

LifeMap is a navigational tool to help you on your path towards personal and professional success.

Our belief is that you can achieve a more rewarding career, a more productive organization and a more satisfying life.



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## Health, Sanity, Fun: Volunteering

Many people develop a non-work life outside of family demands while growing their career. Others, for a variety of reasons, cannot find the incentive or time to do so until they are no longer working full time or have entered their retirement career. Either way there are tremendous benefits to be had from developing avocational (non-work) interests. They include developing new skills, exploring new recreational interests and hobbies, mentoring, social activism and the larger category of volunteerism which is what this LifeMap will explore.

Why bother?

1. It is good for your physical and mental health. It counteracts the effects of stress and anxiety (both related to hypertension). Reaching out to others in need increases your own sense of well-being and causes a release of endorphins. Endorphins are naturally released in the brain and can reduce pain, give you energy, and give you what is called a " helper's high".

2. It will expand your network. Meeting people from different fields, different employers, with different skill sets is invaluable if you are still in your working career. If you are transitioning to a post- work or retirement life you will interact with folks who have already met the challenges you now face. They can help dispel some of the loneliness you'll face from the loss of your work colleagues.

3. Self actualization is Dr. Abraham Maslow's term to define a level of personal development

5. Self-actualization is Dr. Abraham Maslow's term to define a level of personal development where we are reaching to meet our highest human needs (beyond our more basic bodily, safety, and social needs). Irrespective of where we are in our life we have a built-in (God-given?) desire to be happy, to increase our self-esteem and self-confidence and have a sense of purpose - a reason for being here. Volunteering has been shown to be a useful path to utilizing unused talents, discovering new skills and insights, and living a more meaningful life. Most of us heard from our teachers that we weren't living up to our potential. If they were right then are they right now? When *are* you planning to reach for your great potential? Volunteering may be just the path you seek to improve your connection with your community (however you define it) while bringing more fun and fulfillment into your life. That's *my* description of self-actualization.

Here are some questions that will guide you toward a volunteering experience or venue that best suits your schedule, talents, and interests

## Paths Forward

1. What have been my volunteer activities to date and how did it /they work out? Let these experiences guide you.
2. How much time (weekly, monthly) are you willing to invest in a volunteer activity? A little as two or three hours a week can suffice for many groups.
3. Would you prefer to work with individuals, groups, animals, children, elders, or somehow contribute digitally from home? Is there an activity you can share with your spouse, partner or children?
4. Is there a community, social, civic, religious, charitable, political, environmental, religious, historical, educational, artistic group or institution that you've been meaning to explore? Go do it. Explore. Widen your horizons. Keep a file of your findings.
5. Do you want to volunteer the use of skills from your work career or try out doing something totally different?
6. Are you clear on what it is you do not want to do?
7. Is there a particular skill you are looking to develop?
8. What kinds of volunteer activities have you seen or heard friends speaking of that sound like fun?
9. Are you willing to try two or three activities out until you find the right fit? You may not hit a home run at first. Don't be afraid to say goodbye if it's not a good fit.
10. Are you willing to try different places to get a feel for what it's like there and how you relate to the folks there? It might take time to settle in or it may just not feel right?
11. Am I looking to meet people with similar interests or from diverse backgrounds?
12. Are you willing to set limits (time, responsibilities, finances) on your volunteering so as not to intrude on the other important elements of your LifeSpace? Learning to say "no" where you are needed isn't easy.
13. Is the mission and goals of where I've chosen to volunteer important to me?
14. Is what I've chosen to do as a volunteer fun? If not fun per se, does it give you a sense of

purpose, does it give you a sense of satisfaction, does it make you proud of yourself? Not every day will be fun but if you are volunteering grudgingly then you should keep exploring until you find the right fit of "good for thee, good for me."

Your time is your most important resource. It is too valuable to waste so invest it wisely.

**LifeMap** (sm) is about discovering for yourself that we humans are hard-wired to reach out to each other and that doing so promotes our own personal growth and development.

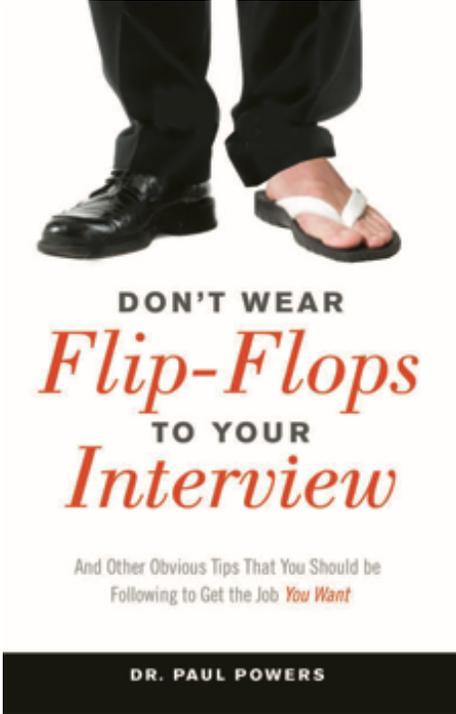
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My latest book [Don't Wear Flip-Flops to Your Interview](#) is packed with strategies and techniques that are practical, market-proven, and easy to use. Added to this powerful mix, are the hard-won lessons from the personal experiences of thousands of professionals who have succeeded in the job changing game. It is not necessary for you to struggle to rediscover and reinvent the job hunting process. Here you will find the keys to a more productive, shorter and less stressful job search.

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Sincerely,  
Dr. Paul

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