel the most secure need at least one other person, depend on at least one other person and strive to meet the needs of at least one other person.

They are happy when others around them are happy, have been made happy by something they have done themselves. That happiness returns to them, with interest.

The more we work to make others happy--not with money or what it will buy, but with love and effort--the more happy the others will be and the happier we will be in return.

The Christian Bible says "Give and ye shall receive." Now you know why. Though places of worship want money, what the Bible wants you to give is love. Give love and you will receive love in return.

No, you can't count that kind of love. But you don't have to pay tax on it either. It has no real value in monetary terms.

Have you given love in the past, but not had it return to you by the one you loved? It's highly likely that the other person was so steeped in the value of money that he or she couldn't understand the value of love. That's not your fault. Find someone else who does value the love and the happiness you have to give.

For those who believe in the value of money as the value of life, every relationship is a business relationship. Business relationships come and go based on the value that each party offers constantly and uninterruptedly to the other. That's the core of the throwaway economy.

Love should not be thrown away. True love cannot be thrown away, but business love is disposable.

Find someone who can appreciate and enjoy what you have to give of yourself. You will find it comes back to you. Over time, that joy and appreciation will increase if both parties understand and work at what Dr. Peale calls the law of abundance.

Love thy neighbour as thyself. Sound familiar? Christians will recognize it as the prime commandment of Jesus. But the same advice exists in every religion, even if the words differ slightly.

Give and you will receive. But you must give first and you must give freely, not depending on what you will receive in return. If you are looking for return, you are basing your love on the business model of love. The easy come, easy go, disposable kind.

Real love makes you feel superhuman. The best the business kind of love can make you feel is powerful. Real love helps you to understand why so many people in every culture of the world believe that there is more to existence than these body vessels we inhabit during our lifetimes. The business kind of lovers will never understand, never appreciate, never enjoy the real good things of life, either here or in some future existence.

But they may appreciate a good tickle.

Bill Allin

Turning It Around: Causes and Cures for Today's Epidemic Social Problems, a guidebook for parents and teachers who want to grow children who can understand and appreciate the real good things of life, not just what they learn in school.

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