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| **Retirement is the Perfect Time to Volunteer.****The beauty of retirement is that you finally have the time to do the things you want. It’s a great opportunity to start volunteering for causes that you find truly engaging. The amount of time you dedicate to volunteer work is completely up to you.**You many have an impulse to take up volunteering after retirement, but the best role may not always be apparent. Your volunteer work should be rewarding, enjoyable, and perhaps even fun. Here are some tips to help you get started.**Know why you want to volunteer.**Identifying your reasons can help lead you to the most fulfilling choices. For many seniors, the promise of contact with other people is paramount. But that will only take you so far. The best opportunities suit your personal interests and may differ from what you did during your career. If you felt a little burned out by the time you retired, don’t put yourself back into the same role. Rather, choose a volunteer role that ignites your passion. Don’t fall into the trap of volunteering somewhere just because there happens to be an opening.**Understand the qualifications for a specific role.** It’s true that many organizations are happy for anyone to volunteer, but you have the opportunity to be choosier. The role you seek may require a background check, training, and/or an upfront commitment for time. Be aware that some organization may ask too much of your time and energy. If all that sounds like too much of a bother, then you may prefer a role that requires minimal commitment, without the need for preparation or paperwork. If it’s hard to work up the enthusiasm to show up at the volunteer site, then you’re probably in the wrong place.**Consider the buddy system.**It can be decidedly easier to volunteer when you do so with a friend or spouse. When you have a partner with you, the whole process will be less intimidating. Not only can this strengthen your relationship with your partner, it also gives you the opportunity to frankly discuss your feelings about the work. A conversation with a trusted partner may help both of you work out any vague misgivings you have about your roles. When your partner knows you well, he or she may be able to help you gain insight as to why you find your role less than fulfilling.**If you love helping businesses succeed, consider SCORE.** The Small Business Administration’s SCORE program helps entrepreneurs realize their dreams to start up and run a successful business. If that peaks your interest, there are several roles you can assume. For example, a mentor provides confidential help to business owners. You can also be a subject matter expert, workshop presenter, or even assume a role in supporting the local SCORE chapter.**Volunteering can also lead to financial commitments.**You may feel the need to contribute financially in addition to your time. Contact me and I’ll help you analyze a suitable amount given your overall financial circumstances.

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