



How to Fill Your Days with Good Deeds

The Jewish tradition always thought our lives would be meaningful and grounded if they revolved around three pillars: "*Torah* [Jewish instruction and general learning], *Avodah* [ritual worship and personal reflection], and *Gemilut Hasadim* [doing deeds of loving kindness]." Marion Wright Edelman, founder of the Children's Defense Fund, reminds us that "Service is the rent we pay for living. It is the very purpose of life, and not something you do in your spare time." So how may we infuse our lives with service all year long? How can we connect with the inspiration of Good Deeds Day and the power of community over 365 days?

Here are four steps to fill your days with good deeds:

1. KNOW THE NEEDS – Learn about the needs in your local (or national or international) community. What needs to be fixed? Who is in need? Sometimes news stories will highlight problems needing solutions.
2. REFLECT – What "gifts" (skills, talents) would you like to share with others? What are you thankful for in your life? Service is a way to pay forward that appreciation. Was there a project on Good Deeds Day that you would like to continue on a sustained basis? With whom would you like to serve and how will you keep each other motivated? Make a plan- reflecting on how you could tweak your schedule to allow 30 minutes/an hour/ an afternoon of *Tikkun Olam*, world repair, each month?
3. LEARN – Educate yourself on the many opportunities to serve. Click on <http://www.jconnect.org/> to register for emails with learning, service, and community event opportunities. Keep checking back at <http://www.jconnect.org/participate/volunteer> for suggestions of volunteer projects. A new way to use your skills in service to community, and generate "moolah" while you volunteer is *Voolla*. <http://bit.ly/1Shl8c3>. And a general site to match your interests with a service project is at <http://bit.ly/1RBOg16>.
4. SERVE – Before you engage in service, take a moment to ask yourself "What am I expecting to get out of this today? What impact will I have? What is the gift that I am giving today?" Then, during your service, keep focused on the sacred work you are doing with another human being or the environment. After your service, ask yourself "How am I changed by having done this "good deed?" How was someone else changed by my having done it? How is my community changed? How could I make a continuing commitment to a life of service?"

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