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“...a hopeful text for hopeless times....Post's work is more than a feel-good read.
It's today's handbook for survival.” —Publishers Weekly

The Hidden Gifts of Helping
**New Book by Compassionate Love Researcher Stephen G. Post Shows
How in Hard Times, the Best Way to Help Oneself is To Help Others**

For many people facing the loss of jobs and homes in this difficult economy, hunkering down may seem like the best way to deal with such enormous stress. But paradoxically, the most effective way to stay happy and healthy is to turn outwards, and reap the benefits of helping others, says Dr. Stephen G. Post, a leader in the study of compassion and unlimited love. In his new book, *The Hidden Gifts of Helping: How the Power of Giving, Compassion, and Hope Can Get Us Through Hard Times* (Jossey-Bass, A Wiley Imprint, March 2011), Dr. Post, who underwent just such an upheaval in his own life, shows how helping others can get us through the inevitable tough times that come everyone's way.

Dr. Post recounts how he and his family bounced back when he lost his job of twenty years. The family had to leave their longtime home in Cleveland, beset by new financial anxieties, the loss of community, and facing the challenges of starting over in a new place. They found that the key to dealing with this upheaval was something they knew quite well, since Dr. Post has led the scientific study of it: the healing power of helping others. Intentionally helping others as a daily way of life got them through several rough months.

“The experience taught me that bonds of affection, good neighbors, and ultimately, love itself are the most essential things in a happy life,” says Dr. Post.

The spontaneous and generous outpourings of help in response to disasters all over the world (such as the earthquake and subsequent cholera outbreak in Haiti) demonstrate how quickly people respond to urgent need. But what if we make helping others a way of life rather than a periodic response? We're actually hardwired to do so, Dr. Post says: “We eat because it keeps us alive, and we help others because it keeps us human.”

Using insights and research from evolutionary psychology and psychiatry, spiritual wisdom, and findings from a national survey conducted by the Institute for Research on Unlimited Love, where he serves as president, Dr. Post illustrates the amazing benefits of helping others, including greater longevity; lower rates of heart disease; improved mental, emotional and spiritual health; and relief of stress and negative emotions.

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This “kindness kickback” occurs partly because focusing on others causes a shift from our preoccupation with ourselves and our problems, which reduces stress-related wear and tear on body and soul.

“‘Do unto others’ is the greatest self-help message ever devised,” Dr. Post says. He calls the side effect of helping others the “giver’s glow.” “Something about moving beyond self and looking toward others brings happiness. When we stop expecting others to do things for us, and stumble on the happiness of doing things for other people, we can’t help but realize that whatever happens, we can handle it,” he says.

This wise and practical little book includes ideas on how each of us can find our own “hidden gifts” to share with others, helping them and reaping important physical, emotional, and spiritual benefits for ourselves.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Stephen G. Post is professor of preventive medicine and director of the Center for Medical Humanities, Compassionate Care, and Bioethics at Stony Brook University. He is president of the Institute for Research on Unlimited Love, established in 2001 with support from philanthropist John Templeton and the Templeton Foundation. Dr. Post, at the Stony Brook University Medical Center, started the first graduate program in the United States on compassionate care, and addressed the United States Congress on the health benefits of generous behavior. He is the author most recently of the widely praised *Why Good Things Happen to Good People*, and his work has been featured by national media such as *Nightline*, *20/20*, NPR, and *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*. Visit him at www.StephenGPost.com.

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