

# Find Community, Give, Receive, Repeat

Last night at a beer garden here in Atlanta, I got to see what a healthy modern tribe could look like.

I was meeting with dozens of new and old participants, alumni, and team members from Praxis, the startup apprenticeship program that helped launch my career. If it sounds like a staid old business conference, it wasn't.

The atmosphere most closely resembled a family reunion more than anything. People were snapping photos and perching on picnic tables, and everyone felt free to talk to everyone else. Shared values and mission brought together people of different genders, ethnic backgrounds, places, ages, religions, and more.

Because of all the differences we brought to the gathering, there was this beautiful cycle of exchange at play – particularly between veterans and beginners. I received affirmation and welcome from mentors and role models. They received thanks and praise from me. I gave affirmation and welcome to younger, newer members of the community. They in turn honored me for my experience.

Everyone had a role to play in the cycle of exchange that comes with a healthy community – and everyone walked away with something. Communities like last night's little ephemeral gathering provide opportunities to work, explore, play, support others, and receive support and encouragement ourselves. For me (and I suppose for many people), it felt good to play our roles well within that.

The giving and receiving of a healthy community (reciprocal respect and affirmation) is just \*right\*, and last night's event was a small glimpse of what life can be like inside that flow.

What if that giving and receiving wasn't an exception?

**What if we engaged ourselves meaningfully as members of as many communities as possible? Or as meaningfully as possible in single communities?**

Obviously adding value and receiving value from community isn't something that can be done haphazardly. But given that stable, geographically-fixed tribes aren't a thing anymore, we are going to have to work harder to replicate the feelings of closeness and reciprocal respect and love that we need.

Fortunately, I'm lucky enough to get community (and especially that reciprocal respect-affirmation cycle) in jiu jitsu classes, at church, at work, in my small group, and with my accountability partners. But even these small pockets of integrated community aren't

enough. I want to go deeper into relationship there, and I want to cultivate more areas where I can find reciprocal respect and affirmation.

I'm not one to harp on how we \*need\* other people (we do to some extent, just like we need independence). But community – and giving and receiving inside community – is not so hard to find and not so hard to recognize as one of life's great gifts. Let's make it the rule, not the exception.