

The Thriving Rhythms Project...



...challenges us to move with thoughtful purpose toward a deepened sense of identity—that we are spirited, creative, and connected people, called to be present, grateful, generous, and missional with our lives. We're exploring what it means to intentionally engage this particular series of life rhythms, which help us bring some good to each moment, something better to each day, and our best to each other as we encounter the world around us.

We are ... Generous

As image bearers of the Divine, we are called to be extravagantly generous human beings. We thrive as generous people by living open-handedly and open-heartedly, seeking lavish interactions with the world so that the abundance of the few can transform the scarcity of the many into a feast of blessings where all have enough.

WELCOME | CHECK-IN |

CENTERING | GENEROUS THRIVING |

Steve Hartman is a broadcast journalist who believes everybody has a story to tell. His "Assignment America" reports were part of the CBS Evening News With Katie Couric; they were inspired by Charles Kuralt's On the Road series, which originally aired on CBS from 1967 to 1980. In 2011, CBS revived On the Road, with Hartman providing the Friday evening end-pieces for the CBS Evening News with Scott Pelley. The series won two 2013 Edward R. Murrow Awards (presented by the Radio Television Digital News Association) for the CBS Evening News. Three of Hartman's stories won in the Best Writing category. Check out this episode of On the Road: Kindness - "Pass it Forward"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RdmVXLXJCU0>



ANCIENT WISDOM – LUKE 6:38

"Give generously, and generous gifts will be given back to you, shaken down to make room for more. Abundant gifts will pour out upon you with such an overflowing measure that they will run over the top! Your measure of generosity becomes the measure of your return."

~ *The Passion Translation*

STORY / *Open-Handed, Open-Hearted*

With all due respect to all the Bob Smiths globally, Bob Smith is an unremarkable name. But what Robert F. Smith did for four hundred graduating seniors from Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia, was anything but unremarkable in the Spring of 2019.

Robert F. Smith is the founder and CEO of The Student Freedom Initiative, a tax-exempt nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring freedom in professional and life choices for students attending Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), with a first emphasis on Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and students majoring in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). This innovative and student-centered program aims to free students from the crushing burden of unmanageable student loan debt and serve as a catalyst to help students gain the skills and confidence they will need after graduation to navigate their personal and professional pathways.

Robert Smith was invited to deliver the commencement address and receive an honorary degree at Morehouse College. That's a standard part of any college graduation ceremony. But there was nothing standard about what Robert F. Smith did. He created an entirely new standard. In one way, it was like dozens of other commencement speeches given to the graduating classes of 2019. But in the final three minutes of his half-hour speech, Robert surprised everyone with an announcement that he and his family would set up a grant to pay off the nearly 400 graduating seniors' student loans. The total gift is estimated at \$40 million. The place went nuts. Dwight Lewis, a graduate, formerly a homeless young man from Compton, California, said afterward that having the weight of his student loans wiped away is motivating him to charge unhindered to pay it forward into the future.

Bob Smith is a wealthy man. He's a very wealthy man. But here's the deal: this story isn't about the money. This story is about the heart. This story isn't about the wealth of a family. It's about the wealth of a family's heart. And what moves the heart? Generous acts of love. Generosity creates generosity.

Because we've been blessed with enough, how will we pay that forward? How will we be generous in the lives of others?

Generous CONVERSATION

- As image-bearers of God, we are ‘generous’ human beings. Work together to create a list of ways that God is generous. Do you have a favorite Bible story that features generosity? Tell us about it. How has this story been foundational in your faith?
- Share about someone you know who lives open-handedly and open-heartedly. Other than “generous,” what is one word you would use to describe this person? What is one word you would use to describe their impact on you or the world?
- Is it possible to live open-heartedly without living open-handedly (or vice versa)? Explain your answer with at least one concrete example.
- When have you been the recipient of a large or small act of generosity? How did you “pass it forward?”
- From Luke 6:38: Give generously, and generous gifts will be given back to you. How has this been true in your life? Should this be our motivation for generosity? Is giving with a repayment mindset even real generosity? What is YOUR motivation for generosity? Is generosity ever its own reward?
- What does it mean to be generous: with your spiritedness, creativity, connectedness, gratitude, and each present moment? Share an example from your life when you have been generous in one or more of these rhythms.
- Generate a list of practical ways to thrive as a generous person. Share and celebrate the ways you are currently thriving as generous people. What is one idea you can take away from this conversation to help you grow as a generous person?



A GENEROUS MANIFESTO

We believe in the power of generosity. We believe that by living generously, we encourage an open-hearted Spirit in the world. We believe that living with open hearts leads to living with open hands. We believe that we thrive as generous people when we seek lavish interactions with the world around us so that the abundance of the few can transform the scarcity of the many into a feast where all have enough.

MANTRA

"As a child of God, I am a 'generous' human being; I'm free to live open-handedly and open-heartedly."

INTENTION

Gracious God, we are your spirited people; you have created us in your image and called us into community together. As we dwell in the fullness of this moment, we acknowledge your generous love that frees us to be your missional people in the world. Inspire our creativity, animate our relationships, and enthuse us with your Spirit. In the name of Christ... Amen

BLESSING

May you thrive as a generous human being, fully embracing your call to be generous in the world. May you come to know the freedom of living open-handedly, which leads to the joy of living open-heartedly. May this openness lead to lavish interactions with the world around you. And may you sink into a vision where the *abundance of the few can transform the scarcity of the many into a feast of blessing where all have enough.*