



"I Like Giving will light you up on the generosity dial."

DAVE RAMSEY, host of *The Dave Ramsey Show*
and *New York Times* best-selling author

THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF A GENEROUS LIFE

I LIKE GIVING

PRACTICAL IDEAS, INSPIRING STORIES

BRAD FORMSMA

**Praise for
*I Like Giving***

"Important and exciting! *I Like Giving* could be the beginning of a movement of generosity."

—MARK BATTERSON, author of *The Circle Maker*

"*I Like Giving* will light you up on the generosity dial."

—DAVE RAMSEY, host of *The Dave Ramsey Show* and
New York Times best-selling author

"*I Like Giving* inspires us to explore giving that is full of cheer and joy. These stories have opened up our eyes to see our daily interactions with people in a whole new way."

—DAVID and BARBARA GREEN, cofounders of
Hobby Lobby

"*I Like Giving* is a beautifully written book with the right title, because people really do like giving. Brad Formsma has an inspiring message, and his book should be on every kitchen table, like a daily vitamin for the soul."

—STEPHEN POST, best-selling author of *Why
Good Things Happen to Good People*

"Brad's understanding of generosity is a wake-up call for the giver inside us all."

—MICHAEL JR., award-winning comedian

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WATERBROOK
P R E S S

I LIKE GIVING

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*To my wife, Laura,
who knew this book would happen
years before it did.
Without you and your encouragement,
this book would never have come to pass.*

I love you.

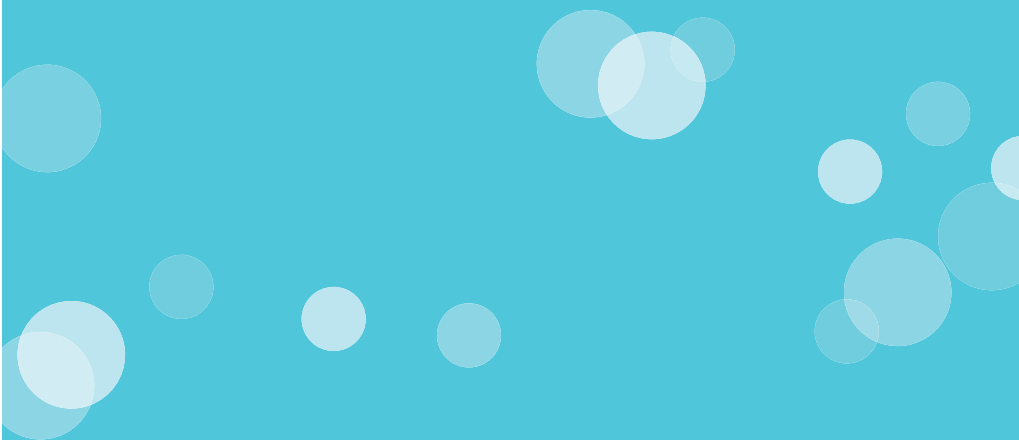


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THE POWER OF ONE GIFT





The giving journey for Tracy Autler started on Thanksgiving Day 1993. Away from her family, living in an apartment on the lower end of town, a single mom to a three-year-old and eight months pregnant, she was relying on welfare and food stamps to get by. While other families were preparing for their Thanksgiving feasts, Tracy would do the best she could with canned food.

Standing in her apartment and looking at the sparse collection of cans on her shelf, Tracy heard a knock at the door. *What in the world?* she thought. Who would be coming to her door on Thanksgiving Day? Weren't people at home with their families, eating turkey and watching football? She opened her door and simply couldn't believe her eyes.

Standing there was a man from a local restaurant with a delivery for Tracy: a full Thanksgiving dinner, complete

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with all the trimmings. He said it was from an anonymous donor, and before Tracy could ask any questions, he handed it over and left. Tracy was so overwhelmed that she spent the rest of the day crying.

Surprised and amazed, Tracy decided she needed to know whom to thank for this extravagant and timely gift. However, she couldn't figure it out. She called her parents, but it wasn't them. She asked her friends, but no one knew. Tracy couldn't believe that someone outside her circle of friends and family had noticed her situation and done something about it without drawing any attention to himself.

Years went by, and Tracy still had no idea whom the mysterious Thanksgiving dinner had come from. In time she moved out of that apartment and began working as a nurse at a local hospital.

And then it happened. Seven years after that special Thanksgiving meal, a woman named Margot was admitted into Tracy's care. Margot had multiple sclerosis, and her condition was becoming critical. Tracy remembered Margot from her time on welfare. She had lived in the same apartment building as Tracy. It was clear that Margot didn't have much longer to live.

Three days before her death, Margot took Tracy's hand in hers and, in a frail voice, whispered two words: "Happy Thanksgiving."

In that moment Tracy knew who had given her that Thanksgiving dinner. She would never have guessed that

Margot—the unassuming neighbor with multiple sclerosis—was behind that generous gift. Tracy still gets tears in her eyes when she tells the story today.

I'd call that story "I Like My Neighbor." Margot saw Tracy's situation that Thanksgiving Day and did something extraordinary—she gave her the perfect gift without anyone asking her to and without asking for anything in return.

That one gift had a massive impact on Tracy's life.

Moved by the anonymous donor's generosity, Tracy purposed in her heart to do generous things for other people too. The very day she got off assistance, she took a basket of gifts down to the welfare office for anyone to take. The welfare officer was stunned. Can you imagine the look on his face? Who does something like that?

And that was just the beginning. Since then, Tracy and her husband have become foster parents and adopted a son. She regularly looks for opportunities to give. The last time I heard from her, she was getting ready to volunteer her Saturday afternoon at the local Humane Society. One of her latest ideas is to leave five-dollar Starbucks gift cards with little notes for her coworkers to find, just to make their day better. This year Tracy and her family made a New Year's resolution to find one hundred opportunities to give to other people. How inspiring is that?

What I appreciate most about Tracy is that she doesn't do her giving to be noticed by others. Since that Thanksgiving Day in 1993, she has discovered the joy that comes from giving. Now she's hooked. She doesn't give

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to make herself look good—she gives because she *likes* giving. It makes her feel more alive. “It’s how life should be,” she says.



There is something incredible about giving when it’s our idea. Opening our eyes and ears to the people around us and asking “How can we give?” is a profoundly life-giving and satisfying way to live. One of Jesus’s ideas was that it is more blessed to give than to receive. I have found that to be true. The generous life is the only life worth living.

Just imagine—what if every single person on the planet woke up and, like Tracy, looked for ways to give? What sort of world could we create through the simple, powerful decision to live generously? Whoever you are, no matter how much or how little you have to share, making the decision to give regularly to others—daily, weekly, or monthly—will enrich your life and change the lives of the people around you.

When we choose to give, we change, and the people around us change. When we move from awareness to action, miracles happen. When we allow giving to be our idea, a world of possibilities opens up before us, and we discover new levels of joy. If you, like Tracy, get hooked on giving, you’ll find yourself asking, “How generous can I be?” When that happens, you’ll realize that, not only are you

loving life more than ever, but you're also a part of creating a more generous world—a world that is better for all of us.

If you haven't ever experienced the joy of giving, or it's been a long time, this book will show you where to start. We will walk with you as you take your first steps, and we'll stick with you as you grow in the art of generosity.

Or if you're nodding your head right now, saying, "I've known this for years," then we're here to encourage you to keep growing and to empower you to spread the joy. We never arrive. I've been discovering the joy of generous living for many years, and I still feel as if I'm just getting started!

The best things in life are like that—they grow and never end.

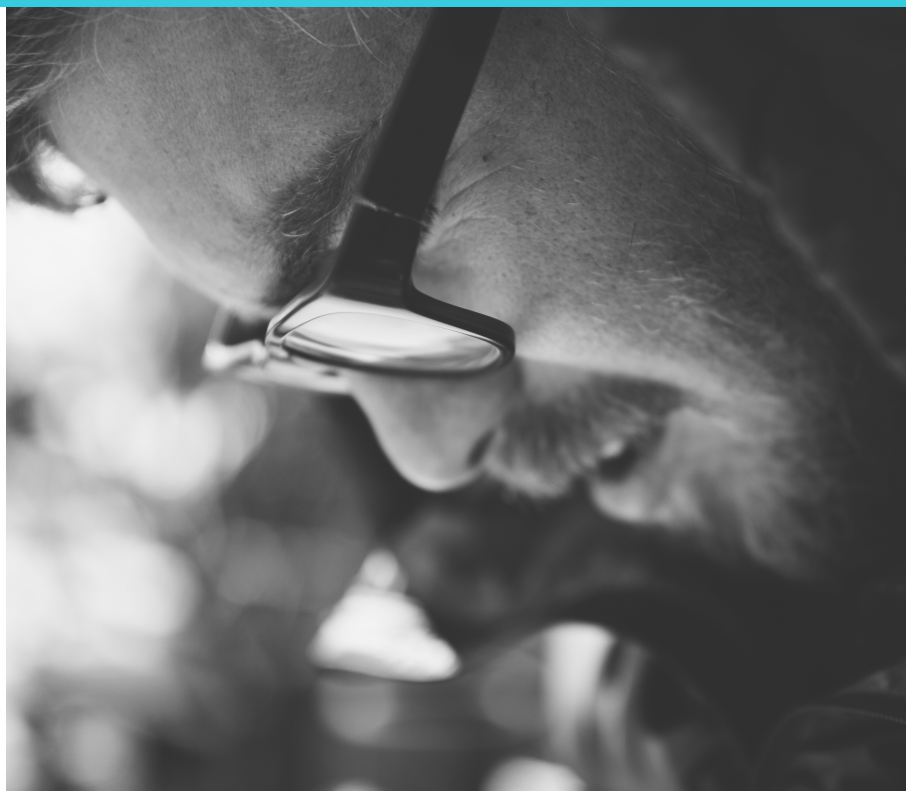
I LIKE WILLIAM.

Submitted by: Elizabeth

In the affluent Ivy League town of Princeton, New Jersey, someone like William tends to stick out from the crowd. William is sixty-seven years old, and, as is evident from his personal appearance, he has a disability. William has cerebral palsy. Our family had become aware of William because we'd seen him riding around town on his scooter, but mostly we knew William because he swept the sidewalk and opened the door for customers at Starbucks, my local coffee oasis.

Being a bit of a coffee addict, I tend to frequent the Starbucks in downtown Princeton, often going there with my family. From the beginning, we noticed William and took time to get to know him. My three-year-old, Chase, gets especially excited whenever we see William's scooter outside. Over the past year or so, William has become our friend.

Recently, however, I realized William had a need we could not see. His eyes were bad. I discovered this one Saturday as I sat working on my laptop. My boys weren't with me this time, so when William came by, I took more time than usual to talk with him and get to know him better.



After we'd been talking awhile, I began to show him some family pictures on our laptop. To my amazement William couldn't see them even though they were right in front of his face!

I asked William if he had glasses. As it turned out, he had a pair, but he had accidentally sat on them, and they were ruined. I had work to do, and putting off William's situation would have been the easy choice, but I felt compelled to act. I called LensCrafters and made an appointment for three o'clock that same day.

When I got home and announced my plan to the family, my husband laughed kindly at me—he's not too surprised when I do things like this—and rearranged his schedule so we could take William to the eye doctor as a family. When three o'clock rolled around, we picked up William from Starbucks and, with the kids in tow, headed over to get his eyes checked.

The optometrist at LensCrafters picked up on what we were doing and showed special kindness to William. He confirmed that William's eyes were, in fact, very bad and made a new pair of glasses for him.

We're very happy to know that William will be able to see well again, especially as he rides his scooter around town!

Every year I choose one word to focus on for the upcoming year. This year my word was *give*. While I feel I give my life away every day in caring for two young boys, I have felt less able to give to my community since becoming a mom. Having the opportunity to help William get glasses not only gave me a way to practice giving, but because we knew him, it also fostered our relationship with him and our connection to our community.

As someone who believes in and desires to follow Jesus, my faith motivated me to help William promptly. Jesus said that what we do for the least of these, we do for him. In many ways William, a poor disabled man, is "the least of these" in Princeton. So

often in Scripture, we see Jesus caring for the needs of people immediately. He doesn't often wait. In meeting William's need immediately, I was attempting to follow Jesus's model and was grateful to have a part in improving William's life.



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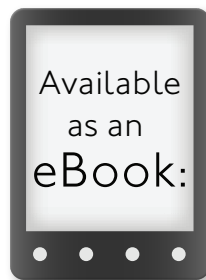
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