

# Givers Takers Matchers Sharers Complete

***"If you're a giver, know your limits because takers don't have any."***

The concept of categorizing people into Givers, Takers, Sharers, and Matchers has intrigued me for years because it helps to explain a lot about how we portray ourselves and respond in relationships. It has also amazed me how many people I have considered to be takers who believe they are givers, how many givers are actually takers, and how we will quickly shift from one to the other based on a multitude of factors and conditions. Dividing the world into these categories can be a helpful way of understanding problems in work and relationships as well as how to more effectively interact with others in our world.

Some people say you can divide the world into three types of people... those that can count and those that can't. You can also divide people into how they interact with the world and treat other people as Givers, Takers, Matchers, and Sharers or a unique combination, depending on situations and/or conditions. Which do you think you are? These categories have helped our evolutionary development and are shaped by two drives... the drive for survival of the fittest and the drive of mutual dependence. Both have helped our species to evolve, but the more "civilized" we become the less beneficial survival of the fittest is compared to the one of mutual dependence and a sense of reciprocal fairness.

The need for Fairness is hardwired in us and a very fundamental principle for the success of human beings. Fairness is not only a human trait, but also regularly observed with other species where cooperation is a necessary agent of their collective survival. Without cooperation of give and take, humans potentially would have been extremely limited and more than likely we would have become extinct like so many other humanoid species of the past. For instance, "Inequity Response," the perception that one is being treated unfairly, has been observed in infants as well as primates, but not in lower life forms. One study reported that when one monkey observes another of her group not getting her fair share that this monkey responds in protest on the other's behalf. See video here of monkey's inequity response: [VIDEO](#)

What makes the evolutionary advantage of Fairness possible for humans is empathy for others and our highly evolved ability to delay gratification for a greater benefit to ourselves. In our culture, humans understand and expect there to be larger pay offs later for immediate sacrifices. By making sacrifices of "Fairness," humans have learned and have come to expect that there will be a larger pay off later. However, if the pay offs don't come or are less than the cost incurred, humans will eventually stop giving once the costs disproportionately outweigh the gains. Fairness is such an inherent aspect in ourselves, like a fish not knowing it's wet, we are unaware that we are acting on it until a high enough level



of perceived unfairness is reached. This sense of cooperation and fairness is programmed into us from a very young age (share with your younger brother to be a "good boy") and is deeply ingrained in our economics, laws, and cultural systems. Although unconscious much of the time, humans regularly evaluate themselves and others, their investments, their returns, and how it serves them overall based on Fairness. It has become second nature in our interactions, expectations, and value systems leading to a strong sense of what is right and what is wrong (i.e. Fair).

[Click here for a comical video demonstration of children and delaying gratification. VIDEO](#)

Obviously, this system of fairness is far from fair in many cases because of the complex mixture of factors in each of our Fairness personalities as well as the political and economic injustices inherent in the systems we are in. To help illustrate how this plays out between people, I have divided people into classifications of Givers, Takers, Matchers, and Sharers. These can be viewed as overlapping, like circles in a Venn diagram where most of us are a combination of all four of these at various times depending upon the situations and conditions. So are you a Giver, Taker, Matcher or Sharer? Here are some quick definitions of the four categories:

**Givers** (I lose, you win)- many times givers unconsciously give for a sense of safety, identity, social approval/inclusion, a sense of power, or past programming. They tend to be other focused and put THE needs of others first. Givers focus on supporting and pleasing as much as possible, especially with takers, and initially will tend to take much less in return. They also tend to say "I'm sorry" quite often even when they haven't done anything wrong. They tend to be more passive in personality and communication style.

**Takers** (I win, you lose)- most takers are unaware that they are takers and usually consider themselves to be givers or matchers. They tend to be self-interested and put their needs first. They focus on gaining as much as possible, especially when "giving," and will tend to give as little as possible in return. They

tend to rarely ever apologize or own when they have harmed others. They tend to be more aggressive in personality and communication style.

**Matchers** (if I win/lose, then you win/lose as well)- high in payoff evaluation (tit for tat, this for that, keeping track) they expect balanced giving and taking. If you give to me, I will give to you equally and if you take from me, I will take from you equally. They tend to be more assertive in personality and communication style.

**Sharers** (we all win) – are lower in payoff evaluation and focus on open giving. Their belief is that it is better to give and trust that the others will also give openly to collectively get to higher levels of success. Sharers tend to operate on trust of others and a sense of abundance in the world. They tend to be more assertive in personality and communication style.

Here are some categories and nick names I have created for Givers and Takers. It's quite likely you know some of them.

## **GIVER CATAGORIES**

**Mother Superior** – helping others at their own expense/detriment. Giver has an air of superiority and likes others to be dependent on him/her. Also, keeps them from being vulnerable and or dependent on others.

**The Rescuer/Fixer** – regularly seen in relationships people with addiction issues. Finds a sense of purpose as well as builds safety for themselves and relationships by being there for others. Rather than rescuing or fixing the person, the often-times just end up enabling the other person.

**The Hero** – Similar to Mother Superior, but more of a “rescuer” than a healer/nurturer.

**The Pleaser** – feels good prioritizing others and feels fear prioritizing his/herself. Tends to have been conditioned early on by parents in taking on a role that benefits the parents or the family system. It is usually shaped by these powerful words “Good boy/girl” and “Bad boy/girl.”

The Marty – “Poor me... look at all I have done for others and look at how little I've gotten in return for it.” A form of getting attention and sympathy because they tend to lack other means of attaining it.

**Wishy-Washy** - lets other people make decisions for them because it is easier than thinking for themselves or the possibility of avoiding some form of disagreement/conflict. Regularly heard saying “I don't know/ I don't care... what do you want?”

**The Giving Parasite** – people who don't have much to offer in who they are or lack a sense of self. Take on the role of giving so that they can be a part of a group or be in a relationship. Usually lack charisma, social skills, etc. and end up doing a lot of work in order to be accepted, included, and appreciated.

**Dudley Do-Right** – has to be the good guy/gal. Was usually programmed by parents and religion to be a good little boy/girl and was shamed if he/she wasn't. Feels good about being morally superior.

## **TAKER CATAGORIES**

**The Leach** – will slowly bleed people to death a favor at a time

**Center of the Show** – (also known as the Rock Star, Comedian, and Poor, Poor Me) always wanting attention on him/her and will get upset if others take it. Usually very charismatic and really annoying if not charismatic.

**The Sociopath** – this person is aware that they are a taker and will usually take pride in it. Will either not be able to hide it well and ends up in prison or hides it very well and becomes the CEO of companies.

**The Smooth Operator** – flatters, makes people feel good about themselves in superficial ways that pulls people in to INTO giving to them.

**The Alpha-Male Man Child** – often fool female givers... initially tend to come off as confident and strong, but later find out that it has its basis in lack of consciousness, no empathy, and having to have his way. Becomes pouty and manipulative when he doesn't get his way. Women tend to hang on way too long in hopes that he will change.

**Needy Nancy** – are dependent, don't take care of themselves and rely on others to do it for them. Usually have some form of addiction and use others to enable them.

**The Ego Stroker** (also known as Slick and the Salesman) –Does this by complimenting people and getting them to feel good about themselves to make them vulnerable. Knows how to fool people into believing that they need him or that he is giving more than he actually is.

**One Hit Wonder** – (the high school quarterback) the person who has done something great or amazing in the past and keeps reminding others of the situation so they can relive it to keep a sense of admiration and specialness.

**Mr./Ms. Entitled** – believe that the world owes them and they surround themselves with people that can help them keep up the fantasy. Usually will burn through lots of people and lots of job.

### ***Here is an example of one of the most common Giver/Taker patterns you see in codependent relationships.***

In this pattern, the Giver gives because of some form of unconscious gain (feels good, is needy, reinforced from a very young age, etc.) which attracts Takers. This initially is a natural fit because Givers like to give and Takers like to take. In this dynamic, the Giver initially gives “freely” for a time, but this “freely” giving is based on an imaginary contract of Fairness that they believe the Taker has signed. However, the Takers are relatively unaware of such contracts and never agreed to this Fairness contract.

As the Giver begins giving, the Taker manages to give back in small and/or superficial ways such as praising, thanking, feigning a sense of dependence, etc. so that the Giver will continue to give. This takes place for some time until the Giver starts to feel a growing imbalance between what they are giving and what they are getting in return. At this point, Givers tend to shift towards a Matching perspective and start keeping track and expecting some form of reciprocity. Because Givers

tend to be passive in their communication styles, they will try to communicate with subtle hints and other indirect manners, hoping that the Taker (who is unconscious of being a Taker) will start to acknowledge/honor the imaginary Fairness Contract which the Taker didn't sign and is largely unaware of.

When Takers fails to pick up these subtle requests, the Givers will tend to use a more direct means of communication (high emotion, criticism, tit for tat comparisons, etc.) with the Taker, hoping that the Taker will see the imbalance and respond towards the Fairness Contract. However, due to the Taker's unconscious tendencies and distortions, he/she honestly believes the Giver's perception is distorted and responds with comments like "You're being selfish," "Why do you need to keep track of things," "Well, I did this one thing for you and now you are unappreciative." These responses tend to be temporarily effective because Givers tend to be prone to guilt and other forms of emotional manipulation. However, as the imbalance continues to build and because subtle and direct forms of communication were ineffective, the Giver starts stuffing emotions and building resentment.

Resentment tends to contaminate all parts of a relationship and the Giver starts looking for things to further support his/her case of unfairness and to minimize anything counter to his/her beliefs, creating the resentment. Eventually, the resentment leads to passive-aggressive behavior on the Givers part. The Giver does this in an attempt to establish a sense of Fairness even while continuing to give, but reducing the amount, withholding, and increasing the hidden and not-so hidden costs of the equation with the Taker. The Taker tends to be quite confused by this passive-aggressive behavior and feels like the victim of the Giver's upset emotions, withholding, and other passive aggressive responses. Turning things around again on the Giver, the Taker makes things appear that they are the victims and the ones being hurt. After a painful period of time, for both individuals, things usually erupt to the point beyond repair where one of them decides to leave and enter into the exact same pattern with another person that fits their co-dependent pattern. A healthier response would be for him/her to become more aware of the pattern, moves more towards an assertive and sharing position, and avoids getting in another relationship with another Giver or Taker.

### **How to Identify Takers and Advice for Givers**

#### **How to identify takers**

- Be aware of your past patterns with Takers and learn from it. Take your time, listen to your gut.
- Divide something up (like a piece of pie) where one piece is noticeably bigger than the other and let them go first in choosing.
- Ask them to name off three people that they really admire and what is it about them that they like.
- Ask them if they won 10 million dollars what they would do with it.
- Say no to a request and see how they respond. If they have a problem with you saying no, then that is pointing out a bigger problem.
- Ask the person what he/she wants to do and pay attention to if they ever reciprocate.
- Listen.... Are the stories always about them or someone or something greater. Does the person say I and me most of the time or we, us, and you?
- Watch how they treat people who are subordinate versus those who are superior?

#### **TAKERS**

- Don't like to be told No
- Like to get their way
- Use emotions to manipulate others – particularly anger, guilt, disappointment, and pouting
- Tend to blame others for failures and short comings
- Lack of insight and accountability in things going wrong

and over owning accountability when they go right.

- Lack empathy
- Asks for lots of "favors"
- Afraid of not having or being enough
- World is inherently unfair and unsafe so they are justified in taking
- Doesn't trust in self or others... self-protected and self-invested
- Isolated with limited friends because of burning bridges (unless brings something of value to the table- charisma, funny, wealth, etc.)

#### **GIVERS**

- Unconsciously give to get. Most givers are highly unaware that they are not as altruistic as they believe.
- View themselves as being better than others or as victims
- Difficulty saying no.
- Over apologize
- Over agree
- Rarely ask for help or favors and dislike owing people anything
- Set themselves up so that they don't need help, but resent that no one seems to help them.
- Stuff emotions
- Passive
- Resentful
- Tend to please and give for secondary gains such as:
  - Sense of value or identity
  - Safety
  - Inclusion
  - Superiority
- Don't know what they want, who they are, and how to make decisions in life because they have been reliant on others to do it for them.

#### **Advice to Givers**

- Start saying No
- Read up on fundamental human rights so that you know yours and can assert them
- Stop saying I'm sorry when you haven't done anything wrong
- Stop saying "Ya""Uh, huh""I don't know," and "your right" so regularly. Givers say these very regularly, even before the other person has finished their thought to stay in high levels of perceived agreement and acceptance. Think for yourself before responding in these habitual responses.
- Learn your wants and preferences and start sharing them. Stop saying "What would you like" and start honoring your own opinions and preferences.
- Listen to your gut and start speaking and acting from it. Your intuition has been telling you when things have been out of balance and when you are being used.
- Learn about assertiveness: What are your rights, how to communicate assertively, what to expect from others, etc.
- Test the waters early in relationships and pay attention to how the other responds to identify if they are likely a Giver, Taker, Matcher, or Sharer. How did the other person respond in their longer term relationships? What was wrong with it? Takers will tend to be unable to share what they contributed to the breakup.

#### **Advice to Takers**

I didn't spend time on this because I felt that a taker would never be interested in reading this stuff. But, if you are a taker and would like to know, please email me and ask me to finish this part of the article.