

Claim your vocation as peacemaker. Write it on the business card of your heart. Live it, not only when life is easy, but *BOLDly* when life is hard. Root your life deeper into the soil of peace in regular rhythms of PoPs, where you can connect more often and more deeply with your tribe, with your own heart, with every breath, each day.

Doing something as significant as peacemaking—here and now—is simple. It is about showing up and bringing your voice and vision to life and offering it to the world.

philanthropists

YOU HAVE GIFTS APLENTY TO GIVE THAT CAN MAKE A MIGHTY DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD. YOU HAVE MORE THAN YOU THINK YOU HAVE THAT IS OF INEXTRICABLE VALUE TO YOU AND TO THOSE IN YOUR HUMAN FAMILY, NEAR AND FAR.

Generosity feels good. It is part of your purpose on the planet. I have seen the unspeakable joy it brings people to give what they value greatly.

I remember one such moment when a little kindergartener came up to me and gave me a baggie of pennies, quarters, dimes, a one dollar bill, little hair bows, a necklace, and a note that said, "I love you." She authoritatively charged me to take it on my next trip to Nepal and give her gift to a child on her behalf. When I leaned down and asked her about the items in the bag, she told me it contained her treasures, the things she loved most in the

world. The hat of philanthropist sat squarely on the head of this wee kindergartner.

To those who may challenge this notion, let's respectfully—and heartily—disagree. Today and together, let's dispute the suggestion that philanthropy is an exclusive club only for those deemed *wealthy*. Today and together, let's dispute that the only thing that matters and makes a difference is giving in "big" ways. Instead, today and together, let's create a movement of philanthropists in which everyone is welcome and all gifts are celebrated.

I invite you to try on the hat of philanthropist. Yes, *you*. This sort of philanthropy is about an unrestrained generosity rooted in the reality of your everyday life. It finds ways to share with others the treasure trove of whatever you have and whatever you love. It elevates the way you spend your time and what you talk about with friends. It finds opportunities to travel to places and volunteer with people who captivate your heart. It makes a difference with something as ordinary as shopping, declaring that how and where you shop will be done with a commitment and connection to your sisters and brothers near and far.

**Today and together,
let's create a
movement of
philanthropists in
which everyone is
welcome and all
gifts are celebrated.**

A few months ago, I visited a store on an errand to look for some shoes. Finding a pair I liked, I turned them over and discovered that they had been made in a country known for inhumane factories and labor practices.

I've been deeply drawn to learn about the realities of working conditions in factories around the world for some time now, and

yet, there is still much I do not understand. Although it remains a confusing and complex area for me to navigate, the more I connect with stories of people—as the *causes become personal* and *shift from issues to people*—the more fierce I am to explore what my part can be.

This was one of those moments in which I knew it was time for my feathers to be ruffled. As I held those shoes in my hand, a picture popped into my mind. It was an image of a man surrounded by mountains of shoes in a factory, depicted in the film, *The True Cost* (truecostmovie.com). In that moment, it was as if the man and the mountain of shoes inserted themselves into the shoe aisle where I was standing, begging for my attention, asking me to *look and do something different* because of what I learned from his story. This stranger surrounded by a mountain of shoes invited me to be changed and act anew.

This film is intense. It hurts my heart to take in the stories that give evidence to the reality that around the world people work in horrific conditions, separated from their own children, weary to the bone, with no real way out of the struggle, and desperately alone. Many of these factories produce clothing, accessories, and housewares that are on the shelves of the stores I frequent. It has been uncomfortable and confusing to know my part in response to it all. And yet, despite the heartbreak, this film is one of my favorites, in great part because of Shima, one of the film's featured storytellers.

Shima Akhter is a twenty-three-year-old *COURAGEous*, intelligent, and innovative woman who lives in Bangladesh. A powerful force for change, she has empowered and unified women in her factory to fight for increased living wages and more humane work-

ing conditions. Her story has inspired me and has nudged me to reconsider my consumption of *fast fashion* clothing.

When we commit to *BEing* and *DOing* life together, we then become part of something big. It then becomes the stuff of movements, powerfully rooted in and growing out of the everyday.

While being interviewed, there are times when Shima's eyes sparkle and other times when they tear up. Her voice trembles with emotion and a high hope for her daughter's future to be different from her own. She is ablaze with a dream. And yet, we see and hear it. Her life is

hard. There are no easy answers to the massive struggles in her life and the lives of her fellow workers and family.

On that shoe aisle, on an *EVERYday* errand, I remembered the man surrounded by the mountain of shoes. I remembered Shima. I went back and forth, thinking, *Good grief, Sarah. Just buy the shoes. What difference will it make in the world—to Shima or the fella in the shoe factory—if you don't?*

Amidst the uncomfortable dissonance in me, I felt it: It was time to *switchfoot* my shopping stance into one more deeply connected to the people of the world, my human family. As I held those beautiful shoes in my hands, my throat tightened, tears filled my eyes, and I thought, *No. Not this time. Although I'm not sure if or how this makes a difference for anyone in the world, I am not going to buy these shoes today.*

In my own heart, as I walked out of the shoe store, it felt like an exhale. *Ahh, much better.* Although I was changed, did my little act have a direct bearing on the world's massive systemic challenges of unfair labor practices? No, probably not. And yet, what

is less disputable is that if many of us commit to such actions—to voice what matters to us with our dollars, with our time, and in our conversations—this change will be even more likely to have an impact.

When we commit to *BEing* and *DOing* life together, we then become part of something big. It then becomes the stuff of movements, powerfully rooted in and growing out of the everyday.

My friend, this is not about shaming or guiltling or piling one more burden on your shoulders. This is not about judging or affirming where you shop or talking about heady and oft' privileged notions of philanthropy. Although you and I may not see where it all will lead, this is about sitting *together*, *WHOLEheartedly* open to learning how to infuse more intention into our lives and to more deeply connect with and love those around us.

Hairdressers (stick with me here)

THIS COLLECTIVE VOCATIONAL NUDGE INVITES YOU TO LOOK AROUND AND SEE WHAT IS IN YOUR LIFE RIGHT NOW. RIGHT HERE AND RIGHT NOW.

What simple tools do you wield that can be shared easily with people around you—something that is connected to your job, your passion, or a way of reaching out to those around you that is easy, natural, and currently part of your everyday?

be still (surrender)

Whether you feel rich or poor,
with much or little to give ...
whether wearing a hat of philanthropist
is brand new or ancient for you,
let it all go.
Doing and talking time will come.
This is quiet time.
This is being time.
Bask in the silence.
Be here.
Let go. Fill up.

ponder (go deeper)

Listen to "My Wish," sung by Rascal Flatts. As you do, here's a twofold nudge for you to consider. Listen to this song twice. The first time, take it in *all for you*. It is full of sweetness and is a cozy *blanket of blessing* from me to you for your life to be so very *good*. Now, listen to it again. Light a candle. Use this as a meditation, a way to ask for what you need, to send some juju to someone specific, or offer a meditation or prayer for those far off.

Before diving in, just sit for a bit. Let the words, the invitation to wear the hat of a philanthropist wash over you. See if a word or feeling takes root in you around this vocational calling.

Regardless of the amount of money in your bank account, what treasure(s) do you have in

your life that would feel good, amazing, *emPOWERing* to share? Be creative and innovative here: think about time, your professional or creative expertise, your personal story, the things you already own that could be shared or loaned to people, conversations throughout your day, or your shopping budget.

Think about the funds you have to give birthday, holiday, and anniversary gifts. Might you give a personal gift to an organization close to the heart of the person you are looking to honor—or around an interest or passion they have, perhaps introducing them to a brand new community of people? Write down some ideas of what would excite you and is doable to start now.

What strikes you about the idea of being generous and philanthropic in your conversations? What do you love to talk about, what really matters to you? What would change if you saw yourself entering into conversations with a treasure to share and on the hunt for treasure to receive from others?

Consider making a donation to a charity you love, making it more personal and connected than it has been in the past. A few ideas:

Call or email the organization and ask if you can deliver the funds in person. Do a little something with or for the folks they serve. Ask if there is a person they serve to whom you might write a personal note with a little bit of inspiration or encouragement—ask if they have any specific recommendations or requests as you do so. Hang a picture of the community of people served by this organization in a place where you see it daily. When you see the picture, send some good juju their way.

If you cannot or are not comfortable personally connecting with the people to whom you're giving funds, play a bit in your imagination. Envision placing your donation directly into the hands of the people receiving those funds. How does this feel?



Whether deepening your connection in-person or in your imagination, remember a time you have been a *recipient*. How did you feel as a *recipient*? Consider how this sort of connection with your own story and with the person to whom you are giving cultivates a sense of being not so different, of being *kindred*. How might seeing the person as a *kindred recipient*, not a distant “beneficiary” receiving a “charitable donation,” excite and ignite your generosity and kindle your philanthropy ... whether giving a little or a lot? Ponder and write a bit about this.

Engage (commit)

A nudge. Shift shopping into a philanthropic act one time this week and choose an item that is certified “fair trade” or comes directly from a source that promises to pay its workers well. Or, whether fair trade or not, consider where the item comes from. Before buying it, pause and imagine the hands that crafted it, the eyes focused on making it. Send a prayer, a blessing, or some love to this sister or brother. Hum the “My Wish” song above as you go about your shopping for the many hands that made the items around you. *Bonus Nudge:* Consider committing to this act for thirty days, at which time it just may become a habit.

Now, it’s your turn. What or who are you beckoned to *commit to*, *connect with*, or *create*—whether in small or big ways?

Share something from this PoP with someone you trust.

Your Word. Write a word that has captured your attention in this PoP.