

The Ripple Effect
By Jeanne Loehnis

Have you ever thrown a pebble into a calm body of water and watched as circles formed and expanded out from the center? Were you able to see them reach the edge and then return, rippling back to that very spot where your pebble set it all in motion?

The ripple effect, what goes around comes around, is not a new idea. Perhaps your parents tried to teach this lesson to you as a young child as a way of improving your behavior toward others. Maybe it worked; maybe it didn't. Regardless, many of us forgot this basic life principle as we moved into adulthood. Too often, our thoughts focus on what happens **to** us and what **they** did to harm us. Our energy is frittered away as we place blame and seek to receive fair compensation for another's actions.

What happens when we spend precious time dwelling in the perceived wrongs in our lives? Our very being, the energy that surrounds and indwells us, is immersed in the negativity. The harmful effect of another's behavior on us is now being sent out from us to those with whom we interact. Imagine each person you touch doing the same: harboring the ill that you have unconsciously put forth, dwelling on it, and, in turn, sending it right back at you. You, in turn, perceive ill, and complete the circle yet again by sending it forth to them.

Yes, the ripples of life, as the ripples in water, go forth in an ever expanding radius, then return, multiplied many times over. Yet, just as negativity sent forth into the world breeds negativity, so does kindness multiply and return from all directions as soon as we place ourselves in its flow. Consider these lyrics:

Circle of Giving

There's a circle of giving, a circle of life.
It's the story we're weaving as our light shines bright!
May we not take for granted any person's precious part:
every action, every kindness which comes from the heart.

In the circle of giving you've offered your hand.
Through the gift of receiving, I've learned to stand
on my own. And I now pass it along:
giving kindness to another. Help her grow strong.

It's a circle of giving without any end.
As we share ourselves freely we'll soon round the bend
so to see with eyes opened God's Love in everyone.
Peace on Earth is before us. God's Will is done.

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As we immerse ourselves in the circle where generosity, kindness, and love abide, we grow stronger. We receive and we, in turn, give forth yet more of life's joy, wonder, peace, and love. Perhaps you have seen the commercial for Liberty Mutual Insurance (*). One person sees a need and fills it. The recipient is touched by the kindness and, in turn, passes it along. We see in this commercial that no one is looking for something in return. Those who do kindnesses are not even aware of the ripple that they have sent forth. Yet, it is easy to imagine the good that is unfolding! Without a doubt, the individual that has participated and walked away smiling has already received the ripple on its return trip!

What do you want more of in your life today? Have you noticed what is rippling back to you? Have you paused to consider what you are sending forth?

(* *An early version of the Liberty Mutual Insurance commercial can be found at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wMwoexR1evo>. Check it out!*

(* *A story circulated on the Internet and in *Chicken Soup For The Soul* tells about the awarding of blue ribbons to folks who have made a positive difference in their life. It is "the ripple effect" in action! Check it out at <http://www.blueribbons.org/>.*

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