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November 2013 Newsletter



Dear Friends of Goodness To Go,

*I slept and dreamt that life was joy.
I awoke and saw that life was service.
I acted and behold, service was joy.*

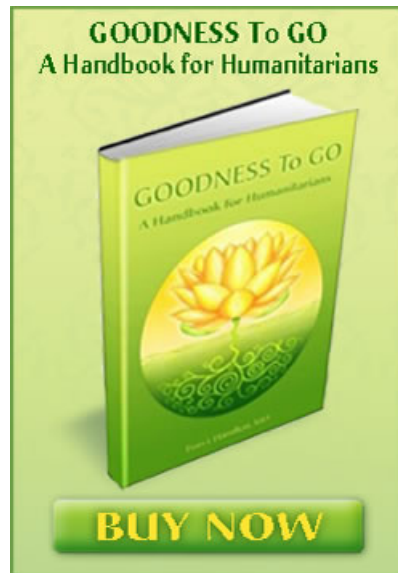
Rabindranath Tagore, the Nobel laureate in Literature from Calcutta, India experienced that service is joy. For forty years, **Child In Need Institute's** programs have uplifted impoverished families near Calcutta where our daughter Grace was born. Tagore's insight is infused with reverence and gratitude, and the Roman philosopher Cicero wrote that **gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues but the parent of all the others**. Generosity, altruism, kindness, respect and other attributes of the heart are nurtured by gratitude. How does giving thanks refresh our spirits and make life new?

You're invited to take action with gratitude and joy for your many blessings. Consider:

- * giving copies of Goodness To Go as holiday gifts to friends and local organizations
- * spreading the word about the joy of service and hosting a GTG action group
- * serving vulnerable community members
- * volunteering with Goodness To Go/CINI
- * launching a GTG/CINI Kickstarter campaign
- * keeping a gratitude journal, which enhances the experience of life's goodness and joy

As we refresh our gratefulness for those who've contributed to our lives, awareness of our connection with all of life expands. The creative convergence from which technological advances emerge makes it possible to share this newsletter with you, and billions of people are thankful for the increased options that the Internet and mobile devices bring. At the same time, any tool can be used in ways that damage human interactions, and overuse can threaten things we value deeply. **At this time of Thanksgiving, what do you cherish?** What relationships, opportunities, and freedoms do you value deeply?

A recent Facebook television advertisement suggested ways to escape Thanksgiving dinner's "boring bits", a term used by developmental psychologist Sherry Turkle. Cultivating empathy, patience, sustained attention, and tolerance of boredom require practice. In the ad, a niece escapes her aunt's "boring" conversation through a handheld distraction: Facebook on her smart phone. Virtual fantasies swirl around the dinner table and the laughing woman loses the present moment's opportunity to connect with her family and **be with what is**.



Does this ad suggest autonomy or addiction? Our human mind is an astonishingly complex gift and its attention can be focused in stillness, flow with creativity, get hooked by reactivity, or stuck in distraction. A clear, trained mind chooses where to place its attention. Constant streams of virtual input and "connections" fragment our attention, making us vulnerable to addictive neuro-chemical stimulation of the brain's reward centers. "Real world" multi-dimensional relationships and celebrations thrive with our undivided attention and physical presence. Dr. Turkle and many others are concerned that being tethered to electronic devices weakens our ability to be fully present. This diminishes the depth of meaningful face-to-face conversations as well as our capacity for solitude. New input is often just more noise. How easy would it be for you to unplug for Thanksgiving dinner or the entire weekend?

Be here now. Our Goodness To Go is affected by the quality of our attention and the whole-heartedness of our connectivity. Although the integral service of humanitarians includes virtual interactions, the expression of our compassion in action is primarily in the physical world. Let's celebrate with thanksgiving the service that arises from, and *is*, our life's joy!

Mobilize Your Goodness



"Go to the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet," wrote Frederick Buechner, theologian and author of *Sacred Journey*. Discover that place, inside and out, as you recall that the journey of a lifetime can begin in a single step from "no" to "yes". **What is a small, specific, scheduled step that you could take this week with joy and gratitude to leave the world a kinder and more connected place?** Since we're all connected, helping others helps ourselves. As your thanksgiving

takes form in joyful service, remember that the effect of one good-hearted person is incalculable. It's been said that **gratitude is happiness doubled by wonder**. I'm grateful indeed for your generous support of Goodness To Go and wish you happy days of thanksgiving!

Celebrating integral service,



Fran I. Hamilton, M.D.



P.S. Thank you for spreading the word about Goodness To Go through your social networks.

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Goodness To Go | 3062 4th Street | Boulder | CO | 80304