

# Loving on Purpose Podcast

with Bonnie Lyman

## Episode 84 Do Good to Feel Good

Welcome to the podcast, loving On Purpose. I'm your host, Bonnie Lyman. If you're having trouble navigating through your relationships with your adult children, if you are struggling to connect with them or having specific challenges, you're in the right place. This is Bonnie Lyman and you are listening to the podcast Loving On Purpose, episode 84.

Do good to feel good. Hello, my friends. Welcome back. I'm back. Summer is creeping away. I heard on another podcast somebody mentioned that as summer was close closing and they went on to express some thoughts about getting ready for the new school year. Well, I have decided that I am not closing summer. This year, I am going to stretch it out for as long as I can. So that probably means I'm gonna see how long I can go without wearing a sweater. I sometimes have to wear a sweater in a room that's too air conditioned though. But anyway, I'm just not planning on closing summer. I'm gonna have a lot of summer, sunny days, at least till the end of September.

So if any of you wanna join and support me in that cause of not closing summer, let's do it. What I wanna talk to you today is how we can spend our time when our kids have left home, especially when life. Doesn't quite go like we thought it would. In other words, that maybe we were going to be spending a lot more time with family, that we were gonna be more included. I don't know if that meant in babysitting or general activities, maybe even just talking on the phone a little bit more. But we do come to that time in our life that we refer to sometime as the empty nest. They used to refer to it as the golden years, and I think for a lot of people they haven't found it.

So golden men who are thinking of retiring early, I tell them, I think you better think twice about that. You know, what do you have planned to do with your time? So, I have a lot of women ask me as to what they can do with all this free time they have on their hands since they are no longer raising children full time. And one of my remedies for having A better relationship with your adult children I call it, is get a life. And that means to be engaged in something in your life that is exciting to you and fulfilling outside of your family. You may hear my dog barking in the background. There's nothing I could do about that and I do love my dog, so we'll just put up with it. But going forward, the disappointment of what you thought you would be doing with your adult children and and their families, for most of us didn't pan out the way we thought it would. And maybe it's not even disappointing to you, but for many I know it is. So to get a life, what I mean by that is perhaps you go back to school or you go to work or you travel, or you take courses in your favorite hobby and expand on those, or you volunteer somewhere.

That promotes a cause you feel strongly about. And so that's what we're gonna talk about today is this idea of considering using some of your time anyway to volunteer. And I'm gonna talk to you about how, how doing good can make you feel good. It could be the very thing that you need that helps you feel excited to get up. Every day. I read an article about the effect that volunteerism has on your emotional wellbeing. And according to the University of Veronas,

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Anna Maria Mening and the University of pdu, I'm sorry, I can't even pronounce. So it's the boost to wellbeing that can provide the explanation. Why so many people go to great lengths to chip in their time to a worthwhile cause serving someone or something else outside of themselves or their family made them feel needed. And important, and I know there's a lot of you out there that are not feeling needed anymore or important in your children's life. So by volunteering in a Cause in an organization for other people that you have a passion for, may just be the very thing that you need. Because feeling important comes from our thoughts by getting involved in something that is exciting to you.

Is the circumstance that causes you to have the thoughts of gratitude for the opportunity that causes your result to be able to let go of ruminating over the life that didn't happen that you thought you were going to have. Our brains are pretty amazing, and they have something called the reward system. When we do something nice for someone else, like helping them out or making them smile or doing some other type of volunteer work, our brain releases chemicals called neurotransmitters, one of these transmitter neurotransmitters. It's called dopamine, and I'm sure many of you have heard a lot of talk about dopamine.

Dopamine is often referred to as the feel-good chemical because it's linked to pleasure and happiness. And when you do something kind for others, your brain releases dopamine, and that's why you feel good inside. But there's more. Doing goods for other also triggers. Another tran neurotransmitter called oxytocin. Oxytocin is sometimes called the love hormone or the bonding hormone because it's associated with. Feelings of trust and connection with others, which many have felt when their children move out and are living their own lives and are adults that they. Their, their trust and connection with their children has weakened.

When you're doing something good for someone else, you feel good because you're focusing on what's going right in your life instead of went, went wrong as to how you thought this part of your life would go. So here are five reasons why you might wanna consider using some of your time volunteering. First, when you volunteer, you feel useful. Your thoughts are about that you matter because you aren't having those thoughts about life with your adult children. That it's not happening the way you wanted it to. You can change the circumstance by focusing on doing something good for oth, doing something good for others and yourself, so it becomes a win-win situation.

Second, volunteering can bring new friends into your life. Loneliness is a real struggle as we get older, but when you join a volunteer group, you'll meet new people and you'll share some stories and you'll build connections. It's like you become a part of a community family, like. You had when your kids were going to school and you kind of had a school friend family, or you might be part. A church family, and that kind of companionship makes you feel less lonely. You fulfill the need of belonging, and that's what all humans need. Third, volunteering can also help you take your mind off problems with your adult kids. Relationships can get strained over time, but when you're out, they're doing good for others.

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The good that comes back to you is quite it, it quits you constantly worrying about your kids. It's like a little break from all the stress and drama that might be going on in your family. Fourth, volunteering can give you a new perspective on life. Sometimes you might be stuck in ways thinking your kid should be doing things in another way or should be giving. More attention to you, but when you see different people and situations, it broadens your mind. It's easier to have different, more open thoughts about what might be going on. In your family. With these adult children, you learn to be more understanding, which can help men, those broken relationships by you dropping the judgment about your children, when you're around them, you, you just show up as a better version of you when your mind isn't focused entirely on what they are doing, but you're more focused on helping somebody else. And fifth, it's always good. When you're doing something good for someone or something outside your normal sphere of how you have been living your life to make a difference in someone's life or in your part of the world, even if it's small.

It will always bring you happiness and it's a kind of happiness that can't be bought or replaced. Finding the best areas to volunteer in that align with your interests and talents can be a rewarding and fulfilling process. Here are some steps to help you determine the right opportunities for you. Reflect on your passions and interests. Start by making a list of things you generally care about or activities that bring you joy. Consider your hobbies.

It causes that you may feel strongly about or areas where you have a natural curiosity. Number two, identify your skills and talents. Think about what you're good at and what you unique abilities you possess. It could be anything from teaching, writing, organizing events, computer skills, artistic. Talents or even just being a good listener. Number three is to reseller research organizations and causes. Look for volunteer organizations or non-profits that focus on areas you are interested in. Use online platforms like. Quote, volunteer match unquote ideal list or local volunteer directories to find opportunities in your community or even online. Number four, you have to consider your availability. Determine how much time you can realistically commit to volunteering. Some opportunities might require a few hours a week. Others might be one-time events or even short-term projects, number five, and trying to find.

The best volunteer area that fits your needs is assess the impact. Look into the potential impact of the volunteer work. Consider the outcomes and the difference the organization or causes. Making volunt in a role where you can see tangible results can be incredibly rewarding. Number six is reach out and inquire. Once you find organizations or causes that appeal to you, reach out to them to learn more about their volunteer opportunities. You can even email them or attend informational sessions or events to get a better sense of their work and how you can contribute. There was a. Organization in town where I live called Hoopfest, and I loved it.

And it was this three on three basketball tournament that they held one weekend a year, and there would be over 6,000 teams that would come. And we went down there many years and I loved everything about it. So one day I just marched myself in the office and asked if there was any opportunity to volunteer. And as it worked out, they were looking for a seasonal person to

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help out with processing all the entries. Just. For the time around the tournament, and so I grabbed onto that, but I volunteered there for 15 years or more, but that was when I still had kids at home.

Number seven is start small and then explore. All the opportunities there are in this organization or cause if you're unsure about committing long term, start with short term or one time even volunteering opportunities. This will allow you to explore different areas and see what resonates with you best. Be open to trying new things. Sometimes the most fulfilling experience come from trying something outside of your comfort zone. Evaluate Number nine is evaluate and adjust. After volunteering in different areas, take some time to evaluate your experiences, reflect on what you enjoyed the most, and where you felt your skills were best utilized. And then you may have to adjust your volunteering choices accordingly. And number 10 is stay committed. Once you find an area that aligns with your interests and talents, make a commitment to stick with it. Building longer term relationships with the organization and the people you are helping can lead to even more meaningful experiences in your life.

So now I'm going to give you 10 places, just suggestions of where you might volunteer. Number one is SE senior centers. Ugh, got my tongue twisted on that one. Many senior centers offer volunteer opportunities for older adults to. Support and engage with their peers. Or you may even find things if you are, say, around the age of 55, which I don't consider old anymore at all. Another good place to look is hospitals. Hospitals often have volunteer program where adults can assist with tasks like greeting, visitors, delivering flowers, or providing administrative support, or even hanging out in the pediatric area of a high of a hospital and entertaining children. Number three is libraries.

Libraries often welcome volunteers to help with shelving, books, maybe even organizing events, and sometimes providing computer assistance. Number four, another place that you might consider volunteering is a museum. Museums may have volunteer roles such as docents, helping with guided tours and educational programs. Another place that maybe you'd already thought of as schools. Adults even that don't have children there can volunteer in schools such as tutors, mentors, or classroom assistants supporting students in various subjects. And another one that seems quite popular is animal sheltered. Animal shelters often need volunteers to care for animals or to walk dogs or help with adoption.

Event number seven in our list of 10 possible places to volunteer is nonprofit organizations, and that's what this hoop fest. Organization that I worked at would be classified under. There are numerous nonprofit organizations that seek volunteers for various causes like hunger relief, environmental conservation, or community development, or community events. Number eight. Which I found interesting. Community gardens adults can participate in community gardening projects, promoting sustainable practices, and providing fresh produce to low to local, perhaps lower income communities. Number nine is religious institutions. Now I belong to a faith where we all, everybody that comes on a regular basis has some sort of volunteer position that is either working with the children or the youth or adults.

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Many churches and other religious organizations have volunteer opportunities to support their communities. And number 10 is environmental cleanup initiatives. Vol volunteers can participate in local. Environmental cleanup efforts, helping to maintain parks, beaches, and natural areas. I know where I live, those kind of opportunities isn't necessarily a long term. But it's more of a couple times a year projects where they try to get the community out to help clean up rivers and such. The key is to find a cause or an organization that aligned. With your passion and allows you to make a positive impact in the community.

As we age, our brains continue to do some incredible stuff. One of these fascinating processes involves a part of our brain called the reward system. When we engage in acts of kindness and help others, our brain responds by releasing those chemicals known as neurotransmitter, those being that we talked about earlier, dopamine, the feelgood chemical, and oxytocin, the Love hormone or bonding hormone. So by helping others and being kind, you're not only making a positive impact on their lives, but also triggering a natural happiness boost. In your own brain. It's like a beautiful cycle of spreading joy and forming deeper connection with others. When you do good things for others and feel good, it motivates you to do more kind acts, which in turn makes you feel even happier.

So helping others not only benefits others, but it also gives your brain a natural happiness boost. Remember, it's never too late to make a difference, and even small acts of kindness done just every once in a while can have a big impact. Start sharing your kindness and compassion with the world, and you'll find that it brings you an abundance of joy and fulfillment in return. I wish for all of you to have a very good week, and I'll catch you next week.

If you like this, be this episode and you felt it was of benefit to you, I ask you to share it with somebody that perhaps it could also benefit. But if you're still feeling kind of stuck in that you don't know, How to apply what was talked about or where to start on on changing your thoughts, on changing your perspective, on bettering your relationship. Get on a call with me and we can have a discussion and I can tell you. How do we apply it and where we start, and then you get to decide what you want to do about this relationship that maybe you're struggling with with your adult children. There's no reason to go on the rest of our lives struggling with our relationships with our adult children. Let's assume the best. Let's assume that we all love each other and we're just trying to figure out how to maintain our own boundaries and respect another ones. But I can help you with everything. So just go to [bonnie.lyman.com](http://bonnie.lyman.com) and book a call. I can't wait to hear from you.