



BE THE GIFT Film Festival

Shikshantar Andolan
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BE THE GIFT Film Festival



What if... money could speak? What would it tell us?

What if... you had \$1 million dollars? What would you do with it?

What if... we did not need money to live? What would you do with your life?

What if... Mother Earth could speak? What would she tell us?

What if... we had Ministries of Forgiveness rather than Ministries of Military Warfare?

What if...we could all trust strangers? How would the world look?

What if...the purpose of our lives was to share our gifts with each other?

“Be the Gift you want to share with the world.” – Shikshantar

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The gift culture starts with the simple story that we all have come to this planet with amazing gifts and, that the more we share these gifts with each other, the more beautiful our lives will all become.

It reminds us that when we enter into the practice of open-hearted acts of generosity, kindness, forgiveness, hospitality, empathy, sharing, and voluntary simplicity, we can change ourselves and the world around us!

We all have had tastes of the immense joy that occurs when we break-free from the narrowly defined walls of competition, scarcity and commodification and enter the world of trust, collaboration, abundance and deep service.

The need for being kind and vulnerable, being connected within and outside is felt more than ever before in a world full of technological and material advancement but emptier lives, unprecedented socio-economic inequity, mass ecological destruction and violence.

Kindness expands
one's heart



Purple Soul

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Recognizing that we all are interconnected in this vast web of life might just be the answer to solving many of the problems facing our world today.

Tapping into our gifts and offering them in the spirit of deep gratitude may bring us closer towards that sense of oneness with fellow human beings and the surrounding natural world.

The gift culture has a radical potential for political-economic transformation as we look to the past experiences of Vinoba Bhave in the Bhoodan movement and Nelson Mandela in the South African Truth and Reconciliation Committee.

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We invite you to organize a Be the Gift Film Festival with your extended family, neighborhood friends, community group or workplace/school/college.

This little booklet compiles about 3 hours of short films that offer creative ideas and ignite our imagination to the various ways gift culture is manifesting in our day-to-day lives. It is not meant to be a prescriptive document.

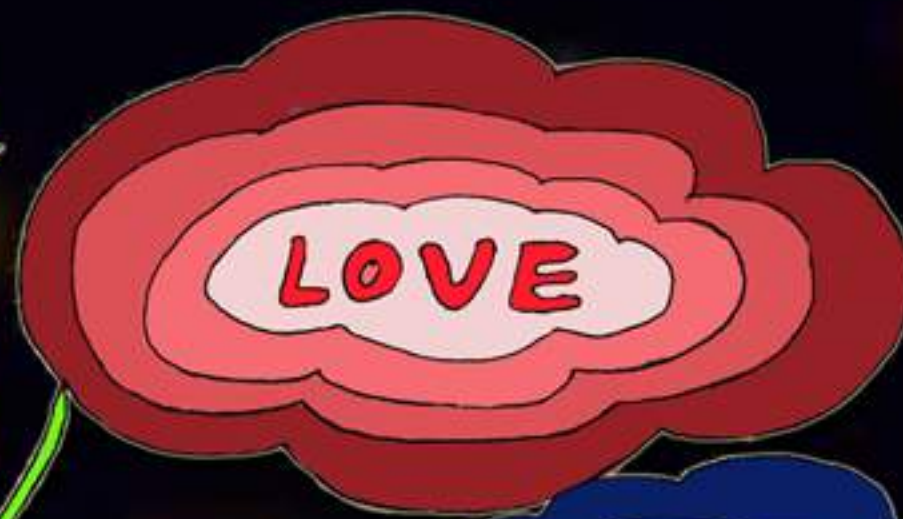
Rather, we hope it can help open up new deep dialogues and experiments around gift culture, in our personal and professional lives, local communities, offices or academic spaces.

There are some 'Seeds of Hope' questions for reflection, which may lead to interesting self-inquiries and ripple effects through personal actions. There are also some quotes at the end that can be printed out on posters to decorate your space with.

You may also refer to this youtube playlist for the compilation of videos:

<http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLXLnQDWxXzJfNWqUzVyvhTeAbSNuds2Hk>

What you
focus on
Expands



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This festival idea and initial package was born out of a Giftival Event (www.giftival.org) in Kochi, Kerala.

Several giftivist friends came together and co-created this Film Festival with us by sharing films that inspired them.

Special thanks to our friends in Moved by Love and Service Space (www.servicespace.org).

So watch these films, share some food, stories, laughter, host some nice conversations, start to play together, imagine what if..., and let the magic unfold!

More details on the Gift Culture can be found at: Reclaiming the Gift Culture.
<http://www.swaraj.org/shikshantar/giftculture.pdf>

We would greatly appreciate it if you could please share any inspiring short films on gift culture that you come across with us for future editions of the Film Festival.

In deep gratitude and service,
Manish Jain and Vipul Shaha, Shikshantar, Udaipur,
Sheetal Sanghvi, The Urban Ashram
&
Priya Krishnan Das, Purple Soul.

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1. Share, Care, Joy (1 min.57 secs.)

What would a kid do with Rs 50 in his pocket and all the time to spend on a sunny afternoon? Buy some candies or a toy? Or perhaps enjoy lots of ice-cream?

This little kid is all set to treat himself to such delicacies in the market place until something unexpected calls for his attention. A truly heart warming story of forgiveness and joy of giving.

<http://youtu.be/HkuKHwetV6Q>

Seeds of hope:

What is your experience in letting go of any personal luxury in order to care for and share joy with others?

2. Life Vest (5 mins, 45 secs)

Small acts of kindness can be very contagious and it's what keeps the world afloat. Life Vest is a beautifully created video that re-affirms the power of the ripple effect and that what goes around comes around.

<http://youtu.be/nwAYpLVyeFU>

Seeds of Hope:

Who/What are the Life Vests that keep you afloat in times of need?

3. The Little Thief (3 mins, 2 secs)

A poignant story of a kind deed that never got forgotten. We see how the universe is conspiring to connect our actions.

<http://youtu.be/VF9b1cq-PAI>

Seeds of Hope:

Think of a time when you were in utmost need and how you were helped. How have you expressed gratitude to the person(s) who helped you?

I feel so Rich with a heart
full of
Love



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4. A Generosity filled Birthday (3 min. 28 secs.)

This young man made his birthday a truly memorable one by performing 22 random acts of kindness on his 22nd birthday. Thus bringing joy not only to himself and his family and friends but also to many strangers in the community and inspiring hundreds of thousands across the world.

<http://youtu.be/wskG18saKko>

Seeds of hope:

In what unique ways have you celebrated your birthday or anniversary? How would you like to celebrate your next special event? What ways would you recognize those who have contributed (directly and indirectly) to achieving your own milestone?

5. Grateful: A Love Song to the World (4 Min 57 Sec)

Musicians Nimo Patel and Daniel Nahmod brought together dozens of people from around the world to create this beautiful, heart-opening melody. Inspired by the 21-Day Gratitude Challenge, this soul-stirring music video is a celebration of our spirit and all that is a blessing in life. Created within a week by a team of volunteers, it shines the light on all the small things that make up the beautiful fabric of our lives.

<http://youtu.be/sO2o98Zpzg8>

Seeds of Hope:

What are all the things you are grateful for in your life?

6. Free Hugs (3 Min 39 Sec)

One man and a free hug to offer at a shopping mall snowballs into a thriving community of thousands who connect with each other to share moments of warmth and joy. All it takes is a heartfelt hug!

http://youtu.be/vr3x_RRJdd4

Seeds of Hope:

Would you have accepted a hug from a stranger? How do you express your love and warmth towards fellow beings? How can we connect more deeply with 'strangers' in public spaces?

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7. Validation (16 Min 24 Sec)

Appreciating others and bringing smiles to fellow beings can be such a simple and powerful act of service—one never knows what shifts it might bring to someone's life. This beautifully made short film inspires us to reach out to even those who're hardest to love, perhaps they need it the most.

http://youtu.be/Cbk98OjV7Ao?list=FL_gNcnYVm7B_OcmrerFCGPA

Seeds of hope:

Be that person across from you – what do you appreciate in him/her? What role has appreciation played in your own life journey? How do you show your appreciation to friends and loved ones around you?

8. Oasis Game—Udaipur, India (8 Min 24 Sec)

A remarkable example of what can be achieved when a community joins hands and hearts to co-create something beautiful. Tapping into our collective dreams and gifts, a true Oasis of joy and hope can be created anywhere, anytime!

<http://youtu.be/fSE6GbYAUEU>

Seeds of Hope:

What are the collective dreams you hold for your community? What are the hidden treasures in your community? What gifts would you like to bring to your community?

9. Gift Circles (3 Min 45 Sec)

Gift Circles are a wonderful way of strengthening local community by openly sharing our needs and freely offering our gifts. They create a win-win situation for all without having to constantly rely on monetary economy.

http://youtu.be/aUPZvU1y_vO

Seeds of Hope:

What keeps you from asking for help for your dreams? What unique gifts do you need to take your dreams forward? What gift can you offer to help support others with their dreams?

Love is indeed
a Real
& Powerful
thing!

Love is like
Philosopher's stone...
whatever it touches
becomes Gold....



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10. Shop of the Open Hearted (4 Min 59 Sec)

A shop where there are no price tags, a shop where people exchange some of their most dearest objects, precious talents and inspired gifts and in turn open their hearts and stories to the fellow community. Check out this guide to host a Shop of the Open Hearted with your community

<http://youtu.be/xBtOLKbDhVY>

Seeds of hope:

What explains the joy in giving something away that is precious to you? What objects are you attached to and what stories do they hold? What are beautiful traditional ways people in your community used to share things they are not using with each other?

11. Customers Pay It Forward at Starbucks (1 Min 49 Sec)

Disrupting the common economic notion of 'maximization of self-interest' and 'everyone in it for themselves', a wave of generosity is sweeping across America (and elsewhere) as this video shows:

<http://youtu.be/xfgDTqEWAJQ>

Seeds of Hope:

Why do you think this idea is succeeding in this Starbucks? How would you feel if tagged with an anonymous gift? Has it happened to you before?

12. Right Here Right Now (28 Mins. Approx)

Every moment, we have a choice—the choice between spreading love or hatred, generosity or greed, compassion or anger...

What we choose right here, right now ripples out and influences not only the world around us, but also our own destiny as this two-part video shows:

1: <http://youtu.be/OVAokeqQuFM>

2: http://youtu.be/_b_9FIQEtFg

Seeds of Hope:

Are there any creative practices that come to your rescue in your moments of anger or despair?

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13. Cycle Yatra (6 Min 3 Sec)

An innovative and sacred pilgrimage on a bicycle—to re-claim control over our learning, to experience what it really means to give and receive in the spirit of trust and service.

http://youtu.be/t_YQsaFLOvM

Seeds of hope:

What would turn a travel experience into a sacred pilgrimage for you?

14. Halchal Café: Introducing Slow Food in the Fast Food era (4 Min 49 Sec)

Halchal means 'commotion' or rather 'creative co-motion'. Halchal Saturday Café started in Udaipur with the idea that when people from varied backgrounds, interests, talents, places and cultures come together in the spirit of friendship, beautiful things emerge. Check out this volunteer-run weekly restaurant that is experimenting with healthy local slow food and gift-culture.

<http://youtu.be/aHyvzeayvRU>

Seeds of Hope:

What traditions and practices around food and family/ community existed in your culture?

15. Urban Leaves (11 Min 9 Sec)

Growing not just organic food but also human relationships and community talents in the urban sprawl of Mumbai, Urban Leaves has set an excellent example of what can be achieved when we put together our heads, hearts and hands!

http://youtu.be/hYfL4KA_HB4

Seeds of Hope:

Where does food in your community come from? What would it take for your community to grow its own food?

Samastha Lokah Sukhino Bhavantu



May there be Peace in all the Worlds

Purple Soul

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16. Being Kind (4 Min 51 Sec)

The 21-Day Kindness Challenge launched on September 11th involved 98 countries, 6000 people. And a collective tidal wave of good that inspired many – including young rapper-activist "Nimo" Patel at the Gandhi Ashram in India. Nimo wasted no time channeling that inspiration into an infectious music video. 'Being Kind' features footage from all over the world and heart-melting appearances by the children Nimo works with in the slums. Watch, listen, and prepare to smile big at this lyrical reminder that kindness really is "all we can leave behind."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mJhZ64BvvFU&feature=youtu.be>

Seeds of hope:

What are some stories of acts of kindness that you have done for others? How did they make you feel?

17. Seva Café (3 Min 25 Sec)

Seva Café is a volunteer run initiative in various cities around the world. Giving is practiced at Seva Café in Ahmedabad by serving food with love simply for the joy that comes from true service, seeking nothing else in return. The meals are offered as a gift, with no prices. Each volunteer and guest contributes in their own ways. Thus a value-based community is created and sustained.

<http://youtu.be/KdMPriorpDY>

Seeds of Hope:

What does 'Seva' mean to you?
What ways of serving the world excite you the most?

18. The Gift of Zero Waste Music (11 Min 44 Sec)

Only the human society has invented a concept called 'waste'. The animal and natural world has a use for everything that it discards and engages with. A group of Latin American teenagers are exploring a different path by upcycling trash into incredible musical instruments and producing soulful music out of it.

<http://youtu.be/sJxxdQox7nO>

Seeds of Hope:

What is your relationship with the 'waste' that you might be responsible for producing out in the world? Where does your waste go? How could we create a world where nothing and no one is wasted?

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19. Vinoba Bhave (7 Min 50 Sec)

With the power of love, the man who won millions of hearts across India and led the historic Bhoodan (Land Gift) movement where millions of acres of land were donated for the landless.

<http://youtu.be/2Tx28l9sb5w>

Seeds of hope:

How can we imagine new ways to look at solving issues of social injustice with the heart of gift culture?

20. The Gratitude Challenge (2 Min 27 Sec)

Encouraging us to look at the brighter side and appreciate the many blessings in our life the gratitude challenge has the potential to unlock many hidden treasures within our hearts!

<http://youtu.be/OHxIXLDMGOQ>

Seeds of Hope:

How can the spirit of gratitude be consciously cultivated in your community?

21. The Power of Empathy (2 Min 53 Sec)

This simple animation explains the crucial difference between sympathy and empathy and its importance while trying to reach out to others.

<http://youtu.be/1Ervwgu369Jw>

Seeds of Hope:

How would your approach to connecting with others be any different after watching this video?

To Forgive
is to set a
prisoner Free
and discover
that the
prisoner was
You.

—Louis B. Smedes



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22. The No Money Man (8 Min 7 Sec)

Is it really possible to live without money? A chance encounter with Gandhiji's autobiography led Mark Boyle to enter into a two-year no-money, self-reliance and simplicity experiment that actually ended up 'enriching' his life so much more. His incredible story is a testimony to what can be possible when we break-free from many of the conventional assumptions around success and happiness.

<http://youtu.be/5uTyjvAO6ww>

Seeds of hope:

What would it be like to spend a day or even a week without money? What would you choose to do?

23. Game-a-Thon (5 Min 26 Sec)

Can we play and change the world? This film explores how you can organize a game-a-thon in your community and use the power of non-competitive games and laughter to open hearts and re-build trust in your community.

<http://youtu.be/eWpJNb-GszQ>

Seeds of Hope:

What games do you play which encourage trust, teamwork and sharing in your community? What kind of games did your grandparents play as children?

24. Empathy: The Human Connection (4 Min 24 Sec)

If you could stand in someone else's shoe, how would you treat them differently--asks this very poignant video clip filmed in a hospital setting.

<http://youtu.be/cDDWvj-q-08>

Seeds of Hope:

Can you recall a moment when you felt deeply connected to or understood by another being? What new perspectives emerged as a result?

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25. The Unsung Hero (3 Min 5 Sec)

Believing in goodness and practicing it for its own sake may bring with it many rewards as this unsung hero reminds us.

<http://youtu.be/uaWA2GbcnJU>

Seeds of hope:

In there is an 'unsung hero' in you? What 'heroic' opportunity do your regret not taking? What is it that you desire the most and that money cannot buy?

26. Ubuntu—African Philosophy (7 Minutes)

Ubuntu, which means 'human-ness' or 'the belief in a universal bond of sharing that connects all humanity', is a deep-rooted African philosophy. This video takes us to Africa in order to grasp the idea behind Ubuntu and how it helped reconcile some of the deepest wounds of apartheid.

<http://youtu.be/KgEwV4X3aB8>

Seeds of Hope:

Does any aspect of your life call for reconciliation? How can you apply Ubuntu in your life?

27. What about you? (5 Min 25 Sec)

This music video shares that the secret to being happy lies in turning around the question 'what about me?' to 'what about you? Such a fundamentally simple and yet very powerful idea.

<http://youtu.be/RUA-x6fBPqw>

Seeds of Hope:

Can you share a personal experience of prioritizing the well-being of another person? What feelings and emotions came to your mind?



Let's pollinate the
world with
Kindness

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ADDITIONAL TALKS:

A. Designing for Generosity— Nipun Mehta (18 Min 10 Sec)

<http://youtu.be/kpyc84kamhw>

B.A New Story of the People— Charles Eisenstein (22 Min 46 Sec)

<http://youtu.be/Mjoxh4c2DjO>

C.Sacred Economics— Charles Eisenstein (12 Min 8 Sec)

<http://youtu.be/EEZkQv25uEs>

D. The Commons— David Bollier (24 Min 37 Sec)

<http://vimeo.com/63307196>

E.The Commons— Leo Burke (22 Min 27 Sec)

<http://youtu.be/WDsK6OI5rfo>

F. Giftivism: Reclaiming the Priceless—Pavi Mehta (24 Min 11 Sec)

http://youtu.be/p_QLGvp_stl

G. Embracing Your Gifts—Sobonfu Some (24 Min 11 Sec)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=x6RwkD5vnVs

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SOME QUOTES FOR POSTERS:

"The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give it away." – Pablo Picasso

"You can't make community without gifts. Community is woven from gifts and stories."
– Charles Eisenstein

"Gift-giving implies the value of the other while the exchange transaction, which is made to satisfy one's own need, is reflexive and implies the value of only oneself." – Genevieve Vaughn

We came to this world empty-handed, and we will leave this world empty-handed.
– Indian proverb

"An enemy is the one whose story we have not yet heard." —Gene Hoffman

"Cultivating your own food is like printing your own money."

"If you need to walk faster, work alone. But if you need to walk farther, work together."

"The man who works with his hands is a laborer. The man who works with his hands and his mind is a craftsman. The man who works with his hands, head, and his heart is an artist."

"Meditation is finding God within oneself; Love is finding God in the person in front of you and Wisdom is finding God everywhere around you."

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to share
with the World.*

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