



# KARMA KITCHEN

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Growing in Generosity

Karma Kitchen is essentially an experiment in movement. 😊 Below are some of our core concepts:

## **Moving from transaction to trust**

Many of our interactions in society are based on transaction. When you order a meal at a restaurant, the underlying assumption is that you receive what you are willing and able to pay for. Sitting down for a meal at a friend's house is an entirely different experience. And it's that difference that we want to make with Karma Kitchen. When you make a gift of something, the "how much" question is no longer relevant, and that can be a powerful thing. When you drop the expectation of "pay back", something shifts for both the giver and the receiver. That's what moves people to do things at Karma Kitchen that they wouldn't come up with in a regular restaurant context -- it provides a context for people's unique expressions of generosity to blossom.

## **Moving from scarcity to abundance**

When we think of our resources as limited and finite we become possessive with our time and our various "gifts". When we operate from a space of generosity and think of it as unlimited, then we don't guard our resources with self-interest, and our actions begin to stem from a sense of abundance. As volunteers at Karma Kitchen we have no hidden agenda. We are not there to "get" anything, but to give as unconditionally as we know how, and to practice receiving with humility whatever that experience may yield on any given week. Finding skillful ways to walk away from our ego and express our fundamental generosity in any and every situation is part of what Karma Kitchen is about.

## **Moving from isolation to community**

Every interaction we have in our lives gives us an opportunity to connect with another person at a deeper level. When you start out with an intention to be generous it spurs you past the confines of your own life and opens you up to all the various ways our journeys intersect with each other. At Karma Kitchen the beauty of that comes alive in different ways - such as the community table. Or the fact that every week

strangers come together to volunteer as part of a once-in-a-lifetime crew that assembles and dissolves only to be assembled and dissolved again with a different set of people week after week after week. And the whole thing happens unburdened by expectation. As one guest said: "The fact that this meal was offered to me as a gift, made me wonder about where this food came from, and the hands that had helped cook it. Instead of wondering about whether I was getting my money's worth, I woke up to the inter-connectedness of our lives."

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A couple of additional key concepts:

## **The Difference Between Free & "Gift"**

There's a subtle but important difference between something handed out to you for free, and something offered to you in the spirit of a gift. A gift celebrates inter-connection and relationship. It's a simple gesture of both gratitude and appreciation. Karma Kitchen isn't about giving food away. It's about sharing an experience of generosity that has the potential to shift both the giver and the recipient.

## **Being The Change**

Whenever we serve unconditionally, no matter what the context, it has a ripple effect, both on our own lives and those we come in touch with. The restaurant offers us the opportunity to cultivate generosity on a moment to moment level using actions, words and thoughts. In reality, every moment of every day of our lives offers that opportunity, but we're not always aware of it. Here we have a chance to consciously cultivate that awareness through the simple act of serving a meal.

As anchors, the more you bring your awareness to the opportunities for generosity and kindness in your own life, and the more you stretch yourself to take those opportunities, the more "alive" the concept of Karma Kitchen will be for you.

Another thing to remember in the early days is that even if you don't have a full restaurant just yet, what you do have is a real opportunity to connect at a deeper level with every single person who walks in through the door --whether it's a guest or a volunteer. When things get busy, to some extent you lose the luxury of being able to spend time with each person. So remember to take advantage of that luxury during these initial weeks!