

THE GENEROSITY SCALE
 USATAA/ITAA conference. 2007.
 Stephen B. Karpman, M.D.

Do you have an important partner in your life, past or present? Look at the Generosity Scale below. Where do you place yourself and your partner on the scale?

GE - Give Elsewhere GL - Give Less GE - Give Enough GG - Give Generously

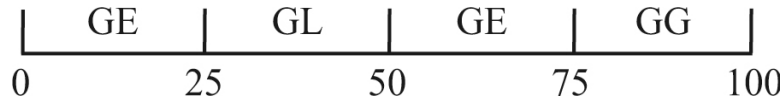


Fig. 1 Generosity Scale

Who defines generosity in a relationship? What is "giving of yourself?" Is "who's giving what" an issue? Is there a reasonable norm? Is someone being compared to an unknown standard perhaps by a troublemaker behind the scenes? Is anyone fairly or unfairly labeled "selfish" or with that cool newer word, "entitled?" Power defines what is OK. Is it OK to be non-demonstrative but give in other ways? A partner can be unfairly demanding without noticing the little things that balance it out. There can be an acceptable tradeoff such as when one person provides stability and the other provides excitement and change

Think back to when you were at the top or at the bottom of your Generosity Scale. Now do the same with your partner. Has it changed over time and why? When do you collect stamps and silently pull away? What brings you back? Is it discussed? Are both your needs and wants verbalized effectively? Is "giving of yourself" rewarded, or is it unnoticed or taken for granted? Do you want credit? Can the two of you address normal complaints openly or are needs attacked as "needy"?

Exercise:

- 1) Think of examples of you in a relationship in the past, from both sides.
- 2) Then look at the levels of giving between your parents (could you guess wrong?). What level of attentiveness was OK? With friends or children? How have you changed over time and how has it been apparent in better friendship choices or better feedback? In what order would this sample of Top Ten gifts be appreciated in your relationships?

Strokes?	Deeds?	Character?	Looks?	Stability?
Excitement?	Money?	Friendship?	Social skills?	Pride?

Workshop exercise. Gather in groups of threes and discuss a current or past relationship for how you see yourself. Discuss generosity. Give examples of you at different times on the Generosity Scale. Would your partner see you differently? Then present how you see your partner and whether s/he would agree. In the workshop, you may invent a future relationship to use as an example, declare it so, scoring what you would want, expect, and settle for. Then reverse it and score yourself as you slide along the scale. How would you ask for what you want the next time? Are you flexible? Play act a conversation with a new person in your life and tell them what to expect from you.

At the end of this small group work, Tell group members how you will use this review to move forward along the scale more consistently, or to be content with it, which is fine. Do not secretly collect blame stamps without clearing it in your group.

Another relationship checklist is in the Five Trust Contracts For Couples (see reference). Another one we use is in the Love Me, Like Me List and small group work.