

# 5 Ways to be Charitable

Although, you most likely think in terms of giving money when you hear the word, “charitable”, it is not always about money. There are many ways you can live a charitable life even if you don’t have your hands on extra amounts of cash.

I like to think of being charitable as a heart condition. Your heart is either open to opportunities to be charitable, or it isn’t. The good news is, being charitable is a behavior. You can train yourself to be open to helping and looking for ways to provide charity even if it’s not something you’ve been accustomed to before. You can start practicing now.

Here are 5 ways you can improve your charitable heart condition without money being involved.

## 1. Volunteer

Believe it or not but giving of your time for a good cause does wonders for your physical and mental health. Your stress levels are reduced, and your mood improves. By focusing your efforts on improving others’ lives, you’re more likely to lift your emotions to a positive place, decrease your tension-producing patterns which means less stress and a happier you.

## 2. Help a stranger

When is the last time you helped a stranger? I don’t mean pick up a hitch hiker (that would be dangerous). What about the last time you held a door for someone, picked up an item another person dropped before they could do it themselves, or offer to return a shopping cart for someone in a parking lot. These may seem very small, but these are small ways you can train your mind to always be thinking of others and looking for ways to be charitable.

## 3. Be an encourager

How often do you boldly encourage someone to keep going on their goal they want to achieve? What about someone you work with who is trying to lose weight. Could you encourage them by not eating fast food in front of them, or not bringing sweets to work? You could offer to go for a walk with them over lunch break. This is one small example, but opening your heart to look for ways to be an encourager is a great way to be charitable.

#### **4. Show up**

Showing up is an amazing way to be charitable. How often do you not show up for something because you don't see how it could benefit you? Remember, being charitable is not about you, it's about them. Maybe there is an opportunity to go to a support group or meeting, but you've already accomplished what you were looking for, so now in your mind, there's no reason to show up. But, think about how by sharing your story or testimony, it could help make a difference for someone else attending. Simply showing up to support others is a much larger way of being charitable than you know.

#### **5. Put another's needs above your own**

This makes me think of allowing someone to go in front of you in a checkout line or giving up an awesome parking spot for someone else who is near the same spot or offering the last piece of your favorite cake to another. Putting another's needs above your own is a small but mighty way to be charitable.

These 5 charitable actions seem so easy, don't they? They are, but unless you are intentional about being charitable, these seemingly simple ways of showing charity will slip by you. The other crazy thing is, when you open yourself to living with a charitable heart, the person it helps the most is you! It is proven that being charitable brings more meaning to your life and increases your mood.

Take the charitable heart challenge by looking for opportunities you can give everyday in small ways.

To Living Decided,

Kim Martin