

---

MIKI KASHTAN

# LIVING A GIFT ECONOMY WITHIN AN EXCHANGE WORLD

Maternal Gift Economy Salon

---



---

## QUESTION

When an organization aims to shift into functioning in a gift economy in relation to money, how can it do so when the world around it continues to function based on exchange, and when all of us, including those passionately aiming for the shift, are still immersed within patriarchal, capitalist, scarcity- and exchange-based patterns?

---



# THREE AREAS WHERE WE CAN SHIFT TO THE GIFT ECONOMY

---

HOW  
MONEY  
COMES IN

---

HOW MONEY IS  
DISTRIBUTED  
WITHIN THE  
ORGANISATION

---

HOW  
MONEY IS  
GIVEN TO  
OTHERS





---

# CHALLENGES

## HOW MONEY COMES IN

---

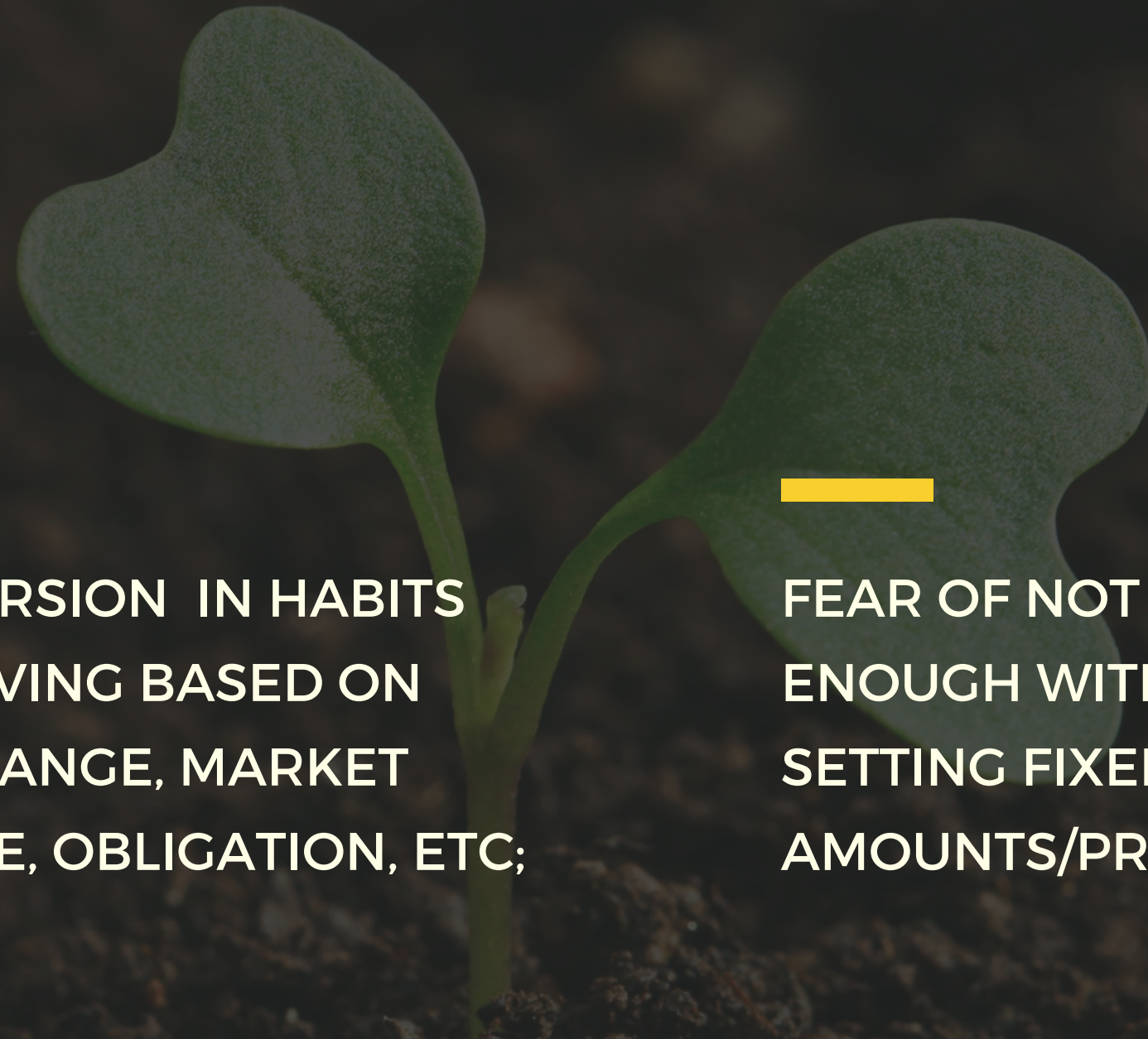
UNCOUPLING GIVING  
FROM RECEIVING IN  
RELATION TO A SERVICE  
OR PRODUCT

---

IMMERSION IN HABITS  
OF GIVING BASED ON  
EXCHANGE, MARKET  
VALUE, OBLIGATION, ETC;

---

FEAR OF NOT HAVING  
ENOUGH WITHOUT  
SETTING FIXED  
AMOUNTS/PRICES





---

UNCOUPLING  
SUSTAINABILITY NEEDS  
FROM RELATIONAL  
NEEDS

---

MOVING FROM “DESERVE”  
THINKING TO CONNECTING WITH  
ACTUAL SUSTAINABILITY NEEDS

---

CARING FOR PATRIARCHAL  
TRAUMA THAT THE INTENSITY  
OF OPEN DISTRIBUTION BRING  
UP

---

MATCHING THE LEVEL OF  
INTIMACY/ VULNERABILITY  
WITH THE LEVEL OF SHARED  
RISK

---

SHIFTING OUT OF  
REPRODUCING RESOURCE  
INEQUALITIES BASED ON  
POWER AND PRIVILEGE  
DIFFERENCES



**CHALLENGES**  
HOW MONEY IS DISTRIBUTED  
WITHIN THE ORGANISATION





# CHALLENGES

## HOW MONEY IS GIVEN TO OTHERS

---

ENGAGING WITH FULL  
EXCHANGE PRINCIPLES

---

LACK OF RELATIONALITY



A small green seedling with two leaves is growing out of dark, rich soil. The background is a close-up of the soil, which is dark brown and textured. The seedling is positioned in the upper center of the frame.

## HOW MONEY COMES IN

In this area, the organization has a lot of say about how things unfold, and not complete say, because it involves interacting with people who haven't made the choice to shift to the gift economy.



# CHALLENGE 1

---

HARD TO UNCOUPLE GIVING FROM  
RECEIVING WHEN ASKING FOR MONEY  
IN RELATION TO A SERVICE OR  
PRODUCT

## APPROACH

---

- INCREASE THE POOL OF PEOPLE BEING INVITED TO GIVE BEYOND THOSE RECEIVING THE GIFT OF SERVICE OR PRODUCT
- SEPARATE THE GIVING AND THE RECEIVING IN TIME - CREATE CONNECTION THAT IS BIGGER AND BEYOND THE SPECIFICS OF THE MOMENT AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE.



# CHALLENGE 2

---

PEOPLE IMMERSED IN THE HABITS OF  
GIVING BASED ON EXCHANGE,  
MARKET VALUE, OBLIGATION, ETC;

# APPROACH

---

- WALKING PEOPLE THROUGH  
RELEASING INDEBTEDNESS AND  
EXCHANGE
- MAKING IT EASY TO GIVE NOTHING  
AT ALL
- CONNECTING THE REQUEST FOR  
MONEY TO THE NEEDS THAT IT  
WILL SERVE RATHER THAN TO THE  
“VALUE” OF WHAT THOSE ASKED  
FOR MONEY WERE GIVEN



# CHALLENGE 3

---

FEAR OF NOT HAVING ENOUGH  
WITHOUT SETTING FIXED  
AMOUNTS/PRICES

# APPROACH

---

- ONLY STEP INTO DOING THIS WHEN  
ABLE TO ACCEPT THE RISK AND  
RELEASE ATTACHMENT TO  
OUTCOME (WHICH IN ANY EVENT  
WE CANNOT CONTROL EVEN IF THE  
PRICE IS FIXED)



A close-up photograph of a small green seedling with two leaves emerging from dark, rich brown soil. The seedling is positioned at the top center of the frame. A semi-transparent dark grey rectangular box is overlaid on the lower two-thirds of the image, containing white text.

## HOW MONEY IS DISTRIBUTED WITHIN THE ORGANISATION

In this area, the organization has complete say about how things unfold to the extent that everyone who is part of it is in agreement with this way of operating. In that case, the only challenges are internal, and that doesn't make them any less daunting.



# CHALLENGE 1

---

WHEN THE RELATIONSHIP IS NOT STRONG, IT'S HARD TO UNCOUPLE SUSTAINABILITY NEEDS FROM RELATIONAL NEEDS AND MEET THE LATTER DIFFERENTLY

# APPROACH

---

- APPLY DEEP DISCERNMENT ABOUT CAPACITY FOR UNCOUPLING AND DEVELOP STRATEGIES FOR INCREASING CAPACITY
- RELATIONSHIP BUILDING TO INCREASE TRUST OVER TIME



# CHALLENGE 2

---

THINKING IN TERMS OF SUSTAINABILITY NEEDS IS A NOVELTY FOR MANY, AND THERE IS GREAT STRUGGLE IN FINDING A WAY TO DO IT. THIS IS ONE OF THE AREAS WHERE “DESERVE” THINKING IS MOST DIFFICULT TO UNRAVEL AND TRANSFORM.

# APPROACH

---

- ACCEPTING IMPERFECTION IS KEY, FOR EVERYONE
- COLLECTIVE BABY STEPS AND INCREMENTAL APPROXIMATION IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY TO AVOID OVERWHELM AND/OR NUMBNESS
- MUCH WORK CAN HAPPEN OUTSIDE THE CIRCLE TO LIBERATE FROM DESERVE THINKING,
- SOME WORK CAN HAPPEN DURING DISTRIBUTION TO HAVE AGREEMENTS ABOUT HOW TO RESPOND WHEN IT COMES UP



# CHALLENGE 3

---

LEVEL OF SHARED RISK MAY BE GREATER THAN LEVEL OF INTIMACY, MAKING IT HARD FOR PEOPLE TO STEP INTO THE VULNERABILITY OF SHARING THEIR NEEDS AND DECIDING TOGETHER HOW TO DISTRIBUTE THE MONEY.

# APPROACH

---

- REDUCING BARRIERS TO VULNERABILITY THROUGH RELATIONAL FACILITATION



# CHALLENGE 4

---

PATRIARCHAL TRAUMA IN THE FORM OF SHAME, ANXIETY, SCARCITY, OVERWHELM, AND OTHER EXPERIENCES ARE LIKELY TO COME UP IN THE UNFAMILIAR INTENSITY OF AN OPEN DISTRIBUTION BASED ON NEEDS

# APPROACH

---

- TRACKING PATTERNS THAT EMERGE AND CREATING SUPPORT OUTSIDE OF DISTRIBUTION EVENTS (PURPOSE BASED TRAUMA HEALING)
- ESTABLISHING CLEAR AGREEMENTS ABOUT HOW TO RESPOND IN THE MOMENT, SUCH AS UNINVOLVED PEOPLE WHOSE ROLE IT IS TO SUPPORT PARTICIPANTS IN THE CIRCLE, OR BREAKS TO CATCH UP EMOTIONALLY, ETC.



# CHALLENGE 5

---

POWER AND PRIVILEGE DIFFERENCES, AT LEAST IN GLOBAL NORTH CONTEXTS, CREATE PATHWAYS THAT REPRODUCE RESOURCE INEQUALITIES EVEN WHILE TRYING TO FOCUS ON NEEDS. FOR EXAMPLE: PEOPLE WITH MORE ACCESS TO RESOURCES FEEL GREATER NEED AND ASK FOR MORE THAN THOSE WHO ARE ACCUSTOMED TO MAKE DO

# APPROACH

---

- NAMING AND MOURNING TO CREATE TOGETHERNESS
- INVITING AWARENESS OF FOR EACH PERSON ABOUT WHERE THEY ARE ON THE POWER MAP OF THE WORLD
- ACCOMPANIMENT FOR SHAME; LEARNING TOGETHER OVER TIME THROUGH FEEDBACK AND DISTILLING PATTERNS FOR DEVELOPING NEW APPROACHES





## HOW MONEY IS GIVEN TO OTHERS

In this area, the organization has the least say about how things unfold. Within the world as it is, many needs will only have ways of meeting them, for now, that require the products or services of those who are fully committed to exchange principles.



# CHALLENGE 1

---

ENGAGING WITH FULL EXCHANGE  
PRINCIPLES

## APPROACH

---

- CREATIVE WAYS OF UNCOUPLING EVEN A TINY BIT, SUCH AS GIVING MORE THAN IS BEING ASKED IF THE RESOURCES ARE IN PLACE
- MAKING PROPOSALS THAT ARE UNUSUAL THAT STILL MOVE IN THAT DIRECTION
- MAKING VISIBLE WHAT IS DONE IN RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS AND OTHER AREAS



# CHALLENGE 2

---

LACK OF RELATIONALITY

# APPROACH

---

- CHOOSING ENTITIES TO ENGAGE WITH THAT ARE AS RELATIONAL AS POSSIBLE
- FINDING CREATIVE WAYS OF BRINGING AS MUCH RELATIONSHIP AS POSSIBLE, ESPECIALLY OVER TIME TO BUILD LONGER TERM RELATIONSHIPS
- MOURNING THE LIMITS OF RELATIONALITY AND OF PATHWAYS TO IT



---

# RELEVANT BLOG POSTS

---

[The Impossible Will Take a Little While – Experiments in Gift Economy \(Part I\)](#)

---

[The Impossible Will Take a Little While – Experiments in Gift Economy \(Part II\)](#)

---

[Matching Resources to Needs: Learning to Receive through Participating in “Money Piles”](#)



---

# RELEVANT BLOG POSTS

---

[Can We Un-Skew Resource Distribution?](#)

---

[Restoring the Flow of Gifting in Community](#)

---

[Life, Interdependence, and the Pursuit of Meeting  
Needs](#)





[thefearlessheart.org](http://thefearlessheart.org)  
WRITINGS & RESOURCES



[mikikashtan.org](http://mikikashtan.org)  
MIKI'S WEBSITE



[nglcommunity.org](http://nglcommunity.org)  
NONVIOLENT GLOBAL LIBERATION

A small green seedling with two leaves growing out of dark brown soil, positioned in the background behind the 'Contact Details' text.

## Contact Details

---