

# altruism

***the belief in or practice of disinterested and selfless concern for the well-being of others***

There goes another email asking for "JUST ten minutes of my time" or "could you please help with doing xyz...thanks in advance" - How has this made you feel? In the moments when we are pretty much in control of our to do lists, this is absolutely fine...however, the moment we are overwhelmed with a lot to do (which seems to be the new normal), this can be frustrating!

Of course, giving in each time can be dangerous, because we're at risk of burn out, however, viewing these "ten minutes of help" from the lens of contribution and organizational citizenship, rather than "oh no, I have to do this because I'm asked to" can be one of the best gifts we give ourselves!!

While we may agree with this cognitively, often, the immediate feeling of having to go out of the way, with no explicit benefit for ourselves is not a priority. However, if made a priority, this can be a huge win-win for both the person you are helping, as well as yourself!

**It contributes to your well-being** *Helping others at work or Altruism, can contribute to one's own well-being at work. Scientists call this the "helper's high". When we give and engage in acts of kindness, the "pleasure" and social attachment centers of the brain are activated. In fact, studies show that the "helper's high" appears to act as an antidote to the stress response in the giver.*

ALL research in positive psychology has found that those who have the mindset of '**organizational citizenship**' - thereby helping others, or going the extra mile always are much **happier at work**, than those who don't prioritize helping others!

However, the key here is to help **without the expectation of reciprocity**... you may think, this is work, and not charity...and yes, that's true...we don't have to spend ALL our time helping others...Having said that, sometimes, going out of your way without the thought of "what will I get in return" can not only enhance your well-being, but also improve your relationships, and help you feel balanced and centered.

Altruism gives us a sense of feeling connected to others, which is critical for health and well-being. It is an empowering state of mind and heart. With this empowered state of mind, producing quality work, with high efficiency is nothing but a by-product

**Makes you feel self-assured at all times (and not insecure)** *Helping others enriches the meaning and purpose of our own lives, showing us that our **contributions matter** and energizing us to work harder and smarter. This feeling of contribution, and being valued, can often help us accept and love ourselves to a much greater degree. We all know how critical it is for employees and leaders to feel self-assured. Research shows that when we feel self-assured, we cultivate stronger relationships, and are open to collaborate with others, as well as accept diverse opinions with an open mind. These behaviors of collaboration, listening, and openness to diversity are critical in today's VUCA world, and perhaps, just this mindset of 'contribution' and 'altruism' can make this possible for us!*

**Finally, and most importantly: Altruism is contagious, and can be 'profitable' for your organization** *The ten minutes extra you spend in a day going the extra mile, or helping selflessly, can actually serve as inspiration for others to do so...your mindset and action can create a chain of 'altruistic' actions, and strong relationships... thereby creating a supportive, helpful culture in the organization.*

*Imagine an organization where individuals are willing to help each other, and celebrate each other's success. Not only would people enjoy working for such an organization, but also, it can have a positive impact on productivity and other important business outcomes.*

*So, the next time someone asks for that 'extra help' and you're too caught up in yourself, pause, take a few deep breaths, and just try helping...you're going to feel great, develop strong relationships, and feel self-confident...what more would anyone want?*



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