



WHO AM I HERE FOR?

PREP FOR THE SESSION

Overview

This resource explores **Volunteerism** through the value of **Growth**.

At-a-Glance:

This resource engages with a broad discussion of volunteerism – the motives, benefits and considerations involved – and can be used in connection with a variety of service activities, including, but not limited to, service with those that are unhoused or experiencing food insecurity. The resource is designed to be facilitated in sections, with a break in between for the service activity. Prior to the service activity, a question will be posed to learners to consider during their service. After service, they will have an opportunity for reflection and processing.



Time Estimate:

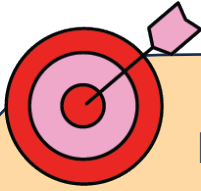
25-30 minutes



Best Uses:

- To be paired with a service activity component.
- For young adult and adult learners.

LET'S GET STARTED



FRAME THE ISSUE

Facilitator reads the following for context:

We show up to volunteer for all different kinds of reasons, some more obvious to us and some less obvious. We sometimes may come with intentions that are more inward focused, and at other times more outward focused. There also may be times where we are not sure why exactly we showed up, all that we know is that we did.

Giving is transformative – and not just to the recipient. In a survey of studies linking altruistic behaviors to improved health, researchers from the University of Michigan concluded that giving time and money to organizations, providing social support to friends, family and community, caring for the elderly or the handicapped, and cultivating compassionate attitudes and traits is associated with higher psychological well-being, including increased happiness and self-esteem, and decreased loneliness and depression.



Facilitator prompts the group:

- What do you hope to get out of the service you are engaging in today?
Be specific and share with the group if you are comfortable.

7 min





EXPLORE THE VALUE: GROWTH

Facilitator reads to the group:

Service at its very core involves growth, change and development of the self, whether that is a stated intention at the outset or not.

Growth as a value is the process in which a person evolves, changes and becomes more advanced through their own efforts. It involves both a change of character and abilities. By giving and doing, we ourselves are changed. In other words, when we give, we receive. But does that receipt take away from our giving?



Facilitator prompts the group:

- In your own service activities have you ever thought to yourself, “am I doing this for others or am I doing this for myself?”
- Does it matter? Explain.

5 min



6 min



JEWISH ANCHOR

Anchor the tension above in Jewish wisdom by reading or having the participants read the following:

In an extensive discussion of the laws of *tzedakah*/charity, the Babylonian Talmud (Jewish Legal Code) discusses the practice of those who would give charity before *tefilla*/prayer. In that context the Talmud reflects on the transformative nature that giving has, not just on the recipient, but on the giver.

Baba Batra 10a states:

Even when a person gives a mere *peruta* (a small amount of money) to a poor person, they merit to receive the Divine Presence, as it is stated: "As for me, I will behold Your face through charity; I will be satisfied, when I awake, with Your likeness" (Psalms 17:15).

אָדָם נוֹתֵן פְּרוּטָה לְעֵנִי –
זֹכָה וּמִקְבֵּל פָּנֵי שְׂכִינָה,
שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "אֲנִי בְּצַדִּיק אֶחְזָה
פָּנֶיךָ, אֲשֶׁבַעָה בְּהִקְיֶיךָ
תְּמוֹנֶתְךָ."



Facilitator prompts the group:

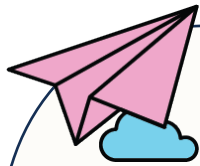
- What is the Talmud telling us about what happens to a person when they give?
- Does it matter that even with such a small contribution (a "perutah" = the smallest amount of currency at the time) someone is worthy of receiving "the Divine Presence"? What is the significance of that detail?

* PROMPT BEFORE SERVICE *

Facilitator prompts the group:

- As you go about your service today, capture how you feel both vis a vis your *own* goals of growth and development and also the goals you have towards those you are giving to.
- What are some dimensions you want to take away from this service activity to shift to a different plane of growth specifically vis a vis *the other*?

BREAK FOR SERVICE EXPERIENCE



PROMPT ACTION

Facilitator prompts the group:

With a *havruta*/partner, return to and review the questions posed above.

- Discuss the tension inherent in the fact that by giving, one also receives.

Facilitator gathers the group. Those comfortable can share the product of their havruta.

Facilitator then asks the group:

- What are 2 new insights you are walking away with after engaging in this service activity specifically as relate to the tension between self-development, and giving to others?
- If comfortable, each group member can share an insight.

5 min



CLOSE WITH INTENTION

Read the passage below:

Today's conversation surfaces a tension that can appear across almost all service work that we do: the idea that when we give, we also ourselves receive. Does that matter? How do we balance our own motivation to grow, grow and develop, with the purity of the desire to give to others? Thinking about self-development as a value in the context of service work can be tricky, but it allows us to look both internally, at the ways we personally grow and change, and externally, thinking about the relationships that we build with others to whom we are giving.

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Facilitator prompts the group:

- I came in thinking that I was here today to/for _____ and I am leaving knowing that I am also here to/for _____.

3 min

