

The Spark

Honoring the Givers

by [Brian Schwartz](#)

The goal of death is to end life. It takes back that which was given. Our life is only temporary. What remains afterwards? The objective of life is to resist death. When death win, life fails. The greatest obstacle we'll face is our own mortality.

Becoming a contribution.

It's our 'gives' that create ripples of kindness that become our memory. Kindness persists, while selfishness fades.

The extent of what we contribute is defined by our gives, not our takes. To live intentionally with loving kindness towards one another is a worthwhile endeavor in of itself. What we say or do has the potential to change the world in ways we'll never know.

The impact of a life is what remains after that it ends. Our effect on the world once we leave is the result of what was given, not taken. Takers drain life from the world, givers feed life into it. In the end, the ones we feel the greatest loss for are those who gave the most while they could.

The need to be significant is one of the greatest human needs. In an ever crowded world, being significant is harder than it used to be. Our ability to being significant heavily depends on the medium on which we build. On a macro level, being significant (and standing out) on the internet is nearly impossible. But we can begin with the people we know and the people who know us. When you share something significant to others, you become a source of significance.

Read more about my thoughts on significance [here](#).

No balance sheet

To stay in business, you need a healthy balance sheet. The goal of most businesses is to generate more income than expenses. But in relationships, keeping a balance sheet is a recipe for disaster. If you are using terms like 'a profitable relationship,' you are keeping tabs on whether or it's a fair deal. Even with your business associates, looking at a relationship purely on a dollar and cents basis is short-sighted.

Do you feel an obligation to reciprocate when someone does something for you? Do you avoid letting others do more for you because you'll feel indebted to them if they do?

In our lives, favors are exchanged like currency. It's why politicians owe favors to those who supported their run for office. It's often the unspoken commitment in accepting a sizable donation. The bigger the donation, the bigger the favor. For politicians truly to be the voice of it's people, they need to stop taken favors from those who expect something in return.

The true winner

In the end, the winner gives up more. But when you think about those we miss the most, it's the ones who gave more than the took. In the end, it's the givers who win. The takers lose.

Win-win is a concept many of us have been taught to strive for. It's the so called 'best solution' to any problem. But, win-win is never truly equal. In the realm of loss or gain, what remains from giving more than you take? Does a sense of guilt set in when you take more than you give?

Do true givers give selflessly?

The subtle distinction lies in whether or not the individual is pursuing an idea bigger than themselves. The further the goal reaches to serve the needs of others, the more are drawn to support the ones fueling it. It's a win-win.

Who you are is an idea.

Imagine getting so consumed by an idea that it becomes part of your identity. When who you are becomes the idea that energizes you, you become charged by the idea alone. The best moments of the day are when I lose myself in something greater than myself. The lowest points are often tied to the ego and it's separation from something bigger than itself.

The lives we celebrate are the ones where it's contributions to others exceeded itself. Where one's 'gives' outweighed it's 'takes.'

We transcend life when our contributions exceed ourselves. When who we become is an idea bigger than the ourself, our significance exists in the shape of the idea others adopt for themselves.

It's when we discover a connection to a purpose greater than ourselves, that we transcend pity self-preservation. The idea doesn't get caught up in emotions.

As a society, we have the ability to transcend the more primitive state of self-preservation by giving into something greater. As long as we live with the mentality that we must take more than we give, we will never evolve.

Your personal best

I am an early morning person. I typically way up by 5 AM and am at my best by 6 AM. It's when I naturally peak and it's during this time that I write. It's the best hours of my day, and am I giving my best hours to you through these words. By sharing what I write, and writing when I'm at my best, I am sharing my best work.

All that matters is that I know it's my best work. I strive to not let the opinions of others weigh into the opinion of myself. I know that my best is the best that I can ever do. I'm content with my best because I know I will continue to improve, as long as I practice.

My skill continues to improve through the cycle of mastery: learn, do and teach. The more I do, the more I can. The more I teach, the more I learn, and the cycle never ends.

I will always strive to improve my craft by performing my work, to the best of my ability, ever minute of every day. This is my sole conviction. To give my best in all I do is that matters. Everything else is minutia.

When my best starts to fade, I know it's time to set it aside until the next cycle, although push the edge each time. To give a little more each time. Like doing one more push-up than you think you can. In the next cycle, that one more push-up becomes your edge. The most successful are always pushing the boundaries of their edge. Perhaps adding just 5 minutes a day, in time, my summit will widen and I'll be at my best for a longer duration.

[Sidebar: The successful writers who write for 8 hours/day certainly didn't start that way.]

When what we commit our lives is mutually important to others, we are rewarded. The less others value what we do, the less our impact on others, and the less we stand to impact our world.

Take this writing. If it is important to others, others will share it. If it's not, they won't. When others share it, it will validate what I have to say is also important others. Don't we all want what we say to be important to others as well?

Fulfilled potential

Live authentically and accept your fate. Recognize that if what we do is important to others, we will be supported and encouraged to continue. We need not fret over the death of ideas that don't grab others, just be careful not to throw in the towel too soon.

I recall the first day I went to my yoga studio shortly after it opened. There were only a few people. One time, there was a class where I was the only student! Three years later, most of the classes fill up. There are waiting lists to get into many of them. This is an example of how what is important to few can become important to many and the natural cycle of growth. If others were not caught by the idea, the idea dies a natural death until better one comes along.

Finding the sweet spot of living a life of purpose

Our true purpose is our unique contribution in the form of a gift to others. We build livelihoods around contributions to others. A vocation is something we do that others find of value, and we succeed when our gifts become our vocation.

To be continued...

Health is wealth and kindness is the only currency that matters in the end.

Writing with purpose.

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