

# Why do more?

Posted: 11/21/2013 3:36 pm [Jamie Schaefer-Wilson](#), Senior Director, Business Development and Branding, VivaDressUp

Giving Tuesday is almost upon us and you will certainly be bombarded with all types of stories and you will, 1) wonder where to give, 2) how to give, or 3) think this day doesn't apply to you, because after all, you don't have the resources to truly help another human being.

Guess what? You do.

Let's be blunt; who am I to ask you to give? Quite simply, I'm you. I work a 6-7 day workweek and have no "extra" money; I have two children and a spouse who I bump into some evenings. With all this, we still strain to make ends meet. So why do more?

Over a decade ago I decided to briefly interrupt a well-paying career to volunteer at a child safety non-profit. I did so to the chagrin of many colleagues, who considered it a departure from which I'd never return. Suddenly I wasn't just going to work, I was converting my time into life-changing efforts. The emotional reward was immediate, absolute and astounding. It changed my life, my habits and my way of thinking.

I met parents who lost their children, and were donating their time. Talk about a true life-changing moment. Regardless of how busy you are and how badly your day is going, nothing makes you feel smaller than standing within arms' length of a mother who lost her child, wanting only to reach over and take away her pain, knowing you never can. What hits you is their strength. They disseminated information, provided awareness and petitioned for legislation knowing they could never bring their children back, but would help prevent injuries and deaths to others.

My colleagues were correct; I never went back; I realized donating any money, time or even belongings could change a life in ways I couldn't have imagined and I knew I wanted to find ways to continue to do so. I joined a non-profit (at a fraction of my previous salary) as one of the leaders of their child safety efforts and encountered other parents donating time, and often, money and other resources. Rarely were they wealthy; they were you and me, doing a small part to help change the status quo. The longest journey begins with a single step.

Giving comes in all shapes and sizes. Who should you give to? Find something that speaks to you -- a person, cause or organization that is near and dear to your heart. Whether it is changing the life of a child or fighting homelessness, hunger, cancer, AIDS or helping communities overseas. Whether you help a sick child's dream come true, fight against birth defects; provide money to research Down Syndrome, Parkinson's or Cerebral Palsy.

Unfortunately there are no shortages of causes.

Why now? When we are in the midst of looking for deals during this week of commercial-minded shopping days like Black Friday, Cyber Monday, and Small Business Saturday? Another simple answer -- you can give while you shop, there are now unique ways to do so.

So what's left to give? Some organizations can take pennies and perform miracles such as food or a check-up for a child. A few dollars can make a tremendous difference. If we all did so ... imagine what would happen? Would we wipe out hunger or a disease or prevent injuries and deaths? Educate those who can't afford schoolbooks? Let's find out.

What if you don't have dollars? Do you have a few hours for an organization that needs volunteers? Do you have a non-profit organization in your community needing help? Here's a secret -- they all do. Sometimes your time is the most important commodity of all. Even better, why not go out and spend a few hours volunteering with your kids? The local pet-shelter, senior home or soup kitchen would be thrilled to see all of you, and the reward of watching your children thrive and interact is enormous.

Finally, can you help if you don't have the dollars or the time? Or even find a combination of both? Absolutely. You may not even have to leave home. Just hit your closets -- hard. I am currently working for fundraising platform, VivaDressUp, which promotes both giving and shopping by converting women's clothing to a shopping experience that then converts the donations to non-profit partners such as the UN Foundation's Girl Up, buildOn, Kids in Distressed Situations, Kids and Cars and more. Go dig out that prom dress, business suit or bridesmaid gown you thought would never be worn again -- we'll make sure it will!

December 3rd is Giving Tuesday. Let's do it today ... let's make this the biggest Giving Tuesday ever! And then let's do it again -- next Tuesday!

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