

Hello friends,

What is the best way to love our neighbors? That's a question I've asked myself often over the past 25 years here at the Mission.

As I look back, it seems like we often used the same strategy to show compassion and love to our neighbors in poverty that non-Christians use: identify what a person needs; then, provide the solution.

When we were the only shelter in town, people would come to us and say, "I need a bed." We would take their names, and assign them a bed. They may have stayed for a night, or maybe a week, and during this time we would try to offer them a hand up, not simply a hand out. Sadly, many just wanted a hand out.

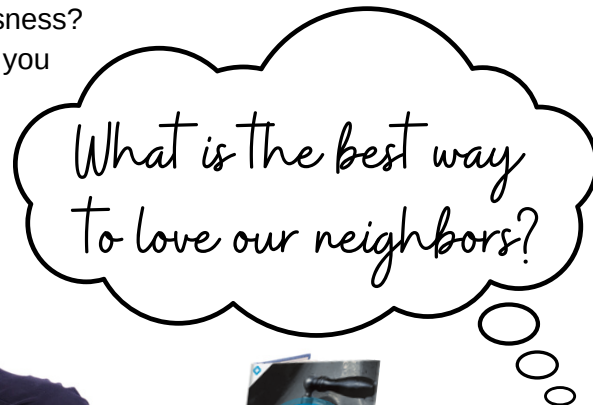
We were treating people as consumers and assuming the customer is always right. If they only want food, clothing, and shelter, we had the ability to provide it to them. The problem was that it wasn't a very effective way to truly love our neighbors. It was a transaction rather than a relationship.

So we tried another approach that we thought was more compassionate. When people came in for a bed, we sought to understand their situation using the 5-W investigative questions. Instead of simply **who** are you, we would ask, "**What** do you need? **When** did you become homeless?"

Why are you here at the Mission? **Where** were you before you came here?" The idea was that the better we understood the person, the better we could help fix their problems. Conversely, the people that came to us for help would know that we really care because we asked. As a result, more people joined our programs, and we were able to help people in different ways than before. This was better....

Then I read a book entitled *When Helping Hurts*. Reading it thoroughly challenged the way I was thinking. It reasoned that because people are created in the image of God, they are assets to be appreciated, NOT problems to be fixed.

What that meant was, instead of asking people, "*What's **wrong** with you?*", we needed to start with the question, "*What's **right** with you?*"



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What gifts, abilities, and assets do you have?", not "What do you need?", not "What are you able to do?", not "What can't you do?". So flowing out of that, "How can you utilize these abilities to attain your goals?" With this approach, the solutions to their challenges and the resources that are provided come from them as much as possible, and not from us. The interesting thing is, people respond much differently when you walk with them instead of just giving them stuff.

The cool thing is we are not doing things **to** people anymore (trying to fix them) or **for** people (simply giving them stuff), we are doing things **with** them. It is a process of ongoing change that moves everyone involved, both them and us, closer to a right relationship with God, self, others, and the rest of creation...closer than we have been in the past.

By the grace of God and thanks to the *Chalmers Center*, the writers of *When Helping Hurts*, we are better equipped to love our neighbors in a much deeper way than ever before. And the exciting news is, we can help equip you as well.

Would you like to walk with us?

Thank you for your continued support! 

- Chalmers Center: <https://chalmers.org/>
- When Helping Hurts: <https://chalmers.org/resources/books/>

GIFTS FROM THE HEART

In honor of Jesus Christ
by Ken & Diane Capp
In honor of Gene Covic
by Frank Albert

In memory of Jerry Armstrong
by Mary Armstrong

In memory of Morris Arthur
by Jillinda Arthur

In memory of Earl Best
by Nickolas & Lindsay Boosalis

In memory of Jack Bird
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