

Why do people volunteer

Psychology



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People volunteer for many motives. Studies indicate that there is always a mix of altruism and pure self-service. From serving a meal at a homeless shelter, to enlisting in the military, this force has become an instrumental tool for the healthy growth of society. The question is: Why do some individuals do it...? A volunteer is defined as a person that offers him or herself for a service or activity. Altruism is basically the most studied element of spontaneous help when facing situations of emergency. It can be defined as unselfish regard, and behaviors of caring for others without expecting a reward for it. However this type of behavior is often gratifying for the individual volunteering. Studies show on the other hand that helping others is used as a way to increase helper's satisfaction (David Horton Smith, 2000). Therefore it is concluded that pure altruism does not exist and that is basically egoistic (D. H. Smith, 1981). Some individuals seek self-service in voluntarism. Some of their motivations are either to alleviate negative emotional aspects of their life, or to overcome daily social life frustrations. We usually feel better emotionally, when we help someone else. Some people volunteer because these organizations will help them meet their desires. In the military this is very usual. For example: Having more involvement in the community can get you better performance evaluations or an award. Therefore, some people volunteer with the sole intention of getting recognition or an award. Volunteering is a fundamental part of our society. American devoted 8.1 billion hours to volunteering in 2010, according to a research by the Federal Corporation for National and Community service (CNCS). Volunteerism, not only benefits the needy, but it is proven by many studies that also help the volunteers. Although reasons for volunteering are varied, it is important to understand that the goal is only

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one. Its goal is the constant struggle towards a healthy, more humane society.