

Seven “Enough Experiments” to Use Your Excess for Good

adapted from *More or Less: Choosing a Lifestyle of Excessive Generosity*
by Jeff Shinabarger (David C Cook)

1. Begin to Give Out of Your Excess.

For the next week, every day, listen to friends and colleagues. Try to hear what they communicate as a need or want. Your goal is to begin to give to others out of things that you already have in your possession. Think about everyday things in your home that you could give to make a friend’s life easier and your life simpler. Give it away. You will be amazed at how others will respond positively and with surprise. Get a taste of what it feels like to give out of your excess.

2. Take Your Food Donation to a Person—Not a Bin.

Find five cans of food in your kitchen. Take them to the nearest food bank in your area. But don’t place the cans in a bin—deliver them to a person, and have a conversation. Seek to see beyond the statistics and into the lives of those affected by hunger in your own community. Ask them about the food needs of your city. Find out how many children are hungry in your community. Learn everything you can about that food bank and how it addresses the needs of hunger in the place where you live. It will make you think in a new way about your next meal.

3. Count Your Clothes.

Go through your closet and drawers and pull out every piece of clothing you own. Count every piece. How many days could you go without wearing the same thing twice? Decide what is enough for each category of clothing, and pare down. Before going to donate the clothes, look in your closet and choose one piece you love, and give that also. Don’t give only your old but give your favorite, and you will begin to change your perspective toward clothing and live with a renewed hope through generosity.

4. Cash in Your Loose Change.

Dump out those coffee cans or jars filled with loose change, count it up, and give it to an organization in need. If you can add up at least fifty dollars in change, you can send it to Hope International which will start a new business helping to lift someone out of poverty.

5. Give Opportunities.

Look at your calendar and determine what events or activities on your schedule are most exciting to you. For each event, find a person to bring with you who could benefit from the opportunity. This experiment is simple—just share your experience with others

6. Sell Something You Own for Charity.

Look around your home and choose one item valued at more than fifty dollars. It may be a chair, a video game system, a bread-making machine or maybe even an old baseball card. Figure out the value of the item and post it for sale online. Use social media to get the word out to your friends about the sale and the cause you want to support with the proceeds. Then give whatever you receive from that sale to a local need in your community. This is a simple way to understand the excess we have and the needs we can solve today quickly while limiting the stuff in our homes.

7. Throw a Gift Card Giver House Party.

Pull out all your gifts cards. How many do you have? How much is left on each card? Ask your friends to do the same. Throw a house party during which everyone who comes gets “carded.” Designate the cards to the charity of your choice. For more information visit www.giftcardgiver.com/house_party.php.