

Natural Goodness and Greater Goodness

Natural goodness is to do unto others as you would have them do unto you, and to do more for others when you are in a good mood or when things are going your way.

Greater goodness is *always* to be generous—not just when you feel like it. It's also to withhold giving when it is best for others.

Natural goodness is to be touched when you witness the suffering of others, and to act to relieve it. Greater goodness is to seek out situations where you will see people in need, be touched and act. It is also to act before seeing with your eyes.

Natural goodness is to give others what they want. Greater goodness is to give others what they need, even if they don't want it at the time.

Natural goodness is to give from your surplus. Greater goodness is to give yourself.

Natural goodness is based on supply and demand. Greater goodness is based on manners and relationships.

Natural goodness is based on your talents and sometimes your need for recognition, attention and praise. Greater goodness is based on recognizing others' unrealized (latent) talents and their needs.

Natural goodness is based on fear and desire, sometimes for others' welfare, sometimes for your own. Greater goodness is not based on feelings that come and go but on duty and something that is constant and unwilled.

Natural goodness first attacks the symptoms of a problem, then eventually the root of the problem. Greater goodness attacks the root of the root.

Natural goodness is to give in such a way that your surplus and reserves drop, and your capacity is depleted. Greater goodness is to give in such a way that your capacity to give increases.

The naturally good learn when a need arises. Greater goodness is to learn before a need arises.

Natural goodness is to give people fish, then teach them to fish. Greater goodness is to teach people how to learn, and then teach them to teach others. In this way, everyone can learn to fish, and learn whatever they need to learn.

The naturally good will see these statements as guidelines, criteria, and formulas. The supernaturally good will see them as invitation, nutrition and light.

“...The real generosity is when a man does something generous when nobody knows about it; or when, other people knowing something about it, he refuses to gain any credit for his generosity, from the recipient or anyone else...Real generosity is anonymous to the extent that a man should be prepared even to be considered ungenerous rather than explain it to others...This kind of generosity, in goods, in work and in thought is deliberately cultivated in the ranks of the Elect, and is practiced by those who wish to enter their ranks, with no exceptions at all, and there is no relaxation of this exercise.”

– Idries Shah, in *Learning How To Learn*