

2022 International Essay Contest for Young People

[Children's Category – Honorable Mention]

Act of Giving

(Original)

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John Maxwell, A New York Times bestselling author, coach, and speaker once said, "When values, thoughts, feelings, and actions are in alignment, a person becomes focused, and character is strengthened." This statement resonates well with me. Values help us to grow and understand the world, it is like a guiding compass, leading us to do what we think or believe is right and to avoid what is wrong. When we are faced with choices, it is our values that lead us to make a better choice. As for me, one of the values that I hold it closely is the act of giving.

Act of giving is defined as giving people from the heart without any expectation of reward. It makes people happy. I recalled when my mother went on a medical mission trip to the Philippines in 2019, I decided to donate almost all my plush toys to the underprivileged children from rural villages. I hesitated initially as those plush toys are gifts from my family members and friends, and very precious to me! However, when I thought about the smiles and joy that I could bring to them, I just decided to give my plush toys away to bless those children. I felt good about my decision and there was no regret at all. There was a scientific explanation to this based on a study done by Jorge Moll and colleagues at the National Institutes of Health in 2006. They found that when people give to charities, it activates regions of the brain associated with pleasure, creating a "warm glow" effect. Scientists also believe that altruistic behaviour releases endorphins in the brain, producing the positive feeling in one's brain.

Blessing others increases our social connectiveness and, thus, gives more meaning to our lives. The act of giving is an excellent way to show empathy and to build relationships. For instance, during the pandemic, many people have lost their jobs, some of them are the sole breadwinners of their family, thus leaving these families with no income. Many volunteers

have stepped up to help the incomeless families by providing them with daily necessities, and help them to cope with stress, anxiety, grief, and depression. Strong bonding and trust are built through art of giving.

Giving also help us to view and manage our resources with gratitude, and thus generates a great sense of contentment. When we see the plight of the needy, we empathise with them, and feel grateful with what we have. That compels us to give more. Very often we associate giving with money. In fact, money is not the only thing that we can give. We can give our attention, words of encouragement, time and even just to lend a listening ear. These intangible gifts bring comfort to those we help, make them feel loved and hence improve their mental health. In addition, act of altruism prevents us from being overly attached to our material possession. It helps to cultivate a mind of abundance.

To summarise, act of giving is very important to me, and I always believe that it is more blessed to give than to receive. Although giving may appear as a loss on our side, always remember that whatever we give, it will always come back to us. Each time we give, we will become more optimistic, and our heart will become tender. Soon, we will see the world in a different lens and different perspective, instead of focusing on ourselves!