

## COUNT ME IN!

**Genres:** Health and Well-Being, Human Behaviour, Society

**"The sole meaning of life is to serve humanity." - Leo Tolstoy**



This quote by Tolstoy, one of the 19th century's greatest writers reveals what is most important about life. To do things for one another. If we only live for ourselves, we will find that sooner or later we will feel lonely and unhappy. Those who know us will be unhappy too, as our behaviour will also affect them.

### The Helping Others Effect

At our emotional core, we all seek safety and happiness. But somewhere along the way in our life, we can end up trying to reach the top of an imaginary pyramid, where we think we'll be happy if we just get enough money, fame, or power. Unfortunately, even if we do get those things, they are often short-lived and not fulfilling. They don't lead us to feel happy over the long term. In fact, they can lead us to feel empty and unhappy.

What writers like Tolstoy show us is that the secret of happiness comes from helping others. We feel like what we are doing is worthwhile by the contribution it brings to other people's lives. Studies have also shown that when we are generous, the act of giving literally gives our brain a boost, and it can take our minds off our own worries too.



## What can you do?

Here are some ways that you can help others in your family and community:

### 1. Offer to Help with Work

Young people at school are old enough to have responsibilities around the house. You may see in your own home that your mother or father are stressed because of so many jobs to do around the house (as well as work to provide for the family).

Set aside some time to help them.

- Offer them a helping hand in the kitchen or make meals with them.
- Watch your younger siblings and give your parents a much-needed break.
- Care for elderly parents. Offer to mow their yard or accompany them on a small evening walk.
- Choose and put on your own clothes and shoes.
- Pick up after yourself.
- Put clean clothing in your drawers.



### 2. Donate

To get an instant feel-good dose of happiness, donate to a cause. You can donate unused items or things you don't need anymore, or collect things other people don't need and donate those items. Remember the adage, "One man's trash is another man's treasure".



Donate any unused items in your home or collect things that other people don't need (or want to give) to give to a charity.

### 3. Volunteer Your Time

Many non-profit organisations (NGOs) rely on volunteers to carry out day-to-day activities. Volunteer your time with an organisation that you think is doing good in your community.



### 4. Offer Kindness Proactively

Simple gestures can enlighten someone's day or can lift up spirits. You can smile at people who cross your path, wish them good health, bring dinner to someone who has been dealing with illness, and do other regular acts of kindness.



It's time to stir our conscience and let us not walk past a person who needs our help. Let's reach out to those who need us because what we do helps them and ourselves feel happy. It also makes our community (and the world) a better place. Next time you hear someone asking for help, remember to say, "Count me in!"

## Questions to answer:

- What happens when we don't do things for other people?
- Why does doing things for other people make us feel happier?
- What simple things can you do to help lift someone's spirit?
- How can you help your parents?

## Key Vocabulary

Add these to My Words to build your vocabulary.

- pyramid
- happiness
- adage
- imaginary
- generous
- responsibilities
- accompany
- organisation
- enlighten
- conscience



Use My Words to play games that will help you build your vocabulary.



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