

Why You Should Invest in Someone Who Can't Pay You Back

What in the world did she see in me?

I was just a 12-year-old girl ... awkward and still in the preteen class at church. She was in the uber-cool college class.

Warehouse. That's what they called themselves. I looked up to them so much; they put on clever skits for church and drove cars. They hung out ... and they were just so cool. I wanted to be just like them.

Me? I was the oldest kid in the pre-teen class. I felt like an elephant in a room full of kittens. Awkward. Clumsy. Huge. I was insecure and my greatest ambition was to make it to youth group. If anyone from youth group even realized I existed, I would have soared to cloud nine.

It didn't even occur to me that someone from *Warehouse* would even so much as glance my way, much less want to spend time with me.

But she did.

Kim would come by *in her own car* and take me places. Just to hang out. *For real?*

Why she would want to hang out with this clumsy, awkward kid who didn't even technically classify as a teenager yet was beyond me. But she did.

And those moments, and that impression she made on me have stayed with me all these years. At a time when I felt so invisible, to her I was visible. At a time when I felt

extremely insecure, to her I was someone who was worth her time.

And the most important thing is that she never expected me to reciprocate.

How could I?

I didn't have money. I didn't have a car. I didn't have any good ideas of places to go and things to do. I wasn't even a teenager yet.

We are most selfless and kind when we take moments out of our busy schedules to touch someone who is completely unable to touch us back.

We've talked about appropriate circles of friendship, setting boundaries and investing in those people who are able to invest back into our lives. We've discussed the importance of give-and-take and healthy relationships.

But if we never leave room in our lives to give to those who cannot give back; either because they don't know how, or they are in a season of brokenness and are incapable of investment, we are denying ourselves the joy of selfless giving.

There have been many others who have invested in me in times when I was not able to invest back: Miss Jo—my pastor's wife—comes to mind. I was coming out of a dark era in my life and needed someone who would lovingly but firmly speak truth to my heart that had freely lied to me for a long time. She set aside an afternoon twice a month to meet with me and mentor me. I wouldn't be where I am today without her.

There is Mark, my cell group leader, who took time out of his day to listen to me talk and ramble about my broken engagement to a man who had psychologically abused me. When I was done, he quietly asked me why I continued to choose to date these unhealthy men. Would I have continued down this destructive

path had he not taken time out of his busy schedule to ask me this life-altering question?

I could list many others who have made deep and indelible impressions in my life and shaped who I am today. Some of them made a one-time investment, others made long-term investments—but all of them play a vital role in the person who I have become.

You see, when we invest in those who invest back into our lives, we are investing in relationship. The give-and-take is fulfilling and our cup runs over with the joy and fulfillment we receive.

But when we invest in those who cannot invest back, when we give to them with no strings attached, we invest in eternity!

There is a certain joy that we experience when we give selflessly to others, because when we do we partner with Jesus in living as He lived.

Look at those in whom Jesus invested: a harlot, a thief, an outcast, uncouth fishermen, lepers, demon-possessed ... He invested in those who could never reciprocate.

He made the largest investment in His disciples, with whom He walked daily for three years. How did they reciprocate? By walking away at His moment of greatest need. But He went on to invest in them after He rose again. His investment in them changed their lives ... and led them to change the world! Ultimately all but one would die for Him!

Dear friends, as I wrap up this series on building healthy relationships, may I leave you with this challenge:

As you seek to resolve the toxic relationships in your life and surround yourself with healthy people, leave some room in your life to reach out to those who may never be able to reach back.

You may never know the impression you make in their lives for eternity.

You may never see how God will use that moment to alter the course of their life.

But as you reach out—selflessly, with no strings attached—your investment in eternity will never be forgotten!

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