

Getting to Know Our Donors: *The Gift of Ten Percent*

I was a child when my parents gave me a gift that I've held onto through all the years since. It has offered me a unique vantage point that helped broaden my thinking. The gift is, simply, the concept of "Ten Percent."

When my brothers and I earned money by doing extra chores, or we received a gift of money on a holiday or other special occasion, our dad would act as the bank and save it for us. If we earned a dollar, Dad's "bank" allocated twenty-five percent to savings and an additional ten percent to a giving fund. Once the giving fund reached a reasonable amount, Dad would offer us options for giving that amount to a person or a cause. Because of this ten percent concept, I came to understand the value of money: that it was not all mine to spend as I pleased. As a young child, I went along with the program, without question. Then came my teenage years and, to be quite honest, the "Dad bank" lost its allure.

But a funny thing happened by the time I was in college. The ten percent practice was so ingrained in who I was that it came naturally to me to give. I really didn't even think of that ten percent as my own. If I was lucky enough to be able to earn money, then it was my responsibility—and also my joy—to share the ten percent with someone who needed it more than I did. And because I had been taught to look for that need all around me, I noticed it wherever I went. As Richard Rohr teaches us in the Living School for Action and Contemplation, "Often we only notice what we are told to notice."

At the Living School, much of the instruction is centered on contemplative practice. This practice has reprogrammed my hard drive and taught me the profound truth first articulated by Albert Einstein: "No problem can be solved with the same consciousness that caused it." As the Center for Action and Contemplation's name implies, we are a community striving to become compassionate people through contemplation. We act on what comes to us in those contemplative moments. For me, I felt called to action by sharing this idea of the gift of



ten percent; it's about living what I'm learning. I realize that the incarnate God in me is using me as Her hands to lessen the suffering of the world. As a co-creator with God during my lifetime, how can I listen to what makes my heart sing and put it into action?

My husband and I have taught our three boys the practice of ten percent, but I'm always wondering how I can magnify the message. As Richard has taught us, "We don't think our way into a new way of living; we live ourselves into a new way of thinking." For me, living my new

way of thinking has been to spread the gift of ten percent.

That's why I started a micro-philanthropy movement called the Butterfly Effect, named after the idea that a single occurrence—no matter how small—can change the course of the universe. The Butterfly Effect involves others in the act of giving, and the very action changes us by opening our eyes to what God has put in our hearts. I ask each participant in our program, "What makes you come alive, or what breaks your heart?" Then I add, "Let's give to that."

We are each uniquely and wonderfully made and all have different causes we want to support. As we actively give to those unique callings, our hearts grow bigger. Our story becomes less about who we are and more about who we might help. We become the eyes and the hands of Jesus. Our meager ten percent is the beginning of expanding our hearts to include the larger story.

—Tasha Wahl

Tasha Wahl, a student in the 2016 cohort of the Living School for Action and Contemplation, is the founder and creator of the Butterfly Effect (<http://www.butterflyeffectbethchange.com>), which advocates that, "By making small changes in our communities, we will set into motion a vast and unexpected movement toward a better world." Tasha and her husband, Erik, are founders of the Wahl Foundation. They are committed to producing positive change in order to create a better world. Together, they helm The Wahl Group (www.theheartofvision.com), which challenges corporate America to shift business-as-usual thinking to a more dynamic paradigm of holding the tension between success and significance.

THE LYDIA FUND



AFTER GOD "opened her heart" (Acts 16:14), Lydia, a merchant in Philippi, shared her house and hospitality with Paul and his companions. Lydia trusted that something larger was working within and through her. Lydia's inclusive generosity toward a group of outsiders planted seeds of transformation in many lives.

In this spirit, we invite you to become a benefactor of the Lydia Fund. The Lydia Fund provides scholarships to those in the Living School and other CAC programs who otherwise could not afford to participate.

You may donate securely online at cac.org/scholarship-fund.

You may also send a check, payable to CAC, to PO Box 12464, Albuquerque, NM 87195. Please note "Lydia Fund" in the memo. If you wish your donation to be applied *only* to Living School students, please note "Living School Scholarships" in the memo.