



Service versus Sacrifice

First, to be fair, the word sacrifice is not automatically negative in its connotation. For purposes of discussion we will simplify the definitions, making “service” represent the more positive aspects of giving, while letting “sacrifice” represent the giving that involves some form of loss.

<u>Service</u>	<u>Sacrifice</u>
Both sides benefit (giver & receiver) (Win/Win)	One side (or both) must lose something (Win/Lose)
Giver is lifted by the experience	Giver loses part of themselves
Clear boundaries	Lack of clear boundaries
Joy & increased energy from giving	Giver is feeling drained, loss of energy
Service is reward in itself, there is no loss	Giver is keeping score, eventually the “accounts must be settled”
“Desire” / “Want To” / “Gift”	“Should” / “Have To” / “Duty”
Compassionate	Driven by guilt / Has an agenda
Divinely inspired	Acting from Ego
Remembers there is choice – and can say yes or no - Takes time to “check-in”	Stuck in an automatic “yes” – forgotten there is a choice
Does not compare with the service of others	Comparisons, keeping score of “who is doing the most”
No expectations	Has expectations – of being recognized, of being rewarded
Acceptance – I am enough, I am doing enough	Judgmental – of self (I am not doing enough)
No feelings of guilt	Judgmental of others - - they are not doing enough

Mahatma Gandhi:

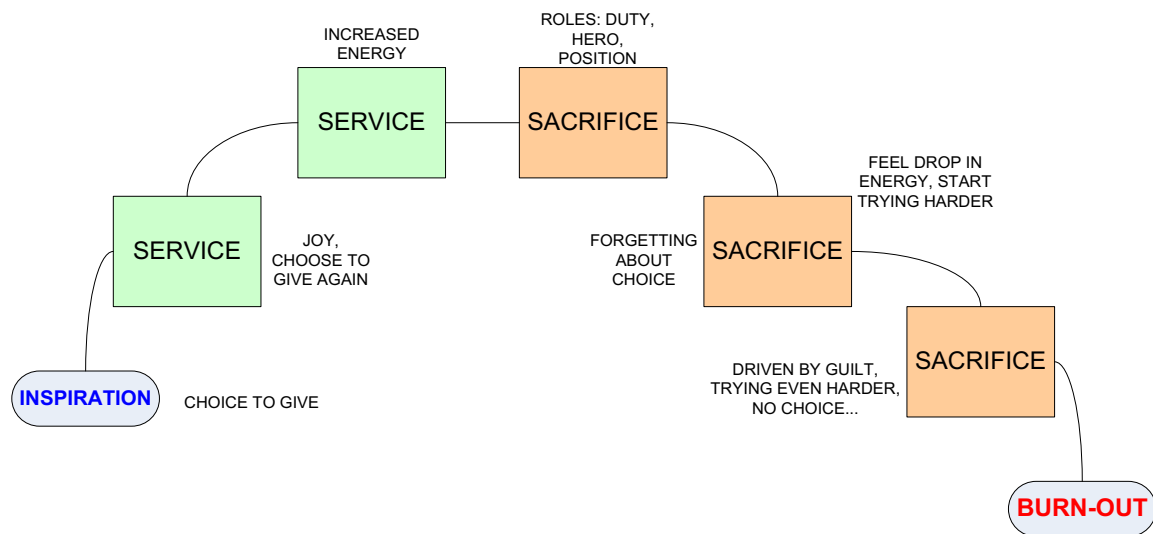
“The sacrifice that causes sorrow to the doer of the sacrifice is no sacrifice. Real sacrifice lightens the mind of the doer and gives him a sense of peace and joy.”

(In this quote we can see that Gandhi is using “sacrifice” in a positive sense – what we are describing as “service”).



The Path To Burnout

Sacrifice often starts as *service*, but over time we forget about *choice* and we forget to re-state our intentions of service. It is not the action that determines what is service versus sacrifice; it is the intention, the energy behind the action that turns it into a rewarding or draining event.



Initially we start with service and we receive joy and increased energy from giving to others, so we do it again and eventually we could be recognized by others for the work we did.

The Ego gets involved and enjoys the attention and soon the service starts turning into something to do to get something (giving to get) – it turns into duty and we start taking on roles (leader, volunteer, captain, hero). We are forgetting the original intent was to give for another's benefit without any harm to ourselves.

We start acting from our unconscious needs and quickly forget about choice of taking care of the self. Our mind tells us that “people are benefiting – so what if it takes so much out of me?” We are now in sacrifice and on our way to burnout.

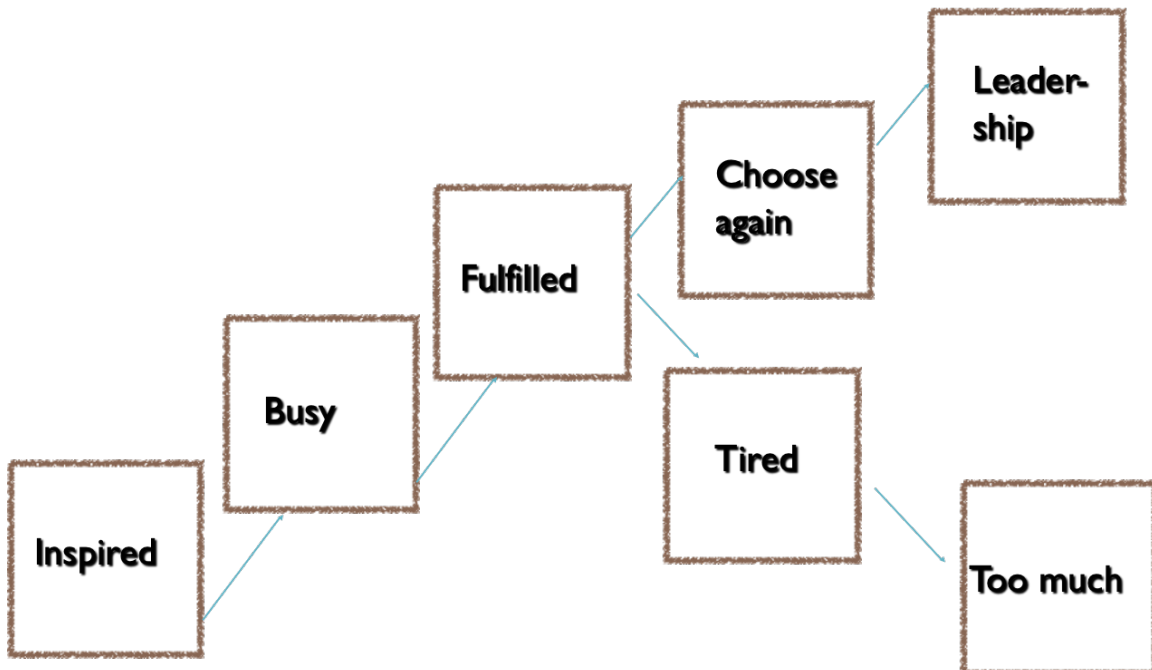
We feel less energy from our actions, so increase the frequency to get something out of the giving. We start trying harder and harder, taking on more and more to try and get the feeling we used to get at the beginning when we were in service. We do not feel we can say “No” and have lost the power of choice –so we are stuck in a place of sacrifice. We resent anyone who can say “No”. We feel guilt when we are working, and we judge others when they are not working. Almost all the joy has gone and we are simply driving ourselves and others using guilt and judgment.

Eventually we collapse – in exhaustion, in sickness, in anger. We find we have nothing left and cannot even do the simplest things – everything is “too much”. We isolate and lick our wounds and if we are smart we get help and try to make changes. But most of us take a small break, just enough until the guilt starts driving us again and we are back on the path to burnout.



The Good News:

We can catch this spiral and make corrections to sustain ourselves and be a source of giving over the long term.





The Problem with Roles

Examples of Roles

A good **mother** should...
A good **father** should...
A good **child** should...
A **husband** should...
A **wife** should...
The **eldest son** should...
The **eldest daughter** should...
A **brother** should...
A **sister** should...
Family should...
A **volunteer** should...

We should give our **community**...
We should give our **parents**...
We should give our **children**...
We should treat our **elders**...
An **entrepreneur** should...
A **nurse** should...
A **teacher** should...
A **board member** should...
A **hero** should...

As long as we define ourselves using these roles we are disconnected from a sense of *choice*. We will make decisions from the mindset of the role and not check in with what serves the “real me”.

As soon as we remember that we have a *choice* we are on the way to busting the role. Unfortunately we tend to surround ourselves with people who reinforce the roles we have established. They are not very supportive of us making changes (they see it as they will have more work).

So why would everyone prefer that we stay in our role and maintain the status quo? In a family system, when we bust our roles, it forces others to look at their own roles. Rather than doing that we often allow ourselves to be scapegoated or guilted back into the role they want you to sustain.

What are they afraid of (in removing the roles)?

- They think they will need to go into greater sacrifice to make up if we start saying “No”
- They do not allow themselves to say “No” – so how dare we do that?
- They have forgotten that they have a choice
- They do not want to do the work to find out what life will be like without all the roles
- They are afraid of what others will think (fear of judgment)
- It brings up grief/anger and shows them how powerless they feel

So what gets created – out of fear – is a self-managing system that keeps everybody in their position or role. Anyone that attempts a change is punished and pushed back into line quickly.

Examples like the Caste System or Class System (Aristocracy) in the UK are systems that enforce the status quo and do not want change. We need to break through roles in order to find our sense of choice again. This will lead us back to a place where we are no longer in sacrifice and can choose to be in service (or not).



Recognizing When We Have Been in Sacrifice

Exhaustion

- Feeling burdened
- Driving/forcing ourselves to do activities
- Not coming from inspiration
- Driven – based on expectations of a role

Anger

- Feeling powerless
- Forgotten about choice
- Judgment of self
- Judgment of others
- Feels like life is unfair – I have to work so hard while others sit around...
- According to my accounts I have done so much – now you have to give back this much

Denial (Staying in the Role)

- Role is seen to be a source of great power
- Ego is afraid of losing the power or the trappings of power (title, recognition)
- Ego fears what will happen if the role is taken away

Confusion

- Originally came from a place of service – don't understand why activities that were once fulfilling are now draining?
- Wonder about the facade the roles are presenting to the world – who am I?

Grief

- Realization of all the time spent in choicelessness
- Realize cost of forgetting self
- Realize harm to others for forgetting choice (e.g. kids)
- What about all that I am owed...

Our Goals / Next Steps:

- Reclaim the gifts that originally inspired us to be in true service.
- Become a true hero and be our best.
- Always remember we have a choice.
- Change ourselves and help those around us to change.
- Set clear and clean boundaries.
- Live our lives in inspiration, connected with the divine.