

Successful Supervisor Part 55

Your Give Back Ratio

by Bob Whipple, MBA, CPLP

All of us receive blessings and good things in our life. We also find ways to give back to others. This article is about making a conscious choice about your give back ratio.

What is “Giving Back”?

Many people see giving back as contributing to the church, United Way, or some other specific charity. Monetary contributions are just one way to give back to society. I will outline some other ways that you will recognize. The challenge is to add up all the ways you are giving back and decide for yourself if it is the right ratio for you.

1. Volunteering your time

We all have done some service to others in the form of donated time. How do you put a value on that sacrifice? Clearly you could calculate the hourly wage that your employer pays and multiply it by the number of hours you donate to others. I think that is a little simplistic.

What you need to do is forget about the monetary value of your time but add up the percentage of how much time you are actually donating to help other people. It does not need to be an organization, such as the Red Cross. You might be helping to educate youth in a Big Brother Program or serve hot meals to homeless people. The list of potential ways to donate time is nearly infinite, and you can often lose track of just how much time you are donating. My advice is to be alert to the level of contributions you make on an annual basis and decide for yourself if you are giving back enough of your time.

2. Contributing your talent

When you agree to help an organization work toward the betterment of the community or mankind with no remuneration, you are donating your precious talent for a good cause. It might be as a Scout Leader, or it could be helping with a fund raising campaign. Whenever you are using your mind to help further the cause of an organization, that is a contribution of your unique and special talent.

Feel good about these contributions and know that they are making a difference in the world.

3. Helping Others

Contributions here include visiting sick people or helping in a rehab facility. They also include helping friends and family members manage their way through their own minefields. As you coach others to improve their lot in life or survive a tragedy, you are really giving of yourself with no thought of what you will be getting back in return.

The universe has ways of keeping track of these altruistic activities, and you gain in your personal esteem by engaging in them.

4. Giving of your treasure

There must be a billion ways to contribute cash to help out efforts all over the world. You may be contributing to save starving children or even animals. You may be giving to your alma mater so that future students can benefit from the education you enjoyed. You may be setting up a trust to help your family members after you are gone.

There seems to be no end to the number of requests to contribute money. The one irony is that when you give to some charities, somehow others find out about it and your phone rings a lot more along with a lot more letters to appeal for your money. You need to establish some kind of formula for how you are going to deal with all of these requests so that you feel good about your giving pattern but are not bled dry.

Putting it all together

I am not suggesting any particular level of giving to others is the correct one. I am asking you to take a look at your giving pattern from time to time and ask yourself if it is the right level for you. For me, when I did the exercise I found myself dissatisfied, so I made an increase in my pattern of giving back, and now I feel that my level is more appropriate. That review will now become a part of my annual “renewal” process where I examine my life so far and plot my plan for the next year. I think that is a healthy exercise.

This is a part in a series of articles on “Successful Supervision.” The entire series can be viewed on www.leadergrow.com/articles/supervision or on this blog.

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