



CONCERN:EAP

# Healthy & Resilient You



FIND MORE *Time by Giving* SOME AWAY

The Benefits of Volunteering, and How to Make It Part of Your Routine

## Have you ever thought about volunteering?

There is always a need for service and more helping hands. Volunteering offers vital help to worthwhile causes, the community, and to people in need. And not only is it a great way to help others, but it's also a good way to help yourself. The gift of volunteering your time comes with other rewards, such as:



**Builds Experience:** Volunteering gives us the opportunity to develop new skills, increases our ability to adapt to new situations and experiences, and enhances teamwork, interpersonal and leadership skills. It might even help advance your position at work, as many managers equate volunteer work with professional experience.



**Can Improve Emotional and Physical Health:** According to a study from the Corporation for National & Community Service, people who volunteer demonstrate a lower mortality rate, an increase in functional ability, and lower rates of depression than their non-volunteering counterparts. Volunteering can also promote mental wellbeing by increasing self-confidence and creating a sense of pride and identity that's beneficial for making new friendships and expressing your personal values.

## You Got to Take Time to Make Time

As many of us know, it's not always so easy to make the time commitment and jump right into volunteering. With our jam-packed schedules and ever-growing list of obligations, finding the time to volunteer is a legitimate concern. As Elizabeth Jean Andrew, former head of Education and Community Services for Australia once said, "Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart."

If you've got the heart but lack the time, one way to feel as though you have more time is to give it away. Researchers at the University of Zurich, Wharton, Yale, and Harvard all observed the same phenomenon: people who spend time on others are more likely to feel like they have more time for themselves. Those who volunteer also found that it helped them build resilience—ultimately feeling less strain on their time and more satisfied with their sense of work/life balance.



*Help one another.* There's no time like the present,  
and no present like the time..

– James Durst

## Give It Away, Give It Away, Give It Away Now

Ready to test the volunteer time theory for yourself? Here are some things you can try to get started.



**Be like the moms:** A mother's work is never done, but they still find time to volunteer. Working moms, arguably the busiest people on the planet, have the highest volunteer rate according to a survey by the US Bureau of Labor. In fact, the same study showed that people with less leisure time to begin with volunteer more than those with ampler downtime. So, if you feel super-busy, you may be the perfect candidate for volunteering.



**Set clear goals:** Wanting to help is an important starting place. Now get specific. Try committing to a certain amount of volunteer time, like 2 – 3 hours per month, and go from there.



**Think short-term (at least to start):** The pressure of long-term commitments can sometimes deter us from volunteering. But a quick Google search for one-day volunteering opportunities near you can yield tons of options, like reading to kids at the library, replanting at a public park, or helping sort cans at a food pantry.



**Book in advance:** Like other obligations, volunteer opportunities become more real to us when we schedule them. Open your calendar and make a plan—book volunteer work on weekends, planned staycations or national holidays. As a bonus bonding experience, consider finding joint volunteer opportunities on days off shared with your significant other or your kids' school holidays.



**Check with your company:** Many companies encourage volunteering, and have already partnered with organizations to make the process easier.



**Volunteer virtually:** The hyper-connectivity of our world enables us to volunteer our time and unique skills without having to leave our homes. Are you a good listener? Staffing a crisis hotline might be for you. Do you excel at administrative tasks? There are plenty of non-profits that need help answering e-mails or editing communications. If virtual seems like the way for you, try **Idealist**, **VolunteerMatch**, or **DoSomething.org** for ideas and openings.

Volunteering can and should be fun! When you volunteer, choose opportunities that allow you to use the skills that bring you a sense of joy or contentment or involve experiences you find fulfilling. You might find that giving of your time is not only easier but also a little addictive.

For even more ways to help cultivate mindfulness and resilience in 2018, visit the Resilience Hub™ at [www.ConcernResilienceHub.com](http://www.ConcernResilienceHub.com) regularly. First time users may be asked to enter their company ID.

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