

# Making a contribution

I was talking with someone the other day about contributions. Aside from those people who get their names plastered on buildings, hospitals, companies, and the like, most of us won't have our contributions up in lights for everyone to see.

In fact, as I read obituaries, I'm always amazed at the parts of a person's life that his or her descendants decide to highlight in the obit. Some highlight hunting or fishing prowess; some highlight family; some highlight singing ability (or lack thereof); some highlight contributions to local civic organizations. Others have nothing that they highlight -- perhaps there was nothing worth highlighting (or perhaps the price of the obit was too high as it was).

So that leaves us with a big question -- what contributions are you making (or going to make) to your life and the world around you? When you're dead and gone, will anyone ever notice? Will the world be a better place because you were around?

In fact, I've dealt with this topic before, back in 2001, in [Write your Own Obituary and Reform Your Life.](#)

But moving away from the obit tone a bit, what contributions are you making right now? Can you see how you have helped someone else? Can you see how you have made a difference in the lives of your family? Can you find the changes in your own soul? Is there something you've done that has made a significant difference in this world?

If not, now is the time to do it.

Yes, I know -- you're saying "What could I do that would make a difference?" The other day, three people in San Jose, California stopped at car wreck, and pulled the unconscious driver out of the car. Did they make a difference? Ask the guy who they pulled out. Did your parents make a difference in your life? For good or ill, they did. Do you make a difference in your family's life? Yes, you do -- but is it a contribution that will make their life better?

How about your company? Did you know that Google News was originally written by one guy who did it over the weekend, mostly as a lark? At its root, the Honda automotive empire owes its success to one person -- Soichiro Honda -- who had a vision, and the tenacity to pull it off. Toyota? Also family ran. How about Henry Ford? Today his name is remembered -- but he was an unknown when he

started his business career. Andrew Carnegie was once a nobody. John D. Rockefeller -- also once unknown. Barack Obama was once just a skinny kid who played basketball, and Ronald Reagan said he would never have become president if he'd been able to keep a job at Montgomery Ward.

Yes, these people have made contributions that are oversized, compared to the contributions of everyday men and women -- but they started by believing that they could contribute something -- and they had the tenacity to keep at it.

The companies in our society were started by people who made a difference -- they contributed more than just a DNA sample to the world. Like them, you can make a contribution -- you (and I) can make a difference in the life stories of people we meet, people we love, people we work with. We can change others for the better, and it starts by changing ourselves.

People who seek to change the world must first change themselves. We must choose to love ourselves, improve ourselves, educate ourselves, and then reach out to others around us. We change ourselves first -- and the rest of the world will follow.

Copyright, 2010, by Daryl R. Gibson. All rights reserved. Permission is hereby granted for the non-commercial redistribution of this document as long as it remains intact with this copyright and all other lines. This license does not extend to the use of this material in a compilation, whether for profit or non-profit use. Join us at <http://www.weeklywisdom.com>.