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"A PORTION OF THYSELF"

RALPH WALDO EMERSON, that lofty idealist who nevertheless had a penetratingly practical knowledge of human nature, wrote: "Rings and jewels are not gifts, but apologies for gifts. The only gift is a portion of thyself".

Almost anything in the world can be bought for money — except the warm impulses of the human heart. They have to be given. And they are priceless in their power to purchase happiness for two people, the recipient and the giver.

Many letters have come to me from people who want to try giving themselves away, but are timid. They are afraid that their simple gifts-of-the-heart would be laughed at. As one correspondent expressed it: "I have nothing of any importance to give anyone".

This is not true. While you might not think of what you have to offer as being of any particular value, it may fill a need in someone's life. And if it does that, even for a fraction of a minute, it will add that much to the world's happiness. And happiness is one of the greatest gifts within the power of any of us to bestow, particularly in these troubled days when the world is full of fear and suspicion, and men's minds and hearts are anxious.

There are a hundred ways to give a portion of yourself. But they all start from the same spot — your heart. The French have a proverb: "He gives nothing who does not give himself".

"A portion of thyself", will, therefore, be your stock in trade if you want to add to the happiness of those around you, and to lead a happier and more exciting life yourself. It is the spirit, not the substance, which carries warmth.

You need not worry for a second because you lack money or material things. You can give yourself extravagantly if you choose, and reap great happiness from your giving, without reaching for your pocketbook. As Longfellow phrased it, "Give what you have. To someone, it may be better than you dare to think".

— From David Dunn's book "Try Giving Yourself Away".

W.R.