

The startling physics behind infinite abundance

A shift from the Newtonian worldview to a quantum paradigm
will revolutionise how you think about abundance

■ By John David Mann



Illustration: Vandana Nihalani

"Your true worth is determined by how much more you give in value than you receive in payment."

SO SAYS THE Law of Value, the first of five principles of giving that form the thread that weaves a tale entitled *The Go-Giver*. My friend Bob Burg and I wrote this little parable in an effort to pin down on paper some of the subtle yet powerful laws that govern human behaviour. Perceptive readers have pointed out that the more you really look at these 'five laws of stratospheric success,' the more they seem to fly in the face of logic.

The story's protagonist, Joe, is understandably confused by this first law. "Honestly," he protests, "that sounds like a recipe for bankruptcy!" Not at all, says his mentor: "All the great fortunes in the world have been created by men and women who had a greater passion for what they were giving—their product, service or idea—than for what they were *getting*."

Joe grapples with this, but soon accepts it, at least for the sake of argument. Hey, it's a story. But is that really true? And, if it is, how is that possible?! Joe's right: it seems to make no sense!

Or, take the third law, the Law of Influence: "Your influence is determined by how abundantly you place other people's interests first."

Again, Joe is bewildered: "That sounds like an awfully noble principle," he says, "but I don't quite understand..."—and what he doesn't understand [or believe] is how a policy like that could possibly lead to one's success. His mentor replies: "Because if you place other people's interests first, *your* interests will always be taken care of. *Always*."

Really? How so?

The essence of the book's message is this: *the more you give, the more you have*. But how can that possibly be true?

We don't get into this in the book, but there is a fascinating sort of antilogic at work here—or not an antilogic, exactly, but a *different* logic than the one we're used to. It is as different as quantum physics is from the classic Newtonian kind.



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Bills, bullets and billiard balls

Classic Newtonian physics has a 2+2=4 kind of logic, the domain of linear action and response: *every action has an equal and opposite reaction*. Early physics imagined atoms, the ultimate building blocks of nature, as something like billiard balls: inert little balls of matter that, when you hit them, they move in predictable, linear paths with a given inertia. Pretty simple: bank the 6 ball off the side, hit it into the corner pocket.

Classic business operates by billiard-ball logic: you give me \$100, and I'll give you \$100 worth of lumber. You loan me \$1,000, and I pay you back \$1,000, plus interest [*friction!*]. And like Newton's laws, billiard-ball accounting practice works, within its sphere. You want to keep your books accurately and pay attention to the balance of payables and receivables, just as you want to follow Newton's laws to accurately measure stress-load capacity if you're an engineer designing an office building.

But there's more to the world than debits and credits. Billiard-ball logic operates within its circumscribed sphere, but it doesn't govern the interactions of *human relationships*—which form the fabric of all business.

Classic physics says that when you give something away, you no longer have it: *transactions deplete*. Sell off your lumber, steel,

oil, hours, effort, and you deplete your own store. Economics is called the 'dismal science' because it catalogues the ongoing process of depletion.

Managing relationships based on the billiard-ball logic of economics isn't very practical, in the long run, because it's . . . well, *dismal*. It's good for keeping track of widgets, foot-pounds and minutes on the clock—but not of people and their interactions. We try anyway: "I did the dishes last night, tonight it's your turn." [Every action has an equal and opposite reaction, right?] And for a while, it can give the appearance of working. But never in the long term. In the effort to keep score accurately, our humanity invariably breaks down.

"What most people call win-win," says one of Joe's mentors in the story, "is really just a disguised way of keeping track. Making sure we all come out even, that nobody gets the advantage. I scratched your back, so now you owe me. . . . When you base your relationships on who owes who what, that's not being a *friend*, that's being a *creditor*."

Managing a relationship with a score-card doesn't work because nobody can *ever* measure up to the subjectivity of another's billiard-ball calculations. Millions of marriages have broken over scorecards that didn't seem [to *either* party] to tally fairly. Millions of citizens have been conscripted to bear arms in the effort to square warring states' grudge-and-privilege balance sheets.

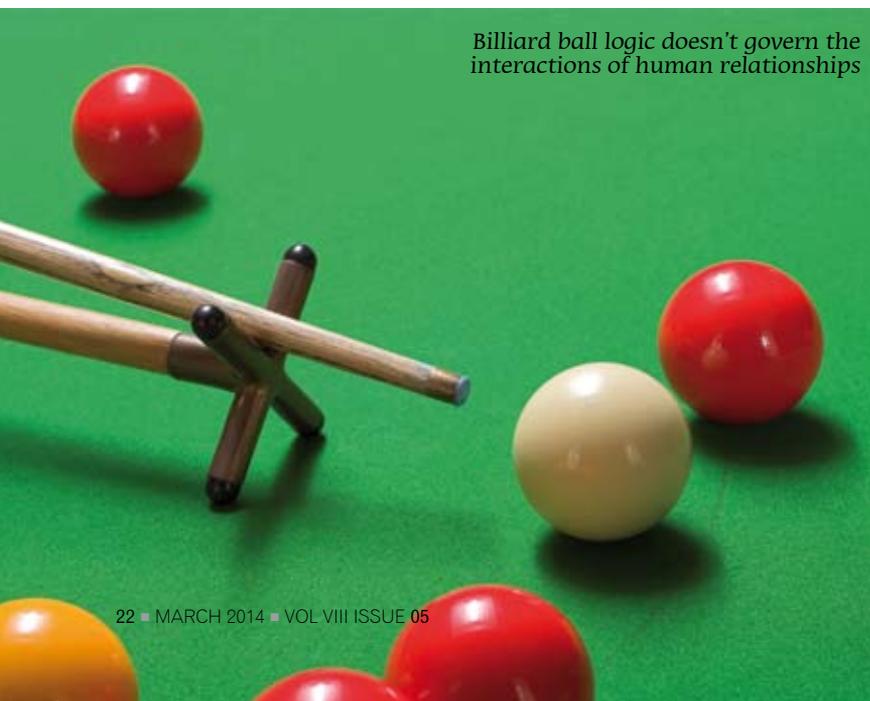
Live by billiard-ball logic, and before long bullets will fly.

Relationships don't work this way, because they are governed by an altogether different physics. Human interaction deals in materials that not only don't deplete, they actually do the opposite. For example, *knowledge*: the more you give, the more it grows. Same with *experience*, and with *appreciation*, and with *love*. This is the antilogic of human physics, and it applies to most anything of genuine human value: *the more you give it away, the more of it you have*.

But how can that be? Where does all that 'more of it' come from?

The answer turns out to be: from a place you may have never expected: when you live

Billiard ball logic doesn't govern the interactions of human relationships





The more you
give away of
love, the more
you have of it

with generosity, that ‘more’ comes to you *out of thin air*—which, as quantum scientists have discovered, turns out to be neither air, nor thin at all.

The inside is bigger than the outside

The logic of *The Go-Giver’s* five laws seems paradoxical, but it reflects how the very fabric of the universe actually works, which is inside out from how it *seems* to work.

In the closing pages of *The Last Battle*, the last book of C. S. Lewis’s *Narnia* series, the children [the heroes of the book] achieve passage into “Aslan’s country,” a paradisaical world that seems like an exact copy of their normal world, only more real—the idea being that the ‘normal’ world is actually a shadow or copy of this interior, more genuine world. As they enter, they discover something extraordinary: despite the fact that they are

entering through a narrow door into what appears to be a small hut, the world they find inside is much larger than the world they are leaving.

“The further in you go, the bigger everything gets. The inside is larger than the outside,” says Lewis’s character, unabashedly flying in the face of conventional physical logic. Yet advances in quantum physics have found that this turns out to be an apt description of the physical world after all.

In the realm of physical matter, as you look at smaller and smaller levels of organisation, you would expect the amount of energy you find on each smaller scale to be less and less. Oddly enough, however, the opposite actually occurs. This is why chemical reactions, such as that of gunpowder, are *more* powerful, not less, than purely physical reactions, like a rock smashing an object, and reactions at the even smaller atomic level are way more powerful than those at the chemical level—and



As matter gets smaller and smaller, the levels of energy get bigger

reactions at the infinitesimally smaller nuclear level are far more potent still.

And at levels even smaller than the nuclear? This is where we start bumping into some truly bizarre logic, where the inside is far, far greater than the outside—like Aslan’s world.

The inside of space

“Space, the final frontier . . .” So says the famous prologue to the popular television show *Star Trek*, and it’s true, but perhaps not in the way we thought. Yes, the exploration of outer space makes for great cinema, but in many ways the true ‘final frontier’ lies in the opposite direction: the exploration of *inner* space.

What exactly is ‘space’? In the old classical, Newtonian worldview, space was viewed as being precisely nothing: an empty void through which matter and energy travelled in trajectories that could be neatly charted in the

three dimensions of height, width and depth. In the 19th century, scientists came to believe that there was some sort of undetectable medium that permeated empty space, some essence through which light waves travelled, much the way sound waves reverberate through air or sonar waves ripple through water. This hypothetical medium was dubbed *luminiferous* [‘light-bearing’] *ether*.

By the early 20th century the ether idea had been generally discredited, yet now, a hundred years later, something very much like it seems to be coming back into style. Starting in the 1970s, scientists in search of a *unified field theory* or ‘theory of everything’ began exploring reality at a level *ten trillion times* smaller than even the inconceivably tiny scale of nuclear forces. As they sought to describe the ‘quantum vacuum’ they encountered at such mind-bogglingly small scales, they found themselves staring at something strikingly similar to the old idea of a luminiferous

ether. They termed it the Zero-Point Field [ZPF], because at this infinitesimal level, some sort of force appeared to be present even at the temperature of absolute zero, where all known forms of energy vanish.

Exploring the nature of this ZPF puts us right onto the pages of Lewis's *Last Battle* [or down Lewis Carroll's rabbit hole, depending on your metaphor]. Because 'empty space' proved to be as far from empty as anything one could imagine.

A world made of thought

Even the massive force of a nuclear explosion pales in comparison to the scale of energy found at the level of the Zero Point Field. According to physicist Ervin Laszlo, author of *Science and The Akashic Field: An Integral Theory of Everything*, this quantum vacuum has an energy density of 1094 ergs per cubic centimetre—that is, one times ten to the ninety-fourth power [1 followed by 94 zeroes]. To get a sense of just how large this number is, imagine taking the entire visible universe, which is by some estimates about 46 billion light years in diameter, and somehow converting every last bit of matter you found into energy all at the same instant. If you did, you would release an amount of energy equivalent to about 10^{59} ergs. In other words, there is *forty more powers* of ten [that's ten thousand billion, billion, billion, billion] times *more* energy in a single cubic centimetre of 'empty space' than there is in all the matter in the known universe.

I am not a physicist, but I don't need to know exactly what an 'erg' is to grasp that there is a great deal more to 'empty space' than meets the eye.

There is one more aspect of the Zero Point Field that is perhaps even stranger than its absurdly massive power levels, and it is even more central to the *illogical logic* of human relationships: the question of what it is made of.

Space, as it turns out, is not *nothing* at all. So what is it? The logically 20th century answer might be 'energy.' After all, Einstein showed that matter and energy are really just two different forms of the same thing, right? So everything that is anything must be energy at its heart... right?

Well, yes: up to a point. But just as unwrapping matter reveals its core nature as energy, you can also unwrap energy to reveal yet something else. Remember, the 'Zero' of Zero Point Field refers to that extreme-low-temperature state where *all energy disappears*. Once you get inside energy, then, what do you find? What is the something deep inside the energy wrapping that contains many orders of magnitude more power than all the matter in the known universe?

The answer, as best as scientists can discern, appears to be: *thought*.

The bottom line of existence, evidently, is *consciousness*.

Organisms are made of cells; cells are made of matter; matter is made of energy; and energy is made of *thought*.

Generosity and the Law of Left Field

Back to human behaviour. A simplistic reading of *The Go-Giver's* message is, "Generosity pays." In other words, when you're nice to people, they'll do you favours back. But that's a billiard-ball interpretation ["I treat you well, then you treat me well back, 6 ball in the corner pocket . . ."], and it doesn't get to even a fraction of the power of the physics of giving. It isn't just that generosity pays: generosity taps a greater and more powerful source.

In the story, there is a scene where Joe is *emotionally* generous with his wife, Susan, in a way that is unexpected to both of them, and it's at that moment that the relationship starts to work—they *both* gain benefit. It isn't that she "pays him back," because he didn't lose anything in the transaction. It's not a question of one gaining benefit over the other. We might say it this way:

The bottom line of existence is consciousness. Organisms are made of cells; cells are made of matter; matter is made of energy; and energy is made of thought



Good fortune isn't coincidental, it comes to you for good reason

“Living with generosity creates a rising tide that raises all ships—not just yours or other people’s, but *everyone’s*.”

I’ve seen this in actual operation hundreds of times, both in business and in the larger realm of life. When you act out of generosity, when you give freely of yourself, then yes, good value will come back to you, but not necessarily right back from the person you were generous to. It’s not a mechanical, one-to-one kind of action.

What’s more, it will often come in amounts that far exceed anything that anyone ‘owes’ you. I’ve seen it happen dozens, hundreds of times, and I’ll bet you have, too, if you were paying attention.

Why? How can that possibly work? Because you’re tapping the underlying fabric of the universe we breathe. For that fabric, whether you call it *luminiferous ether*, *Zero Point Field*, or something quite a bit more ancient and unnameable, provides a source of unfathomable abundance.

You won’t find this one in the book, but you might call this the Law of Left Field: when you live generously, then great value will come to you suddenly and “out of left field,” as the expression goes, that is, from places you never expected it. This kind of unexpected reward has the appearance of being coincidental, but of course it never is. These things come to us for good reason and with the unerring logic of an invisible greater wisdom, as the beneficent response from the intelligent weave of the universe within, which we are thoughtfully cradled, whether or not we are aware of it.

When such unanticipated and untraceable good fortune drops into our laps, we sometimes say of it that “it came out of nowhere”—but it would be more accurate to say, it came out of *everywhere*.



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