**Pay It Forward**

The social frame in which we live has made us more and more selfish. We are in a constant pursuit to satisfy our personal goals and dreams and we are ready to do anything and pay any cost. We strive to become efficient, cold-blooded and immune to a large array of feelings we now assimilate with weaknesses. We work around the clock and live in world where speed is the main denominator. There is no more time for our families, friends and colleagues. Any stranger is an obstacle in our daily commute, someone who gets the better job and is happier than we are.

In the middle of all this, a random act of kindness towards someone we don’t know seems less and less probable. But fortunately we are not yet robots. We are human beings and we are still able to pause or escape all the programming life has given to us. Someone in need or someone oppressed will always open a special valve in our hearts.

To pay someone forward also means to look in the future, to the prospect that the good you are doing will generate a wave of gratitude and free acts of kindness, travelling from people to people and adding a greater value to society in general. You should be aware that the economic system will not like this kind of exchange which doesn’t involve money and indirectly try to warn you that it’s nonsense. You will probably get the feeling you are losing money and time by helping someone or doing a service for free. We all share deep inside us this restraint and it’s quite natural because money for services is how the economy works and how we manage to earn a living. But learning to look beyond that limit is an essential exercise for every human being.

Paying forward should always be done without leaving an open door for immediate payback. You could call it a gift, a permanent loan, a donation or simply a hand of help. However you chose to name it, it should be unconditioned. Also, if we search to make it even more powerful, do it without being anticipated. We all like to be surprised in a positive manner. Even those who chose to control anything in their lives and leave nothing to chance will appreciate the turn of events.

Paying forward is the ultimately source of optimism, new ideas, creativity and a renewed flow of life energies, both for the originator and for the receiver. By doing the things there were not meant to do, many discovered a friend, a lover, a talent ready to be nurtured or simply another human being expressing pure delight. Random people get connected each day by the intricate web of life. If we chose to control and channel all this randomness is better to do it in a good direction.

Personal property has made us less open to new people and new experiences. We fear losing what we have and for this reason we build citadels and towers where we could enjoy our retreat. Culture where sharing and giving away for free are considered to be happier than cultures where consumerism has reached new peeks. Sometimes we need to have less in order to be more content and this could be done by giving away to others.

There are many ways you could pay someone forward. From holding the door open to helping the old lady cross the street we all know the clichés of the urban environment. They have travelled to become more like signs of politeness. True acts of unsolicited kindness take other form. Volunteering for a noble cause is the best thing you can do. The environment, orphan kids or homeless people are not yours to own, but you could share the responsibility of looking after them with the whole community. Donating things you do not use will not make you poor. Someone’s trash can indeed be someone’s treasure. There are also more subtle things you can give away. An unrequested advice or just a few words of consolation can be life changing and attributed to providence. Chance and destiny work in mysterious ways and someone may actually thank you after a couple of years.