Aristotle’s Conception of Virtue

Excess
- Foolhardy
- Wasteful
- Boastful
- Ingratiating

RATIONAL MEAN
- Courageous
- Generous
- Truthful
- Friendly

Deficiency
- Cowardly
- Stingy
- Deprecatory
- Quarrelsome
Question:

- What sustains the gift economy?
- What nourishes the spirit of the gift?
- Never ask! – ‘what self interested motivations can we develop in order to get people to give’?

Virtues are not motives
Generosity
Charity
Compassion

Virtue clusters of gifts outgoing
Generosity

- Binds people together in their living
- Requires the right gift to the right people at the right time
- Is motivated by moral excellence
- Expresses the nature of character to give with pleasure

Stewardship: the gentle art of teaching the joy of giving.
Charity

• Considered a religious duty
• Benedict said: The love of God is linked to charity to the poor.
• The poor are symbols of Christ
• The 7 works of mercy – hungry, thirsty, naked homeless, sick, captives, burying the dead.

Virtue in service to God that embraces community
Charity

• I delight to do thy will O my God for thy law is written within my heart. Ps 105

• Forget not thy precepts....

Delight – the joy
God’s Will – the principle
The Heart – the emotion
Compassion

• Self sacrifice that is an emotional response to the needs of others less fortunate in the context of shared humanity.
• Moves the spirit, dissolves the ego, experiences the world as others do.
• Seeks to be altruistic
• Highest level – ‘teaches to fish’

We are partners in humanity
Giving based on an internalised principle or rule.

Giving based on an external emotional stimulus.

Charity

Compassion

Giving as an internal response to a current realised personal condition or circumstance.
Principled structured Giving

Response to emergent need

Charity

eg Tithe

eg ADRA

Compassion

Spontaneous expression of joy

Generosity

Worship motivated
Structured Giving
Principles are learned but not easily stretched. They can be reinforced.

Response needs
‘The poor are always with us – giver fatigue happens! Genuine response to Genuine Need

Charisma has its limits released by a gift, should not be artificially massaged.

An expression of joy
Virtue clusters the gifts of response.
Gratitude

- Accepts the spirit of the gift without seeking to establish exchange value.
- Responds by graciously passing on the spirit of the gift to third parties.
- The recipient becomes a trustee of ‘grace’.

Voluntary organisations are channels of moral energy.
Mutuality

- Expressed through cooperation and interdependence
- Treats people fairly – and deeper
- Appreciates the common destiny of mankind and shared identity

'Lifting as we climb'
Love

• Recognises that God is the source of every good and perfect give.
• Takes the sacrificial love of Jesus Christ as a model for good works.
• “He saved others, but cannot save himself”.

The task of the Stewardship Leader is to prime the cycle of:

Gifts Outgoing
Charity
Generosity
Compassion

Gifts of Return
Mutuality
Gratitude
Love