

## The Asking and Taking, Offering and Giving Challenge

This is a profoundly powerful exercise for deeply accessing your true fears, concerns, and arguments with asking, taking, offering and giving.

Get 3-6 one-dollar bills or one euro (or whatever the equivalent in your country) and put them in your pocket. You'll take a minimum of three, and a maximum of six. If you need support, enlist one person to be a supportive witness accompanying you who will stand back and gently help you stay present and to finish the exercise. (Grace found this to be the only way she was willing to do this exercise the first time).

Now step out into the street or any area where you know you will encounter other humans who are moving about the planet. You might choose a market, a business center, a place with shops or restaurants, a park on a day where people are out relaxing or playing, or a campus. Don't concern yourself with picking the "right" place. Go to the easiest or nearest area to you where you'll encounter people. Don't think too much about it. Just go.

Task One: Give each one of your dollars/euros away to 3-6 different people. See if you can do this without a lot of explanation, and without revealing that you're doing it for a class or a training exercise. It's OK to speak, and OK to not speak. Simply offer and notice what it's like for you to engage in this activity. Notice what thoughts rise up as you see someone you could approach. Notice if your mind makes immediate suggestions (it will) about whether or not this will be a good person to offer to, if they need it, if they will/won't want it, how they might respond. Notice that you don't actually know the answer. Move through the experience.

Task Two: Acquire the exact same amount you have given away, one by one. Ask without a lot of explanation, without revealing that you're doing it for a class or a training exercise. Again, it is OK to speak, or not speak. Notice your impulses, your stressful thoughts and fears. Simply ask and notice what it's like for you to engage in the activity of asking. You will again see thoughts rising within about people you see, who you could ask. Your mind will talk about who is safe, appropriate, and will be attempting to predict how people will respond. Test it out. Move through the experience.

Journal: What did you learn about yourself and about humanity? Did anything stand out specifically as highly stressful, or troubling? What were you aware of? Write down these passing moments or exchanges where you had a moment of concern.

For example (from Grace's experience of this exercise): a group of three businessmen were walking together down the sidewalk. I asked one of them for a dollar. He stopped, with his two companions also pausing near him, and he said "you don't look like you need a dollar" with an incredulous tone. I had the urge to explain or give a reason. I remained silent, doing the exercise. He reached in his pocket and pulled out a dollar and handed it to me. I noticed thoughts around feeling worried he thought I was a liar, or something was wrong with me, or I was confused. These were powerful for The Work! Doing this exercise helped me change my mind about asking for and taking money.

Who would you be without your story? Doing this exercise will surprise and enlighten you. There is nothing like feeling the experience in your bones of living your turnaround and challenging your thoughts. Doing this exercise can allow us to dissolve stories, blocks and barriers that cause us to hesitate, remain afraid, and stay unwilling to risk or try something new.