

# Overcoming the Corruptions of Generosity

Bhante Bodhidhamma · Tips of the Day · 2 min read

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The self manifests as conceit and conceit manifests as comparison. I am either better, or worse or equal to you. When it comes to generosity, the conceit 'I am better' confides that 'I am truly a generous person'. Whereas 'worse' is critical – you should have given more, spent more time, listened more openly. 'Equal to' masquerades as humble – I'm only doing what others do – others stand for those who are like minded, definitely not the stingy others. Before we give of time or wealth, if we stop and acknowledge the self has a lot of kudos to develop here, we can undermine that conceit by placing in the mind the clear intention to give for the benefit of other without return. We do this more easily with Charities that we support but have no contact with, such as donating to a Homeless Charity. But it gets tricky when we are part of an organisation or family or friendship group. We will know how pure the giving was when we don't get a return. It will manifest as hurt and the intention not to give again. The desire for return, whether it be praise or generous response when called for is part of the make up a do-gooder. They are the ones who do you the good they want to do you – whether you want it or not. They generally do not ask you what you want but tell you what you need and they are going to give it to you. When not appreciated and even rebuked, they are mortally offended. 'I was only trying to help!' We all fall into this trap from time to time. To undermine this tendency, the cure is to ask the person what they need or listen carefully to what they are asking for. No problem with suggesting something else but let them make the decision. Then there is entitlement. This is a subtle corruption. Having done so much, surely they won't mind if I take a pen, bill them for a meal, take some cash. After all I don't feel I am appreciated enough. This can be the first step to fraud. There is also how upset we can be with other people's lack of generosity. That arises out of 'I am such a generous person!' Of course, a person can be stingy, a miser. But it's up to them to discover the joy in giving. It doesn't help to criticise them. How easily our joy in giving gives rise to conceit! How do we develop the joy in giving? By giving! But giving with clear intention, aware of any defilement arising, not engaging them, allowing them to fade away.

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