



## Southwest Character Council

Building People and Communities of Character in the Tri-State Region

### ***Benevolence vs. Selfishness***

According to Giving USA, the United States is still home to the most generous people who care and remain committed to supporting non-profit organizations and philanthropic causes. Whereas donations were up in 2010, totaling nearly \$291 billion dollars, this group cautions tough years ahead. And for the record, most of that money, almost \$212 billion, came from individuals.

As El Pasoans, we love to see so many benevolent families giving to improve our community. It is a great thing to see a person or family giving thousands and sometimes millions of dollars. For this we are truly grateful. The truth is we all could and should be practicing benevolence regardless of our financial status. Benevolence is described as giving to other's basic needs without having personal reward as my motive. The opposite of this is selfishness. Instead, working with those who are benevolent is inspirational because I do believe we all want to fly higher.

Here are our 5 key concepts to building benevolence:

1. Choose to Care- Benevolence is a choice to pursue the good of others, and it speaks the loudest through your daily habits.
2. Make Others Successful- Focus on others' success regardless of how you feel about them.
3. Discern True Needs- Determine what others' genuine needs are, and respond to their needs appropriately.
4. Take Personal Interest- Sacrificing for others demonstrates a genuine interest in their well-being.
5. Give Freely- Share what you have with others, and do not expect something in return. A benevolent person recognizes the cost involved and chooses to benefit others anyway.

We can all make someone else's life a little bit or a lot better. Giving to help others doesn't have to come necessarily by giving money. Obviously, there are so many ways we can reach out to serve others.

Many years ago a friend and neighbor was going through a painful divorce. A mother of 6 children, this friend had to go back to work to support herself and her children. She needed help with after school care, so I found myself making several trips a day to the elementary school to pick up and care for the children until she could get home. It wasn't easy, but I was happy I could help in this desperate situation. Thankfully, the children were some of the best-behaved kiddos in the world! A funny thing happened after that year. My father came in for a visit and announced that he was going to pay for our daughter's college education. All of it. We were stunned. But I knew in my heart, that it was a "reward" for the benevolence shown towards my friend. Benevolence is giving to others' basic needs without having personal reward as my motive. The truth of the matter is that what you do for others somehow comes back to you.

On the road to greatness,

Laurraine Huffman

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