Clarion Review

Career

Strategic Volunteering: 50 Ingredients to Transform Your Life and Career
Mark McCurdy
CreateSpace
978-1-4537-5023-0
Five Stars (out of Five)

While it is obvious that volunteering with nonprofit organizations meets a real need in the world, it may be less obvious why it is so good for the volunteer's own life and career path. Mark McCurdy's *Strategic Volunteering*, a synthesis of his more than ten years of professional nonprofit recruiting and personal volunteer work, advocates the practice of "proactive altruism" and shows exactly how to go about selecting the volunteer opportunity that can best enhance one's life and open doors to career success.

McCurdy wastes neither time nor words to make his point; his fifty reasons to volunteer are presented in brief paragraphs that strike at the heart of the subject. Readers soon learn that, while strategic volunteering may accelerate one's social impact and increase one's value to potential employers, it is not just about one's work life. McCurdy gives as the first reason to volunteer: "To bring more joy into your life," and presents a well-balanced discussion of how not only one's career, but one's health, happiness, personal relationships, creativity, and sense of meaning and efficacy in the world are all enhanced by volunteering.

While it has been shown that most people who volunteer do so because they have been asked to serve by someone involved with nonprofits, McCurdy suggests that prospective volunteers would do well to consider their own interests in deciding which nonprofit is the best fit for them. Also of importance is the desire to learn new skills, or practice those skills already acquired but not utilized in one's current employment.

Explaining why even the unemployed can and should volunteer, the author points out that many, as their dedication and skills became apparent, have found employment with the nonprofits they served, and many others have found a new, more appropriate career path for themselves by volunteering with a nonprofit that reflected their passions.

McCurdy offers four "recipes" that, when correctly developed and used, contribute to

success in one’s life and career: passion, purpose, strategic volunteering, and focus—illustrating each with the story of a person who changed their life. Occasional quotes from, and references to, the work of respected teachers and leaders, including Gandhi, Thoreau, Mother Teresa, and Emerson, bring readers into the company of others who took both thought and action to make the world a better place

The author entertains, encourages, and inspires while imparting valuable advice and a new perspective on the larger benefits of volunteering. Anyone who is considering serving as a volunteer would do well to read this short, to-the-point book that shows exactly how strategic volunteering can advance one’s career and enrich one’s life while making a real difference in the world.

Mark McCurdy is a speaker, trainer, success coach, and expert in human capital for nonprofit and social impact organizations. His company, The Nonprofit Career Coach, is dedicated to helping individuals grow, think positively, learn to be accountable, and live with passion as they accelerate their social impact.

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