

# Transitioning

Strategies For The  
Volunteer World

By Eva Schindler-Rainman  
Edited by Val Adolph



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# Preface

Eva Schindler-Rainman is an internationally known trainer and consultant, who specializes in the areas of voluntarism, human resource development, and non-traditional organizational design and development. She has assisted schools, governments, corporations, and community organizations in making better use of human resources. She has also authored or co-authored six books and over three hundred articles.

This latest publication, **Transitioning: Strategies For The Volunteer World**, was produced from selected excerpts of transcripts of a May 1980 workshop which Eva Schindler-Rainman facilitated in Vancouver, British Columbia. This "Transitioning Through Volunteering" Workshop was sponsored by the Voluntary Action Resource Centre, the Vancouver Volunteer Centre, and the Western Association of Directors of Volunteers.

**Transitioning: Strategies For The Volunteer World** looks at changes in socie-

ty, organizations, and individuals, and how those changes affect the volunteer field. Eva Schindler-Rainman's innovative ideas and refreshing commentary make this important new book an indispensable tool for coordinators and other staff in organizations which use the services of volunteers.



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# 1. Introduction

“Bridging the gap”, or adapting to change through volunteering, is a fairly new topic. “The gap” refers to the gap between different kinds of people, different aspects of society, the changing lifestyles required to cope with an industrial age and a post-industrial age.

The idea of transitioning, as it is used in this book, refers to a process of change, specifically to change as it affects people in the world of volunteering. It looks at changes in our society, as well as changes in individuals, attitudes, and approaches to change. The idea of movement is implicit in our idea of change and the verb “to transit” or “to transition” refers to the process of moving from one condition or situation to another. We can look at three kinds of transition:

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**“to transition”  
refers to moving  
from one condi-  
tion or situation  
to another ”**

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**1. Voluntary** - For example, I voluntarily decided to leave the School of Social Work at U.S.C. and become a consultant. Nobody pushed me into that — I made the decision. A man and woman can decide that, after 35 years of marriage, they want to be single and unencumbered, so they leave that lifestyle and try a different one.

**2. Involuntary** — For example, a death in the family or short budgets which change people's job lives. I do not agree with the idea that people have full control over their lives. One has some control, but total control is not a realistic concept.

**3. Part of a process** — For instance, formal education. The process changes the individual, but it is usually a gradual change and the individual and people around him or her may not notice that the change is taking place.

The process transitions may be voluntary, e.g., getting a university education or involuntary, like growing older.

## Feelings Surrounding Transitions

Each transition is accompanied by feelings and, for each individual, the feelings may be quite different. Changes may

bring with them feelings of fear, of anticipation, of frustration, of excitement, or of stress. It is often difficult to discriminate between what to hold on to and what to let go of. This relates to the feelings about the old or traditional values versus newly learned values. Some people find themselves unable to let go of old values. As they grow older, they cling to the old ideas — for instance, that the only “good” family is a nuclear family; that women should not work outside the home; and that it is some kind of disgrace for a person to be on welfare. People who cling to outlived concepts never seem to be very happy, and they are constantly complaining that the present day world does not fit their ideas of how things ought to be — as if complaining would change it back. Other people grow older observing that not everyone is cast in the same mold, and that there is no one “right” family or working arrangement that has to fit everyone. Their world is richer because they see that there is room in it for variety, and they are not stuck with seeing only the old way and the new way and putting out judgments of “right” and “wrong”.

However, feelings can be strong even



during the smallest of transitions. I can decide to go away for a weekend and be ready to go in half an hour. A friend of mine will take two to three hours; she loves to go, but she hates to leave, and it is one of the hardest mini-transitions I have ever seen. However, I have to admit that there are some mini-transitions I hate to make myself which she finds quite easy. It is all part of the individual differences between people. Different people use different coping mechanisms from time to time.

Some mini-transitions can be very mechanical for most people, like getting up and getting dressed, or driving to work, but we must remember that for some people at some time in their lives, those very things can be major coping opportunities or challenges. The whole business of making changes is exciting and challenging for some, and puzzling, difficult, or even depressing for others. We may choose to procrastinate because we have difficulty in coping with something. We may even choose to deny that a change has taken place, like Jack Benny always being 39 years old.

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# 2. Categories

## Major Categories Of Transition

### 1. Societal

We are in the middle of the biggest societal transition in recent history — we are moving from the industrial to the post-industrial era. Alvin Toffler says that we are in transition from the second wave to the third wave. The first wave was the agricultural revolution, the second wave was the industrial era, and now we are moving into the post-industrial era, which is the third wave. It is a whole new era and, as a society, we are in transition. In the process, many people find their lifestyles changing, which might be comfortable or uncomfortable, or a little of both.

Often people do not realize that changes in society mean changes in **their** work place, in **their** family,

and in **themselves**. Society is in the process of change, so why should not

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**“changes in society mean changes in... themselves.”**

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individual people be? Why are we, as individuals, surprised to find ourselves included among those who are in transition? People in transition include more than the obvious groups such as the emotionally disabled or the immigrants. As Margaret Mead said, "all of us over the age of 30 are immigrants to those under 30". Interpret that to mean that so many changes are continuously being made, society and ourselves within it are moving from one way of life to another.

In order to get along comfortably with people who are much younger than we are, or who come from a different country, or who have a different lifestyle, we are going to have to transit in terms of our values and understandings. Those different values and understandings indicate some unanticipated futures ahead of us in all areas of life. One of the major changes will be in our family living.

The futurists say that there will be a total change in family living, but they do not yet know all of the implications. It is estimated that by the year 1990, only 7% of families in the United States will be nuclear families (nuclear families include parents

and children living under one roof). This is in contrast with 1970 when 70% of the families were nuclear families. Those of us who grew up in nuclear families place a certain value on that, and the change in values is a big transition to make. There are segments of the population that we may not even have thought about, but we are going to need to adapt our attitudes, so that these people receive consideration and have the same opportunities as anyone in our society.

There are groups which have, in the recent past, been devalued — the elderly and the disabled come to mind — or if they were not actually devalued, then their opinions or preferences were not considered to be significant. Can we feel comfortable about that? In order for society to change, the attitudes of each one of us must change. We can, to a degree, influence the changes in society, just as the changes in our society influence each of us.

## **2. Organizational**

Organizations are not static. They may change emphasis from one program or mission to another, or there may be a

change in the structure of the organization; some are centralizing and some are decentralizing. Some organizations become short of money, so they may either die or re-group. As values and priorities change, so the purpose and status of groups and/or organizations change.

Value systems within organizations are changing, too. Boards of Directors, executive officers, and decision-makers are going to need to be a very different breed of individuals in order to meet the challenges of the future. In the state of California, now that Proposition 13 has passed, budgets are being cut and organizations will need to re-organize. This can have a very creative impact; it is by no means all negative, although there may initially be some negative overtones.

Another trend within organizations is toward the flattened model, rather than the conventional hierarchical structure. Instead of having most wisdom coming from the top down, with only the occasional idea pushing its way from the bottom to the top, there will be more organizations where both the responsibility and the authority are much closer to the people who need

them to carry out the job. This idea has taken hold in such countries as Japan and Hungary. Workers have been encouraged by management to participate and influence the decision-making in their company through such mechanisms as the quality control meetings. In these meetings, workers discuss how to improve working conditions or even how to improve their products.

### **3. Individual**

We are all involved in personal transitions. We have already considered the voluntary and involuntary nature of transitions. Now we can look at the comparative "size" of transitions and the effect they have on us. Transitions divide fairly easily into two types, the mini-transition and the maxi-transition.

#### **Mini-Transitions**

There are so many of these in our everyday lives that we are often unaware of them. It is a mini-transition to go from being asleep to being awake. For some of us, this may even be a medium-transition. We should be aware that what is a mini-

transition for some can be much greater for others.

Everyone handles mini-transitions in his or her own way, just as he or she handles the major transitions in his or her own individual style(s). For example, in the morning before seeing that first person or taking that first phone call, I like to have an hour or an hour-and-a-half for me — to listen to music, or to watch the news, or exercise, or drink coffee, or just think, or just be. When anyone interrupts that, I can still make it, but less well.

Another mini-transition is going from home to work, or from work to home. It is interesting that the neighborhood pub is becoming a re-entry place for many people before they go home. To me, that says, "I am going to transit and I have got to get ready". Some people need more time to unwind and rewind.

For those people who plan training, another mini-transition is that from one activity to another. When people first come in, we should help them to transit from their car into the meeting. When you are giving instructions, do it in a way that helps people to move from where they were to

where they are going. We should design teaching situations in which one looks at the time of day and asks, "What is the best training activity to help them participate at this particular time?" How can we help people to transit in class so that they take full advantage of what the instructor is offering? What activity will best pull participants together first thing in the morning when they are new to each other? What will keep them awake and learning instead of falling asleep after lunch?

### **Maxi-transitions**

It is a maxi-transition when one moves from one stage of life to another:

- from being a child to being a college student
- from being single to being married (or from married to single)
- from one lifestyle to another
- from living with parents to living alone
- from being a big city executive to being the owner of a gift shop in the country
- from job to job
- from job to retirement
- from well to ill



- from ill to well
- from incarcerated to free (or free to incarcerated)
- from one house or one community or one country to another
- having a child
- losing a child
- having children grow up and leave home
- from wealthy to poor
- losing lots of weight

Most of these maxi-transitions involve a change in the self-concept of the person who is undergoing the transition. Some people will be consciously aware of the difference in themselves; for others, the change might be almost imperceptible, taking place over a long period of time.

For someone coming from a country where he or she may have been an affluent and influential person, to North America where he or she may be without funds as well as being a member of a racial minority, there is a definite, sudden, almost violent change in his or her self-concept. On the other hand, growing up or growing older is hardly noticed day by day. We have to look back ten or twenty years to notice any appreciable difference.

Individuals handle these maxi-transitions in their own individual style. We can handle changes gracefully or we can fight them; some we can put off for a while; others we can ease ourselves into gradually with a lot of consciously (or unconsciously) built-in supports; some we are thrown into and we just have to cope the best we can; some changes we can choose, and that makes a difference in how we select coping mechanisms to deal with them.

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**“We can handle changes gracefully or we can fight them, ...”**

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No two people will cope with a certain transition in exactly the same way. To the outsider, some systems of coping will appear more appropriate than others, and it is necessary to be sensitive about this, rather

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**“No two people will cope with a certain transition in exactly the same way.”**

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than judgmental. Each person copes with each change the best way he or she knows how. Some of them may not have learned very good coping strategies. Some will find a certain transition far more difficult than other people do. Some will waltz quite happily through what appears to others to be a most difficult transition. Then they will fall apart over what is, to others, a relatively minor change. It is all part of the joy and challenge of individual differences.

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# 3. Activities

## Volunteer Activities: Their Role in Helping Maxi-Transitions

Volunteering can play a major role in helping people through the changes in their lives, but it requires considerable sensitivity from those of us who are in charge of volunteer programs to realize their full significance.

Individuals who are involved in a transition are in a position of some weakness. They are venturing (willingly or not); they may be uncertain, hesitating between the un-

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**“Volunteering can play a major role in helping people through changes in their lives,”**

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comfortable and the unknown, or between the known and the new; they may have been forced into a difficult position and be looking for new ways to escape or alleviate it. They may be learning about things they have not faced up to before. We have to be

sensitive to the position that they are in, to their feelings about that, and to the ways they react to or cope with it.

Within the volunteer world, we have the opportunity to support people through some of their personal transitions. Here are some examples:

1. There was one woman, who was married and the president of Junior League. She was a visible volunteer and very active in her community. She got divorced, which was one maxi-transition. Then she went out of office which was very hard for her because she loved all that went with being president and she was very good at it, so she went through two maxi-transitions at one time. She took on some new administrative volunteer jobs, developed a new resume from them, and was employed as a field director for the American Cancer Society. Now she is director of volunteers for the local Red Cross, and she is very proud of where she has transited to. Her volunteer experiences helped her build her skills so she could make a transition that is satisfying for her.

2. There is also an 86 year-old pediatrician

who, after 52 years of practice, had to adjust to not going to the office every morning. So, she teaches nutrition to the elderly once a week; she reads records in the pediatric unit of a hospital to make sure that they are complete before they are filed (because a hospital can be sued for incomplete information); and she is a volunteer pediatrician with a holistic medical group which is looking at new ways of helping people to stay healthy. That is another transition softened and made easier by volunteer work.

3. There is a man who works for the telephone company. He has no arms (he was born that way), so he uses his feet as hands. He always wanted to get out into the community, so recently he became a peer counsellor to physically disabled people. He talks very openly about his own development as a person, as a worker, and as a volunteer. In this way, in addition to helping other physically disabled people, he assists his own integration into the community and builds his own self-concept as a valuable person with a unique contribution to make to others.

4. There is a 13 year-old boy who is one of

a very large family in a low income area. He found life boring with only chores to do, so he made a contract with his parents. Now besides doing chores, he also does volunteer peer counselling at a nearby home for troubled boys who are learning more socially acceptable behavior, so that they will not get into trouble. He is making the transition to adulthood, and making his own life more meaningful where he once found it rather depressing.

In each of these cases, the people in charge of the volunteer programs may have thought they were taking on a high-risk volunteer, but they were willing to take a chance and provide a bit of extra support. In doing so, they created a number of opportunities for both their volunteers and their clients.

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# 4. Usual/Unusual

## Transition From "Usual" to "Unusual" Volunteers

Give people a chance — even if their values and lifestyles are so different from your own that you find it hard to extend yourself to them.

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You have to get to know people who are different from you, and they have to have a chance to surface and an opportunity to become involved with the

**"You have to get to know people who are different from you..."**

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rest of the world. Shake loose the traditional ways of thinking. Not all volunteers will walk into your office alone — they may need others for support. Not everyone who works puts in the time between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday to Friday, year round. Some new volunteers might wear a sari, or come complete with a motorcycle and leather jacket or a seeing-eye dog. Can



you think of ways to use these people?

Think of people who might volunteer in groups, say a family, or a couple to teach sex education to younger people. Think of seasonal employees who have chunks of time between employment. Think of self-interest volunteers who have identified that, "I need this job for me". Their contribution is no less valuable because they have identified their motivation and have recognized that they are not being purely altruistic. Voluntarism is not necessarily the same as altruism.

How do we define the word "volunteer"? Does it include people who do not speak the language, who might look "different", who have chosen a lifestyle that we ourselves have rejected? Can we extend it to include people who have noticeable physical or mental disabilities? Maybe we can change or extend our concept of "volunteer", so that we do not leave out anyone who can contribute to our community.

Artists, whether they be writers, painters, entertainers, or poets, often need an opportunity to move in other circles and volunteering may give them that oppor-

tunity. Artists, of whatever genre, often are very isolated individuals, or live in isolated groups. They might like to transit from being isolated to being part of the community. We often forget that, especially if the artists happen to be well known. Often, the better known you are in this world, the more isolated you are. The same is also true for top managers of large corporations. They lead lonely lives. People do not call them because they assume they are too busy or not available.

What about alumni members, board members, and presidents? Some of them drop into oblivion as soon as they have completed their term in office, and they hate that transition. People just assume that they are happy and well and that everybody wants them, but what if everybody thinks someone else is asking them and they end up not being asked?

Have you thought about elected officials? In order to get visibility, they are very open to volunteering. That is one way to get to know certain types of people, and one way for them to get known.

Some people may be long-term commitment people, and some may be more

temporary or available only for very specific tasks, but they are all available. These are only a few of the people or groups of people who have not been tapped into very widely in the volunteer world.

We must find ways to integrate a wide variety of people to maximize their abilities. We must make it possible for them to do the job, both in terms of the present and in terms of developing the future.

We must put conscious thought into ways of integrating special groups because it will make a difference to our agencies and their clients. We ourselves have to make the transition to involving those new populations. We must realize that those who fall into the "special" category, for example, the elderly or the physically disabled, can do many things, but nobody can do everything.

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# 5. Understanding

## Understanding and Supporting Special Groups

If volunteering is going to make a difference to people in transition, an important extra dimension — support — must be provided. All volunteers require support from the staff with whom they are working. This may be support through listening, support through training, support by offering a career path, support by providing feedback about the work they are doing.

Part of the process of support is effective record keeping. We must make sure we keep good personnel records for all volunteers because five years later, we may not remember, and if we remember the person, we may not remember that he had a career path and moved (to use a hospital setting, for example) from helping in the gift shop to designing new intake procedures. It is no longer enough to have on file only the name, address, and phone number because people now list volunteer

jobs on their resumes, and there may be a need to check back to determine the period of their volunteer service, the various volunteer assignments they performed, and what the staff in the agency thought about them.

Many people returning to the work force use volunteer experience and training to get reintegrated into a job. Not only do volunteers gain new skills, but they change their self-image, too.

A volunteer may not have to work for financial reasons, but it may be important to him or her as a human being to move up or out or on. Movement and change are important components of transitioning.

Knowledge is an important part of understanding, and we must have some understanding of our volunteers before we can begin to integrate them. If we are going to integrate, say Cubans, we need to find out a lot about Cubans. We must start by admitting that we may not understand their lifestyle, but this should not be viewed in a negative way. We should not be thinking, "I do not understand them, so they should change their lifestyle to one more like

mine". Rather, the thinking should go, "I do not understand their lifestyle, so I will make an effort to learn about it".

With special groups, we have to think carefully about things we might not always consider with other volunteers. What might they need in order to have a good volunteer experience in our particular setting? Empathize with them. Try to understand what it means not to be able to speak the language, not to have money, not to be mobile. What is it like to be in a new country with a different culture, with different ways of dressing, and different ways of communicating with others? Try to understand their problem; where they are coming from.

High school students, for example, need extra guidance. They have not had a long life experience. A 15, 16, or 17 year-old usually has a narrow range of experiences and exposures. It is important not just to tell them what the choices are, but to help them look at the choices carefully because they may not make the best choice if they do not understand the alternatives open to them.

High school students may have to

learn that someone will miss them if they do not turn up to do their volunteer work. They have to learn that phoning if they cannot make it is an important part of being reliable. They have to be helped, too, to feel adequate in what may be a different world so they have the support of knowing that they are doing well.

Supportive and consistent direction linked to clearly specified parameters will help volunteers in transition, especially the emotionally disturbed people who have been sent to do volunteer work as a form of therapy.

Gentle structure and direction really make people free — they know what they are deviating from and what they are choosing to live within. That is much freer than

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**“Gentle structure and direction really make people free...”**

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being told, “Anything goes here”. Then they try something and they are told, “Whoops, that is against policy”. Make clear the limitations and the possibilities of

the job. Help people to cope in a safe situation before they have to do it for real. If they have continually made mistakes, they will feel more inadequate than they did before.

Value differences are important to recognize, too. If you are working with seniors, for example, you cannot just say, "Don't place any importance on neatness", but you can help them to understand that there may be things that are more important, for example, to a low income family with six children, than being completely neat.

If you are going to have special groups working with clients needing help, it is a good idea to help them find the positive things in the people they are working with, rather than looking for the negative. They need to know the positive things, and they need to know how to look for them. The older people, in particular, need to recog-

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**"...help them find the positive things in the people they are working with"**

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nize these positives and to have the positive things recognized in themselves because many of them feel that they have done their thing and that no one wants them any more. In cases like this, there may be a reciprocal volunteering, that is, the older volunteer helps a client and gets some help or support from him or her in return.

Spending time with volunteers as they come to you, and actively listening can help you understand what their position is. Where are they? How do they feel about themselves and their values? How will they cope with the volunteer situation you have in mind for them? A listening time is very important because it also gives a volunteer a chance to share his feelings about transition. **Transition counselling is important.** Think of the volunteers sent by the courts. If a judge sentences someone to a hundred-eighty hours of community service, it would be helpful if, when the person got to your agency, there were a chance to talk to someone about how he or she felt about those hours. Maybe that person is rebelling because he or she feels the judgment is ridiculous. A person needs to know what to let go of before he can start

being effective, and that is true for a lot of other people, too.

Ask yourself

what excess baggage might this person be carrying around? People from the courts, for example, could have strong emotions of anger or fear, not to mention a whole host of lesser feelings like inadequacy or apprehension. Not only do they need to know what feelings to let go of, but they also need to know how to let go of them. I am not suggesting that you play amateur psychiatrist, but it is very important to allow the opportunity for one-to-one discussions with people about their feelings in a time of transition. People need to know that negative feelings or feelings of ambivalence are understandable. There are many times in my own life, like when I was the first woman in a group of all men, that I have wished someone would say, "Hey, that must be difficult. Would you like to talk a bit about that?"

Just to have someone realize that I am feeling scared, or pressured is going to make me feel a lot more relaxed about what

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**"A person needs to know what to let go of..."**

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I am trying to do. Looking at transitioning is not just a task in observation; it is an experience at the feeling level — “how do I feel as I enter a new experience?” “How does this other person feel as he tries a new venture?” Peer sharing and professional guidance are important in working through these feelings. If there is some structure in the sharing, it helps in turning vague feelings into positive ideas.

It can be helpful also to recap, which actually allows us to move our ideas onwards. Recapping is a way of feeding back to the speaker what you have understood him or her to have said. It offers the opportunity to correct any misconceptions and gives the speaker the chance to extend his or her ideas a little further, knowing that the listener has understood what has been said so far.

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# 6. Social transition

## Social Transitions

There is an old Chinese proverb that says “May you be cursed to live in interesting times”. We are thusly cursed because we are living in times of more change and more complexity than the world has ever known before. Let us look at eight of the major societal transitions and the challenges they present. The transitions I have chosen to look at are those which particularly affect the volunteer world, although I am aware that there may be others.

1. The first one is the **new populations** which might see volunteering as an option. Their specific motivations vary greatly, but it appears that all over the world, people want to make a difference in the quality of life, even though they may not always know how. This often takes the form of people wanting to have a say in the decision-making which will affect their lives — this is a very important motivation. This opens the door for us to encourage a

broader variety of people to serve on decision-making bodies, as trustees, directors, and commissioners.

Perhaps people need to create more advocacy systems where they organize themselves to make sure that their concerns are heard, so that policy-makers incorporate some of their ideas into future planning. Another motivation is the desire to improve the world. It seems that people want to be part of the world instead of opting out of it, which was the trend a few years ago. A lot of people are very nervous about what is going on in the world, and they figure that if enough people go out and do something, maybe the world can be improved.

There may be an overlay of apathy in some places — one cannot maintain a concern about everything and we each have a system of priorities relating to what we feel to be important. I may be apathetic about getting a white line painted down the hill where I live, but very concerned about air pollution in my city. People are not totally apathetic unless they are sick. If people are not as concerned as you are about an issue, it is not constructive to

think of them as being apathetic. Maybe their priorities are different from yours. Maybe their energies are being used in some other way. We must respect that and not demand that their priorities and concerns be the same as ours.

Do not assume that people are apathetic — maybe you talked to them on a day when they were troubled or tired. Do not diagnose apathy without first thoroughly checking

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**“Do not assume that people are apathetic — maybe you talked to them ... when they were tired.”**

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that perception with them. When we do our clever diagnosing based on first impressions, we put the person in a box, label it, close it, and tie it with a ribbon. If you must immediately put someone in a box, at least leave the lid open because he or her may jump out and surprise you and be energetic and exciting. People may not be apathetic, they may be bored, or tired, or perhaps they have just not been challenged in a long time. If you write people off, you may lose a very important resource. You do not

know how people are feeling until you take the time to find out. You should not label people on assumptions at all, whether it is "apathetic" or "too busy". You are not going to know whether they are too busy to work on a problem unless you ask them.

In addition, think of the volunteers you already have, who may not have some new motivations, or who may need to be looked at in a new way. As Martin Buber indicated, many of us are the result of the way we perceive others see us. If I see myself reflected in the eyes of another as apathetic or uninteresting, I may just fulfil the expectation.

2. There is a change from little emphasis on the full utilization of human resources to a deep concern

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for the better utilization of human beings. Gone are the days when it was demanded that people be square to fit a square job, or triangular because

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**"There is  
...a deep concern for the better utilization of human beings."**

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the job is triangular. Instead, we are saying, "Who are you? What are your interests and hopes?" In this way, we tap into diverse talents, lifestyles, and skills. These make what had been a single resource into a pluralistic resource.

I would rather know what people's differences are and what additional strengths they can bring to their volunteer work. I would like to experience all the dimensions of them and appreciate their differences, not just as volunteers but as total persons. I do not like the concept of the melting pot because if people melt together enough, I think they will all turn out sort of gray — that is what happens if you melt all the colors together. In the future, we shall likely teach ourselves to see more dimensions in each person and be able to utilize his or her strengths in a much wider variety of ways.

We shall also need to take a closer look at our organizational structures in terms of utilizing human resources in the best way to give the best possible service. In one school district, for example, each school is now an entity that is considered to be the designer of its own budget; if a school wants to substitute one textbook for



another, it can do that. Each school is responsible for the delivery of the best possible education to its particular students. The Board of Education develops guidelines for all the schools, and each school is encouraged to be creative within these guidelines, in order to better serve the particular population or the special needs of that area. This places most of the responsibility of decision-making right with the workers who have to live with the results of their decisions.

Volunteer organizations will experience flattened structures, too, with volunteers and clients helping in the decision-making. They will be asking, "Is our structure cumbersome? Could our organization be more effective?" More people will be asking, "Is this the best way for these times? Are we using the human resources we have in the most useful, fun, creative way, to give the best service, considering the shrinking dollar?"

3. There is a concern also about the best utilization of all resources. This includes concern about over-utilization and pollution of environmental resources and this,

in turn, gives rise to energy conservation and to an increasing appreciation for nature. More and more volunteers are working on preserving parklands, conserving water, and working to save wildlife.

Concern for resources also means building multi-use facilities which are really needed, not building monuments dedicated to this person or that group. It means not building anything until we are sure existing facilities are being used to the fullest. For example, school buildings could be used for longer hours and for seven days a week. We should stop thinking that bigger is better and start to consider the esthetic advantages of appropriate size and scale. We can think of ways to collaborate and share facilities and resources with others.

4. There is a transition from one technology to another, as well as a change in the technologies and community resources which are available to our agencies. We must maintain a familiarity with new technologies, i.e., the computers and multi-media resources for training. In particular, we must be sufficiently knowledgeable to be discriminating in the purchase of equip-

ment and technology. Too often, an agency will bring in one "expert" and purchase solely on his or her advice. It is better to wait until a board has enough knowledge of its own to be discriminating in deciding that the new computer or whatever will really improve the present system. It is cost effective to take time to become knowledgeable compared to the cost of making the change without sufficient understanding of the technology or the changes to be made.

5. There is a transition from agency and individual "turfdom" to the development of collaboration and team work. We need to increase the use of creative collaboration and build networks, so that we can best use diverse talents and resources. It is im-

portant to acquire the skills to find and collaborate with the people and organizations who have the knowledge and skills needed at any particular

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**"...find and collaborate with the people who have the knowledge and skills needed"**

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time to achieve specific goals.

We need to be able to tap into all the other agencies with their diverse resources — the knowledge, the wisdom, the research — and, at the same time, acknowledge that we are not the only ones who know about 9 year-old blind boys, or whatever our particular turf is. **We have to take down all the little fences and collaborate and create inter-organizational networks.**

Collaboration requires a different set of skills than the skills we already have. In order to get people to work together on something, you need discrete skills and the willingness to share them. If you realize that there is not enough money to fund thirteen different information and referral agencies, you do not go the competitive route and write a bigger and better proposal to be sure that your agency gets the funding. You get all the information and referral groups together and use the best ideas, skills, and resources of each. It is possible to team and develop a network of agencies, including both staff and volunteers.

Collaboration can have a tremendous impact on a community or a population.

For instance, in one city, there was a community-wide conference to improve the beauty of the city. Two hundred people came from very different agencies and they all had different ideas and priorities. Through collaboration, they achieved a revitalized downtown mall and a cleaned up waterfront. In another community, they had a collaborative meeting to discuss ways to provide improved transportation for seniors. They ended up not only with a mini-bus system for seniors, but improved downtown parking and portable libraries as well. These developments did not take away from any one agency or person, and achieved results that none of the individual agencies alone could have achieved.

Changing to collaborative thinking helps us to develop new leadership patterns, as we learn to cope with new problems and difficulties. One of the difficulties with collaborative bodies is selecting a chairperson or leader. Often, people feel that whoever chairs a meeting owns it. Different leadership patterns can be developed to demonstrate that initiating a meeting does not mean owning it; it only means taking the risk to call people to-

gether. We could develop temporary leadership, co-leadership, or sequential leadership. You could have three presidents if they were each too busy to handle the task alone. There is a whole new challenge in utilizing human resources for shorter periods of time, especially in leadership situations.

6. There is a change in the nature of long-term commitments and the value of these commitments.

Long term volunteers who sign on the dotted line for one, two, or three years are in the minority, and instead there are many people who are available for a

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**“long term  
volunteers...  
are in the  
minority”**

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few months, knowing that they will be reviewing their situation by that time. There is a joy in utilizing people who have energy now, rather than forcing them into an existing mold and saying, “You can’t start till you have had eighteen hours of training which begins at 10 a.m. next Wednesday”.

I would suggest that Boards of Directors serve for shorter terms rather than for longer periods. You will have more people with opportunities to make decisions, more varied resources, and more volunteers who can transit from one job to another.

There can be heavy competition for an interesting volunteer job and, at the same time, many less exciting or appealing volunteer jobs which remain vacant even though they may be just as necessary. As you develop collaborative skills and new leadership patterns, you may place a higher value on temporary help. If a new volunteer comes in and asks "How long will this job take?", your answer might be "What kind of time do you have?" This means that a volunteer does not necessarily come into the agency carrying time, commitment, or mission with him or her, but the assignment itself can create an ongoing commitment for that volunteer.

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**"...the assignment itself can create an ongoing commitment"**

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7. Another transition is the new awareness of time. We are now looking at time in a more creative way and people are beginning to change the way they divide their time, especially the discretionary time that could be given to a volunteer commitment. There are so many causes which could be espoused, and so many groups which need help. People can lead helpful lives without concerning themselves with all causes. Selectivity is important, or one's time and energy could be fragmented instead of focussed.

When a volunteer has chosen which cause to help, then there is the choice of when. In the 24-hour cities we now have, there are volunteer opportunities available days, evenings, and weekends. There are jobs requiring a regular two hours a week and jobs whose time requirements vary according to the needs of the moment. Is a volunteer required to be there regularly, or as the situation warrants? Different people would feel differently about those types of commitments. Planners of volunteer activities will need to look at how they can slot different people in at different times, in order to meet more of the needs. Many



people like to plan for the future and project ahead, but their plans are flexible — they feel free to deviate from them as they get more information and as changes arise. The flexibility to adapt to these changes in others will be important, along with the ability to collaborate and to handle conflict carefully.

8. There are changes in the business community that will affect volunteering. The gap between industry or business and the human sector is decreasing rapidly. Many business people have a heightened sense

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**“The gap between industry or business and the human sector is decreasing rapidly.”**

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of social responsibility. They are building facilities so their employees can exercise during their lunch hours, or take time off with pay to improve their fitness.

Some businesses are going beyond giving money to human services and are encouraging their people to become involved in human services. They are lending

or sharing their people and, with the people, their special expertise. This benefits not only the agency, but also the people involved because the volunteer experience goes into their personnel file, and it is considered when people apply for jobs with a greater range of responsibilities. Maybe some of the experiences needed in order to have a good career ladder can better be found in the community rather than in the corporate world.

Volunteer agencies must take the initiative to educate business and industry about where volunteers are needed, how they can be utilized, and how the experience will benefit the business or industry as well as the community as a whole.

While lending people as volunteers can benefit the company which does the lending, there has to be planning to reduce the dislocation to both the volunteer and the company. We must be aware that this might change the priorities and even the programs of the agencies.

Another aspect of this is the greater contact between the public and the private sectors, so that there is sharing of information about what is available — know-

ledge, services, and expertise — in our community. Perhaps both sides could learn new ways of looking at problems, services and new ways of being effective.

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# 7. Coordinator

## The Role of the Volunteer Coordinator in Assisting People in Transitions

Coordinators of volunteers have a great deal to offer to people during transition periods, but they may be isolated in an organization or

not even known.

Coordinators of volunteers need to learn how to influence upwards, in order to become more visible. If you are to be involved in future

planning of, say, patient needs, you have to be accepted as a professional person and to be at a fairly influential level of management.

Our role is also to recognize transitions and to be flexible about the needs of people who are in transition. It may be that we have to change our criteria for recognition of volunteers. People might get recog-

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**“Coordinators of volunteers need to learn how to influence upwards, in order to become more visible.”**

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nized for only an hour of service, but that hour made a considerable difference to the client. Flexibility may include changing our office hours so staff are available during evenings and weekends because that is when many people have time to volunteer. It may mean allowing volunteers to schedule their own hours. You may need to be extremely flexible about time when you are working with senior volunteers or youths, and this would be part of the heightened sensitivity to their special needs. It might just take seniors longer to finish the job, while the young people are finished in no time and want some immediate reaction to their results.

We have to stop thinking that committed people are available, people who will "marry the job," whether it is volunteer or paid. We have to believe that the less time-committed people are as valuable as the long-term or more regular volunteers. We should look

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**"stop thinking  
that committed  
people are a-  
vailable, wheth-  
er it is volunteer  
or paid "**

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at volunteer assignments and see what work lends itself to the more temporary people and where the more permanent people can be placed. We need to prepare clients for short-term people, especially the clients with many special needs, or those who have been let down a lot.

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# 8. Appendices

## APPENDIX 1

### Twelve Challenges of Transitioning

1. To learn when we/they are in transition
2. To develop transition counselling skills
3. To develop support systems for transitors
4. To raise the consciousness of others about transiting
5. To help transitors figure out what to hold on to and what to let go of as they move from there and then to here and now and on to the future
6. To develop skills in recruiting and utilizing people
7. To become increasingly creative about short-term commitments
8. To enjoy the in-betweenness of transition
9. To enjoy and be puzzled by the unknowns of the transiting process
10. To welcome today and look forward to tomorrow rather than prolong yesterday

11. To experiment rather than be a prisoner of the familiar
12. To be increasingly creative and innovative, and enjoy moving to the new — the unknown

## APPENDIX 2

### **Three Ways to Help Change**

Any time you plan to make changes, you can almost always count on there being some resistance. Many people are afraid of change, so they oppose it directly, or they drag their feet in an effort to slow it down, or they nitpick for any one of a hundred reasons. In order to make the changes you believe are important, any resistance must be faced and dealt with. If you try to ignore it, or drive it underground, it will surely surface, usually at the worst possible time and always with greater strength than before. The following are three ways to face resistance constructively and to help your planning for change.

1. Include resisters in planning — A good way to utilize the force of resistance is to include the resisting person(s) in the planning process. Listen to their ideas; they may have some good ones, and the act of listen-



ing decreases the distance between you and them. They may produce a few reasons that are helpful to consider, and once you have faced their opposition, it will never appear insurmountable again. Also, the resisters are exposed to your point of view and they may discover things they had never thought about. It is reciprocal learning — it works both ways. This method uses the resistance instead of alienating the resisters.

2. Rally your positive forces. List them and their positive consequences. See if there are any negative consequences. This helps the decision-making.

3. Look at your strongest negative and list all the ways in which it might be overcome.

### APPENDIX 3

#### **Brainstorming:**

**Why the Brainstorming Technique is unique in its Usefulness — Some Ideas**

1. It is a good transition from lunch; it gets you back from the listless feeling and back into the flow of ideas.

2. It helps with people who do not know each other well. It is a quick way to integrate new people into a group. For instance, instead of having a discussion on

fund raising for the next year with a board group which now has six new members, say to them, "Now let's brainstorm all the ways we can raise funding for next year." The new members will become part of the group more quickly.

3. It decreases the distance between people in a hierarchy, and makes it easier for them to communicate with each other.

4. It can be used to decrease conflict and overcome resistance. For example, there was a department of social welfare which had a mandate to use volunteers, although the staff members were not sure they wanted to. There was a lot of conflict. All the staff had been told to attend a meeting about volunteer inclusion and recruitment. The leader divided the staff into two groups. One group brainstormed "all the reasons to use volunteers", and the other half brainstormed "all the reasons not to use them". Then they read each others' reasons. It decreased conflict because it allowed people to express their feelings about not wanting volunteers, and it also gave others ideas to work on to see how some of the resistance could be overcome.

5. It is great for team-building, especially

when you want different groups or subgroups to get together.

6. Use it for objective-setting or problem-solving. Instead of allowing people to complain about the problems of the status quo, have them brainstorm where they want to be a month or a year from now. Then have them select those items they really want to work on. This frees people to say where they really want to go. Otherwise, they may try to be knowledgeable about what they think they ought to have that fits in with their mission.

7. It can awaken or reawaken people and allow others to see some untapped human resources within the groups.

8. It can be used to spark ideas for improving service or a program. For instance, we could brainstorm all the ways to make a new volunteer feel comfortable in any agency.

### **Hints for Brainstorming**

1. Time required: 10 - 20 minutes
2. Group size: 3 - 15 persons
3. The question to be discussed should be one to which all participants can speak, e.g., all the ways to recruit volunteers.
4. Use large sheets of flip chart paper and

broad felt-tipped pens so all members of the group can easily read the list.

### **Rules for Brainstorming**

1. List ALL ideas.
2. Do not discuss.
3. Do not judge — **all ideas** are accepted.
4. Repetitions are O.K. If you hit a moment of silence, enjoy it. The best is yet to come.

### **Using Brainstormed Ideas**

The lists could be used in a variety of ways, for instance:

1. Vote on a few top priority items to be worked on.
2. Put all the lists on the walls so everyone can read them.
3. Check the most easily accomplished items and begin implementation.
4. Select one most practical idea and plan its progress.
5. Collect all the ideas and reproduce them in booklet form for the group as a resource.

## **APPENDIX 4**

### **Some Tools for recruitment**

Your happy and enthusiastic staff

and volunteers are a tremendous resource for selling your program. Do not spend time being dragged down by the dissatisfied person who thinks that he or she is poorly paid or undervalued. Emphasize the positive — people who love what they are doing and know that they are learning and growing, besides making a difference.

Ask volunteers if you may quote them in print advertising, or if they will speak about their volunteer experiences into the tape recorder. You may need to rehearse a tape recording, but once it is on a master tape, copies can be made at a very low cost. A videotape of volunteer activities is effective if it can be afforded, but not all agencies have the equipment needed to show it or produce it. Slides are another alternative. You might want to develop an audiotape to go with them. You should remember to keep the slides up-to-date. Films are expensive and they tend to get out-of-date quickly. Your own needs and priorities will help you decide which method to use.

I sometimes carry to meetings a little audio cassette tape with a recording made

by high school volunteers who have experienced positive results from their volunteer jobs. I use these at recruitment meetings or board meetings where I am looking for a larger budget, or where I am trying to sell the idea of volunteering to a group of grade eleven students who think volunteering is just for little old ladies in tennis shoes. Playing the tape has a positive effect. It has an immediacy and reality which brings "live" people into the scene, as well as encourages participation.

## APPENDIX 5

### Force Field Analysis

(An adaptation from Dr. Kurt Lewin)

Toward goal attainment:

1. List **all** the things — all the positive forces — which you know will **help** you reach the goal. These are things that are now in the picture (in the field) which will be driving positive forces towards the goal.
2. Then do the same for **blocks** or negative restraining forces. Example: **Goal:** to involve more people in decision-making.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| a. Some supervisors want help in decision-making.                         | a. Little history of participatory decision-making. |
| b. In our organization, there is a trend toward participatory management. | b. Many supervisors lack skill in involving people. |
| c. It has been successfully tried in some areas, etc.                     | c. Some decisions need to be made immediately.      |
|   | d. It takes time, etc.                              |

3. After listing all the forces you can think of, your action choices are:

- a. Take the strongest negative force or forces which you can do something about, and brainstorm all the things you could do to diminish or demolish it or them.
- b. Strengthen the strongest positives (again, brainstorm all the ways to do this).
- c. Combine strong positives, if possible.
- d. Reverse a strong negative into a strong positive.
- e. Remove forces, if possible.

The best payoff usually is to diminish the

stronger do-able negative force(s), so let us start there.

#### **4. Action Strategies**

Brainstorm all the alternative actions you could take here. Now look back over this list and select the action(s) most likely to decrease the selected restraining force.

Answer these specific questions about the action(s) selected in addition to ourselves.

1. **Who else do we need**, to work on this?
2. **Where** do we begin?
3. **How** do we begin? (phone call, meeting, letter, etc.)
4. **Who** will do what to get us started?

## **APPENDIX 6**

### **Ideas to Help Volunteer Integration**

1. support by coordinators
2. support by other staff
3. full orientation to job, clients, agency
4. clear job description
5. clear, realistic time-commitment expectations
6. newsletter to keep them up-to-date
7. feedback/evaluation re performance
8. define acceptable standards



9. additional training for skill development
10. buddy system with experienced volunteer at first
11. increased responsibilities available
12. personal conference available for support
13. introduction to supervisor, other staff, and volunteers
14. recognize personal limitations and abilities
15. positive reinforcement
16. acknowledge the contribution
17. recognize their priorities, e.g., exams, vacation
18. assist with resumes and finding paid work
19. be prepared to teach job skills
20. allow for de-briefing if necessary
21. place according to area of interest
22. provide information kit
23. pre-screening plus personal interview
24. explain philosophy, bias, attitude of agency
25. prepare staff ahead for "different" volunteers
26. determine volunteer's motivation
27. help volunteers to recognize and use existing skills

28. guide volunteer in choice of assignment
29. be prepared to reassign volunteer
30. make them feel welcome and needed
31. understand "where they are coming from"
32. provide out-of-pocket expenses

**I wish you happy transiting, and I hope we can help others to transit more comfortably.**

	University/College Students	Adult-Career Preparation	Newcomers	Pre-Retirement	Retirement	Physically handicapped	Psychologically/emotionally handicapped	Court Referrals
Provide out-of-pocket expenses	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Show value of skills & experience for resume	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
Contact counsellors	✓	✓						✓
Have discussion to create mutual understandings	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓
Use one of the group as recruiter	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pre-plan with counsellors ahead of time	✓	✓	✓					✓
Informational posters and handouts*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reach through leisure time organizations	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓
Slide/tape presentations in malls	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Go to where non-conformists hang out	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Newspaper article magazine/newsletter*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Prepare specific job description	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Approach specific teachers, course areas	✓	✓							
Radio & T.V. public service announcements	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pre-orientation tour	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	
Review our expectations	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Allow participation in prog. planning	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Evaluation for references	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
Data Bank		✓							
Student newspapers		✓							
Women's resource centres			✓		✓		✓	✓	
Lunch/coffee rooms — handouts					✓		✓	✓	
Community centres/libraries			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Letters to group leaders/teachers	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Posters/flyers in residences		✓			✓		✓	✓	
Agencies			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Churches		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Canada Manpower	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓

\* in other languages

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