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Satisfying Work For Volunteers

The Window of Work Process ©

From the book
Building Staff/Volunteer Relations
Chapter 4, pp 37-50
by Ivan Scheier

Having given staff the opportunity to analyze and dream about their own jobs, and to consider the ways they might be supported by volunteers, we can now turn to the question of how best to design work for volunteers.

Philosophy, First

How do we get people to work? When you think of it, there are only three ways:

- We give them dollars,
- We give them orders, or
- We give them reasons.

Pay, pressure, or persuasion--some mix of these three is what prompts most people to work. The rare and exquisite handicap for volunteer leadership is that we have only the last one. This sometimes makes motivating volunteers seem like trying to run a four-minute mile under water.

So, scratch money and mandate as main incentives, and look hard at persuasion. Here, many volunteer leaders think first of rewards outside the work itself pins, buttons, badges, certificates, gold watches, Mickey Mouse watches, etc. This can be nice but it's only the icing on the cake; the real substance of volunteer motivation is the work we offer people, the job itself This is an intrinsic motivation.

We know this first of all from ancient wisdom, thus: "The wise leader knows that the reward for doing the work arises naturally out of the work." Current evidence further confirms this. Gallup Polls have identified the main reasons Americans give for volunteering. Of eight reasons given with significant frequency, the top three were:

- Like doing something useful, helping others
- Am interested in the activity
- Enjoy doing the work, feeling needed

Make no mistake about it, the work itself is by far the most powerful motivator of volunteers. That is the first surprise for some who assume that other, extrinsic incentives, are the key.

The second surprise is that the work-motivation a person brings to us is almost always sufficient to fill the needs of our organization. We don't have to reach down inside people and adjust their drive mechanisms. Actually, "motivate" as a verb is somewhat disrespectful of the kinds of quality people who come to us as volunteers. To repeat, the notion that appropriate volunteer placement needs first to manipulate a person's motivation is usually fallacious and always arrogant. Instead, we can accept the motivation people bring with them; almost always this is good enough, in the sense that somewhere there is work we need that this motivation will power.

To summarize our two main assumptions at this point, hoping that what follows will persuade you of them:

- The work itself is the main motivator of volunteers.
- In adult human beings we don't create motivation; we identify it, accept it, and then connect it creatively to organizational and community needs.

Motivational Markers

The "Window of Work" process is based on these two assumptions. The procedure identifies the work which most motivates a volunteer and at the same time is useful to the host organization. The process is a simple, effective tool for use in connection with interviewing, placing, and matching volunteers. It provides a profile of existing motivation for work which is:

- specific;
- anchored in visible behavior;

- comprehensive; and yet
- practical, in terms of realistically available time for interviewing and placing volunteers.

Contrast this with current approaches to volunteer motivation. These tend to be pitched at a somewhat abstract general level. Let's say we determine that a person is high on achievement motivation. This is a good start, but we still need to know exactly what this person likes most to achieve. Thus, I am high on achievement motivation. But the person who would place me appropriately as a volunteer still needs to know specifically what I most want to and can achieve; for example, excellence in logical analysis, written communication, etc. At least by process of elimination, it is equally important to know what I am not interested in or capable of achieving, e.g., fix-it skills, mathematics, etc. Finally, the placement person must also be able to discriminate clearly between my present capabilities and things I only hope to get good at in the future.

The same points apply to other generalized descriptions of volunteer motivation. Thus, to say a person has a high affiliation drive does not tell us specifically what kinds of people this person most prefers to associate with, and least prefers.

The Window of Work process assumes that much can be made of people accepted as they are. The process is respectful of people in another way, too. Once the relatively straightforward procedures are briefly explained and illustrated, people can largely proceed by themselves. That is, via the Window, we can unravel relevant motivation for volunteering without deep-probing or subtly psyching people. We need just ask them, and trust them to tell us what we need to know about their work-relevant motivations.

But we must ask about the right things in the right way. The key here is concentration on three kinds of motivational markers, defined below, with examples immediately following the explanations.

Glad Gifts

A Glad Gift is something fairly specific a person likes to do, can do pretty well, and which might be of use to other people. This is what a person is pre-motivated to do, has competence- plus-preference for. Clearly, glad gifts are basic building blocks in designing volunteer jobs.

Quests

A Quest or "Yearn-to-Learn" is something fairly specific a person would like to learn, an area in which a person wants to improve. Having such space to breathe and grow built into a volunteer job is a great way to prevent burnout and assure retention of volunteers.

The Quest-of-all-quests, of course, is someone caring enough to help you learn and grow. In catering to quests, the long-term payoff for the organization is freshened motivation and deeper loyalty on the part of the volunteer. The short-term trade-offs are: (a) "loss" of some current volunteer contribution (since by definition a volunteer can't fully perform a quest now) and; (b) the need for an organization to invest time or effort helping the volunteer learn. This means you don't teach people to swim by throwing them in the pool and walking away. All too similarly, in response to my quest for learning to speak Spanish, one organization told me: "We'll put you with Spanish-speaking people." So? Am I supposed to learn Spanish by osmosis, or (better) will at least one of the Spanish-speaking people be asked specifically to help me learn?

"No-No's"

A No-no, "Don't Ask," or "Taboo" is just what it says. Too many volunteers are too nice to say no when asked to do the detestable, too nice to detail their aversions in the first place. And maybe you're too upbeat to ask. But do ask. If you don't, tragic scenes like this ensue: The quiet, seemingly unhappy woman who had been taking notes at the chair's request, later listed as her top aversion-- guess what?--taking notes at meetings.

About the second or third time a person is saddled with a no-no, absent special explanation or psychological compensation, you've probably lost them. No matter if the gaffe is inadvertent. Step- ping on a person's no-no's, unintentionally or not, probably accounts for most of the otherwise mysterious volunteer burnouts we never seem to understand.

The irony is, once we know a volunteer's no-no's, it is usually easy to avoid them. You can at least ease the pain by being clear you're asking something rare and special, and have no recourse but to do so.

There is also one other major motivational component, which has something to do with passion and bedrock values, basic life goals and dreams that never die. So far as I know, it can't be fully handled in anything like a formula fashion, though it's no less important for that reason. It has much to do with the fact that while writing is a glad gift of mine, I'd never do it for the Ku Klux Klan and I would do it for, say, a Women's Resource Center. Possibly, we could begin to get close to this value base by requesting completion of a sentence such as: "I think the world would be a better place if _____." Personal purpose must not be forgotten.

A person's value base is by no means always easily accessible on the surface. Indications you're getting close include: -you start getting "emotional"

-you stop compromising, "negotiating"

-a theme(s) emerges through all the volunteer and most meaningful paid work you've done throughout your life

My somewhat abstract grappling with this "fourth factor" was providentially interrupted by a communication from Kitty Gray Carlsen with the Cooperative Extension Service in Washington State. Apparently sensing a similar kind of incompleteness with just the three motivational markers, she "...decided to add a section for volunteers to indicate why they chose to become involved in the organization. I have found that this helps volunteers clarify expectations of involvement and helps us to understand subsequent behaviors!" She calls these "Wise Whys" and thereby comes up with a format which has the additional advantage of looking like a window, as shown on the following page. The instructions for using the Window are:

Wise Whys	Glad Gifts
Quests	Taboos
Volunteer Window of Work	

Window 1:

In the first pane of this window under "Wise Whys," write down why you decided to become a volunteer for this organization.

Window 2:

Under "Glad Gifts," list any talents, skills, interests, hobbies, etc., you do well and that you enjoy doing. If you do it and like it, list it!

Window 3:

The third pane is for listing your "Quests": those things you yearn to learn more about, or skills you would like to develop.

Window 4:

In the fourth pane list what you don't like or what you never want to be asked to do. We call these "Taboos" or "No-no's."

As you can see, I have repeated these instructions on the previous page so that you can duplicate the full page for actual use.

I do like the four-pane approach, though separate consideration of Wise Whys might not always be necessary. Basic values sometimes come through quite clearly in themes running through Glad Gifts, Quests and No-No's. See especially here, Caitlin's Window of Work in Figure 3, following later.

Window Shopping

It's time now to move from talking about, windows to concrete examples from real life. Three of these are presented in Figures 1, 2, and 3 on the following pages.

Two points occur immediately on looking through these three windows. First, sometimes a phrase or two describing the motivational marker is far from a complete description; for example "collecting humor." Rather than ask the person to write a book on each, which might cut off the flow, use the phrase as a launching point for productive elaboration and perhaps negotiation.

Secondly, never assume out of hand that a glad gift is "useless," however self-oriented it may seem to be. My glad gift of "watching sunsets," for example, once elicited this response: "I work with the blind and invite you to describe sunsets to interested blind people."

In any case, the preceding are fairly typical, windows: somewhere around 15 to 20 glad gifts and about half that number of quests and no-no's. The numbers, proportions, and level of concreteness vary widely, of course, and that is perfectly natural. Only extreme patterns need trigger caution; say 50 no-no's and no glad gifts! Or vice versa.

The window imagery comes from an early use of the method with a paid staff person, as it happens. He completed the listings, then said he wished the boss could see them before she delegated or dumped more jobs on him. "I'm sure she'd be more sensitive in work assignments if she had this kind of information in clear, concise form. Know what (he said)? I think I'm going to put this on my office bulletin board!"

The window format is helpful in presenting personal profiles, though some prefer simply to list the three motivational components, without the window imagery. Nor is there anything sacred about the names " Glad Gift, " " Quest, " and "No- No. " I will however, haunt anyone who substitutes "skill" for "glad gift"! Teaching tennis is a skill of mine in the sense that I'm pretty competent at it. I worked my way through college in part by teaching kids to play tennis--and ended up hating kids and tennis. I've more or less recovered on kids, but tennis is still one of my no-no's. Though still a skill. If you somehow persuaded or pressured me to ply this skill you'd probably end up sorry. I certainly would, and so would the kids. So, remember, it's supposed to be a glad gift: preference along with competence.

Equally beware a preference unaccompanied by competence--the gladness that is not a gift. If someone who truly loves archery asks you to stand there with an apple on your head, check first that s/he's also good at it.

Glad Gifts	Quests	No-No's
Plan meals Cook/Bake (almost anything) Informal speaking to groups Golf Drive a car Swim Gardening - herbs, veggies, and flowers Hike Edit write short articles Long-term relationships Play piano Crossword puzzles Teach conflict management Select, accessorize, harmonize colors in clothing Dance (waltz, 2-step, polka, free style) Sew simple garments Crochet Manage money	Write longer articles, a book Explore literature, poetry Learn to speak French Learn to play tennis Improve cross-country skiing Photography skills Improve: piano skills organ skills ability to judge wine golf Organize photographs Square dance Knit Identify song birds Identify wild flowers Improve counseling skills(maybe a master's degree) Use a computer Understand complicated financial statements Improve appreciation and knowledge of symphony, drama, art	Bowling Smoking Downhill skiing Parachute jumping Mountain climbing House cleaning Bingo Fundamental religion Smoky rooms Weak coffee Being controlled or manipulated Flagrantly bad grammar or spelling Dishonesty

Figure 1. Barbara Stan's Window of Work (not her real name)

Glad Gifts	Quests	No-No's
Wash dishes Draw conclusions from statistical tables Write (several kinds) Teach canoeing Talk about solar power Vegetable gardening Help with ideas on earned revenue fund raising Work with shovel, pickaxe Split wood Read poetry aloud Help people learn Walk, hike Dancing (most kinds) Cataloguing, classifying books and articles Compiling survey statistics Collecting humor Watching sunsets	Speak Spanish More about meditation Stir fry cookery Managing money Make easy talk with strangers Play hockey-sock Make a spontaneous speech History of Southwest U.S.	Take meeting notes Stand in line Red tape Teach tennis Smoky rooms Asking face-to-face for money, donations Media commercials Being late Other people being late Being let down by people I must depend on Working outside when it's colder than 20 degrees F Talk on telephone

* Note to reader: Questioning doesn't necessarily mean you're totally ignorant in an area. I've meditated for seven years, and have taken some formal instruction but that's only whetted my appetite to learn more.

Figure 2. Ivan Scheier's Window of Work (his real name)

Glad Gifts	Quests	No-No's

<p>Writing Networking people with similar interests Introducing people to gourmet vegetarian meals Laughing Exploring/sharing women's creativity Hiking; backpacking Jumping in cold mountain streams Analyzing political process Reading- poetry, philosophy, psychology Training.</p> <p>group process networking resource-sharing organizational development creative fund-raising</p> <p>Playing with cats Taking walks around smallish cities Discovering ambiance of a place Enjoying silence Advocating feminist issues-"feminizing" society Talking about healthy living.- food, exercise, self acceptance Growing flowers</p>	<p>Facilitate women's creativity groups</p> <p>Publish my writing</p> <p>Live in a rural environment</p> <p>Grow a large garden of vegetables and flowers</p> <p>Find a loving, long-term relationship with a man</p> <p>Learn more about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Being an effective social change agent -Silence and patience -Acceptance of people -Providing a living space for people in need -Self-sufficient living models <p>Multi-media arts projects</p>	<p>Rigidity/sloppiness of thought</p> <p>An 'ends justify the means' mentality</p> <p>Desire to dominate the ecosystem</p> <p>Cruelty to animals</p> <p>Talking for the sake of talking</p> <p>Denial of possibility</p> <p>Crowds</p> <p>Cocktail parties</p> <p>The color orange</p> <p>Polyester pants</p>
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Figure 3. Caitlin's Downing Window of Work (not her real name)

Building Windows

How do we get Windows of Work from volunteers or potential volunteers?

Whichever method is used, it helps that the procedure is relatively straightforward and interesting (At the very least, an open window will be relatively painless.) In fact, a happy side effort of the process is how important and valued it makes volunteers feel. "Hey, they're not only interested in what I can do for them; they actually want to know what I like to do and even more amazing, what I'd like to learn, and what I don't want to do."

Early on, I suggest you describe the purpose of the window process; for example, "to find volunteer work that fits your motivation as well as our needs. " Then show a few sample windows, your own perhaps, or other volunteers' (with permission), and/or the examples just presented here.

It's good to do this face-to-face. To save time, it can be a small group situation. After the explanation and examples, you must usually give people a fair amount of time to complete and polish their windows; a couple of hours at a minimum, even better if it can be overnight or more. Here are some suggestions for making listings as complete as possible:

1. Take your time, take a break from the task and come back to it fresh.
2. Draw from your life at large, not just one part of your life, such as work or home.
3. Go back and forth between the columns. Don't feel you have to get all the Glad Gifts down before you go onto the Quests, etc.
4. Talk through your listings with someone else, and ask for their comments and questions. This should stimulate further free association.
5. Have people who know you well list what they think should be in your window. (You might do the same for them.) They might pick up some things you forgot to list because you do them so frequently and thus, automatically. Or No-No's you tend to repress.
6. When, finally, you seem to be running dry, focus on a series of specific situations, such as "work," "at home," "recreation," and see if that turns up a few more listings to put in your window.

Variations on the Window Format

The Haltom City, Texas Volunteer Program incorporates the window in their volunteer registration form as shown in Figure 4 on the next page. Another variation in window format, especially adapted to religiously-oriented volunteer programs, was developed by Mary Jo Waters, National Director of LOVE For Children/World Vision. It appears as Figure 5 on page 47.

Another approach would be to mail the window to people well beforehand, with an explanation and examples, and then ask them to bring the draft of their window to the interview.

Glad gifts, quests and no-no's can also be incorporated as a natural part of the flow in a volunteer interview. This can be one-to-one or in a group situation in which the window process is described and exemplified. Then we all begin building our windows, helping each other do so.

The window process tends to avoid the deep probe proclivities of some other volunteer interview approaches. As further protection of privacy, volunteers should be assured they need not list anything they consider too personal. There will still be plenty of publicly shareable material to build on. A few people may still balk at sharing their window with any stranger. I suggest you ask such people to prepare their window, keep it to themselves, and use it to build their own volunteer job proposals, in relation to the needs of the organization.

There's No Such Thing as a Concrete Window

Each prospective volunteer should have a window of course, but I also suggest the window be regularly re-done for current volunteers, every six months or so. This will first of all demonstrate the program's continuing interest in volunteers as individuals.

It also provides a solid basis for checking the appropriateness of present volunteer assignments, and gives direction to reassignment, or at least re- thinking of a volunteer job. Thus, if my desire to learn Spanish has now been taken care of, maybe we need to look at my quest-list for further learning opportunities. In this way, the window of work is as important for preventing volunteer burnout as it is for good placement in the first place. This is because job conditions change, and so does a person's window of work.

"Work Window"		
Please give some thought to completing the "Work Window" as it will be a primary indicator in helping us locate a special place for you.		
In the first pane of the window, under "Special Talents..." list any talents, skills, hobbies, activities, etc. you do well and that you enjoy doing. This could be things such as typing, talking to people, organizing people or projects, writing, working with children, walking dogs, reading, painting, cooking, studying history, operating computers, whatever. Don't hesitate to list it; it might surprise you how your talents could be utilized.		
The second pane is to list areas of interest you might not presently have the skills to perform, but which you might enjoy learning about. This could include things such as word processing, Texas history, police communications, city government, landscaping, cable television.		
In the third pane, tell us if there is anything you really don't want to do. You might be especially shy and don't want to meet the public, or you may have worked as a secretary and maybe you would rather avoid typing or filing on a volunteer basis. If so, tell us.		
By providing this " of information, we hope to tailor your volunteer position just for you. If we can accomplish an enjoyable work environment for you, we accomplish a rewarding and beneficial volunteer experience for both you and the city.		
"Work Window" (Please try to list at least four or five things in each column)		
Special skills, talents or interests you like to use	Areas you would like to learn more about	No!

Figure 4
Thanks to Haltom City, Texas Volunteer Program

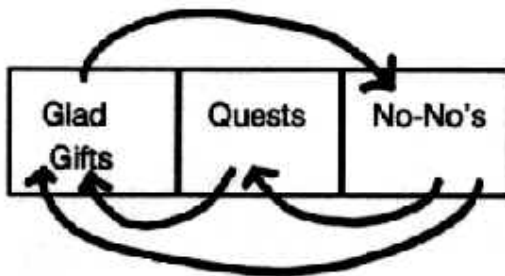
Overarching Belief: that caring Christian volunteers can change their communities for the better... One life at a time	
Setting ... the place(s) you would prefer to work: - at home - In an office - at a WIC/HS site - at the home of my client - at a church \public place - other? _____	Glad Gifts ... any talents, skills, interests and hobbies that you do well and you would enjoy sharing: • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____
Relationships: With whom would you prefer to work? - alone - in a group - with one helpee: - a child	Quests... those things you would like to learn more about or skills you might like to develop: • _____ • _____ • _____

- a mother - other? _____	• _____
Time Available ... or preferred work schedule: - occasional service - regular schedule - 1 X per week (1 -3 hrs.) - 2 X per month (1 -3 hrs.) - 1 X per month (1 -3 hrs.) - other: _____	No!.... please don't ask: • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____
Volunteer Window of Work	
Name of Volunteer: Address: Phone:-	

Figure 5

Thanks to Mary Jo Waters, National Director of LOVE For Children/World Vision.

The latter point is worth a little elaboration. An individual's window is not cast in concrete; ordinarily, it is far more flexible than glass. In the first place, you are always being reminded of things to add to your window. So, keep it open. There is also a clear pattern of clockwise flow around a window, over longer timespans. Thus, following the window format, a glad gift can sometimes become a no-no through overuse and/or unpleasant associations:



Remember my experience teaching tennis. People don't bum out, functions do. Also, a no-no can become a quest when instruction is a cure for fear or reluctance, and you end up liking it. Say you hate public speaking, are persuaded to take training in it and end up enjoying it (no-no to quest to glad gift)!

No-no's can also transit directly to glad gifts via positive associations, though it takes time. I began to enjoy at least playing (versus teaching) tennis a little bit again last summer, when it proved to be about the only way I could get to see tennis-fanatic friends.

Finally, quests can become glad gifts, once learned. Once I learn how to speak Spanish, you probably won't be able to shut me up in that language, either.

So, go with the flow. Remember, too, that surrounding your window is a veritable galaxy of neutral activities, neither glad gifts, nor quests, nor no-no's. Sometimes, the flow becomes a kind of vortex sucking them into the window in any of its three parts. Conversely, anything now in the window might spin off and out into neutral limbo.

Going From the Window to the Right Work

Suppose we have windows now for both prospective and present volunteers. How do we move from this motivational database to the "solution": the most appropriate work for the volunteer? First of all, I hope the volunteer will be encouraged to participate actively throughout the process.

The challenge is to build together work which:

1. Taps into at least one or two of the individual's GW Gifts. However, you shouldn't expect to be able to involve all or most of a person's glad gifts. These rarely form a single coherent pattern, in any case, as our sample windows indicate.
2. Provides growth opportunities in at least one Quest area.
3. Avoids all No-No's, or at the very least compensates carefully for any unavoidable aversions.
4. Can be accomplished within the time the person has to invest. Time available information comes from sources other than the window. However, the window might influence this factor. Thus, most people can find a lot more time for glad gifts than no-no's; they'll make more time for what they like to do and want to learn. Conversely, assignment of no-no's encourages people to remember how little time they have.
5. Be of clear, present, and important use to the organization or agency. The window process can easily tempt design of work only to please the worker. Wrong. The work must please both worker and worked for. Volunteer assignments must be designed to help the organization as well as to please the volunteer, just as we have discussed in the preceding chapter on staff Job Factors: the volunteer's Window of Work should fit the staff's "door of opportunity."

A reasonably complete window of work, processed in terms of the foregoing five criteria, will yield at least fifty distinct volunteer job possibilities. Try it with the window examples presented here. My own window (Figure 2) has generated over 100 appropriate volunteer job possibilities for me; several of which I've happily filled in recent years.

Ordinarily, only a really rigid organization fails to find something it can build around a person's reasonably complete Window of work. Even when an organization, intent on slow suicide in the increasingly fierce competition for volunteers, restricts itself to just one or two roles for volunteers, the window can still suggest how a volunteer can best fill that role; e.g., what kind of a case aide, office worker, etc.

I've tried window-type job building with hundreds of people and have come to this firm conclusion: there's no such thing as an apathetic person; there are only unimaginative interviewers working with incomplete information for inflexible organizations. Particularly in such cases, the window can be used at the volunteer's rather than the organization's initiative, in the search for meaningful work.

Other Windows, Other Rooms

This chapter is oriented to placing volunteers productively and happily in work via the window. There are also a number of other possible uses, less explored at present. Among these are:

1. Exchange windows with a friend, spouse, co-worker, partner, family member, etc. Discuss. Have you, out of ignorance, been playing too much to each other's no-no's, neglecting each other's glad gifts, and forgetting to give the other person enough chances for growth (quests)?
2. As a paid person or volunteer, see if your boss at work is willing to look at your window, the better to motivate you and use your potential.
3. You as a boss, get and use windows with people you supervise.
4. Use your window as a way of monitoring satisfaction in your present volunteer and/ or paid job. Are there still enough glad gifts in it? At least a few opportunities for growth (quests)? Has the job come to require too many no-no's for you? About every six months I take out my window of work, retouch it as necessary, and use it to gauge the level of fulfillment in my current work situations, paid or volunteer.
5. If the above kind of analysis shows a serious lack of fulfillment in your present job, use the window to visualize the kind of job you should be looking for, the job which would maximize chances to use glad gifts, seek quests, and minimize no-no's.
6. Options 4 and 5 above might also apply to other parts of your life; for example, homelife, leisure time, marriage, relationships, family.
7. What about preparing windows for organizations? Glad gifts would translate to something like "willingly shared resources or competencies." Quests and no-no's would remain pretty much as with an individual. Even for small and struggling organizations, composite windows are enormously impressive and illuminating.

The Window of Work has many uses. Let the light shine through.

Connecting the Window of Work and the Job Factor Processes

Having enabled employees and volunteers to analyze their work and preferences, we can now compare staff Job Factor need lists (X + T + D + Q) with volunteer work windows in a number of different ways. The possible variations are:

1. A combined staff "work assistance need list" is reviewed in relation to available volunteer Work Windows. Reviewer is the coordinator or other volunteer program leadership person.
2. Ditto, review of individual staff "work assistance need" lists.
3. The combined staff work assistance needs list is circulated to present or potential volunteers who compare it to their work windows.
4. Ditto, the work assistance need list is circulated to volunteers separately for individual staff/gatekeepers.
5. A group of staff/gatekeepers and volunteers exchange Job Factors and Work Windows and discuss them face-to-face, with a view to making matches.
6. A combined volunteer Work Window is circulated to individual staff who each compare it to their own Job Factor need list.
7. Ditto, individual volunteer work Windows are circulated to staff to compare with their Job Factors.
8. In the future, I can visualize a variation in which each participant enters the process as both giver and receiver of

help, which is to say with both a Job Factor and a Work Window. Each participant then scans all other Job Factors relative to her/his own Window while all other participants review her/his Job Factor in relation to their Windows of Work. The result should be a more fulfilling and effective redistribution of tasks among staff, among volunteers, or any combination.

However many matches are made in the above ways, we must always remember that a single spinoff, team or dream, doesn't always correspond exactly to a volunteer job. Various combinations and permutations may still have to be made. For example, a spinoff sweetened by a dream, or a dream shared among several dream-implementers.

At long last, then, we come to the volunteer job description. This occurs, please note, at the end of the volunteer job development process, not at the beginning as some seem to think. Job descriptions are simply the record of that process, not an influence in it. And because Job Factors change, as do Work Windows, I suggest you do each at least twice a year. This means that volunteer job descriptions should not be engraved on tablets of stone. Instead, write them in slowly disappearing ink.

Interlude on Empowerment

An important way of empowering people is to give them work which fits their talents, is sensitive to their needs for growth, and is meaningful in terms of their values. In that sense, this and the preceding chapter are about empowerment through work-- first for staff and then for volunteers.

I believe genuinely empowered people are more likely to be comfortable about sharing power in cooperative endeavors. I therefore think empowering both volunteers and staff in their work empowers teamwork at the same time.

In all these ways, the agency overall will be empowered and, one hopes, all its clients.

Building Staff/Volunteer Relations by Ivan Scheier is available for purchase from [Energize](#).