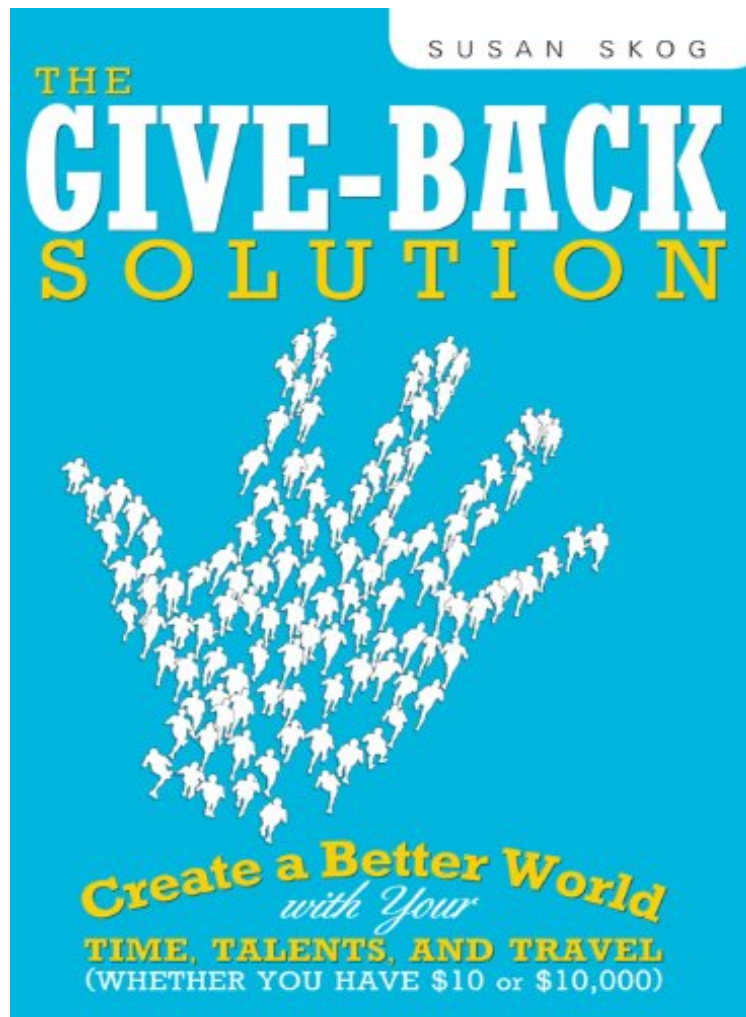


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## The Give-Back Solution: Create a Better World with Your Time, Talents and Travel (Whether You Have \$10 or \$10,000)

*Susan Skog*

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**Susan Skog : The Give-Back Solution: Create a Better World with Your Time, Talents and Travel (Whether You Have \$10 or \$10,000)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Give-Back Solution: Create a Better World with Your Time, Talents and Travel (Whether You Have \$10 or \$10,000):

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Doesn't Look At The Other SideBy LivingMyLifeLikeItsGoldenThe Give-Back Solution: Create a Better World with Your Time, Talents and Travel (Whether You Have \$10 or \$10,000)I like the concept of the book and the encouragement it brings to people. However, the book does not offer practical advice on giving in a way that builds on the gifts and talents of what is already in a community or country.In the last

10 years, I've been blessed to travel to many different countries. I often hear that "Americans are generous people, but why do they always feel the need to do things their way when they give?" I've also heard from Americans who gave generously, and then are disappointed when they return to a community or country two years later and none of their work was sustained. The book for me continues the tradition of us as Westerners putting on "rose colored" glasses when it comes to making a difference in the world. We are not Oprahs, Bonos, Angelinas, or Madonnas. Making a difference has nothing to do with money, it has everything to do with the heart. 1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Great Ideas By Marsha Wallace In this day and age when giving back is a timely topic, and the world seems smaller and smaller, Susan Skog's book brings much needed light to various ways that we can all contribute to the world. There are ideas for everyone covering any area of interest. No matter what past experience in giving back involves, there is something for you to discover here. Susan is obviously passionate about facilitating change in the world and in people's lives. I found it very informative but also very inspiring! It's uplifting to know that so many are doing such good work, including Susan Skog! 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Inspirational Reference for Overseas Volunteers By Richard G. Wendel MD This is an inspirational and great reference for potential volunteers with interest in overseas work and exposure to various cultures. It lists most all of the prominent agencies in the field and gives some amazing stories of how volunteers with limited resources can make a huge difference. It is especially useful for the younger-set as they consider volunteer work.

An unprecedented surge of ordinary people are using their time, talents, and travel to make a better world. What's Your Part of the Give-Back Solution? Reaching out and supporting others brings out the best in all of us. Giving back strengthens America but the under-appreciated secret is that it lifts us up, too. Part call-to-action, part inspiration, part practical research guide to make-a-difference opportunities, The Give-Back Solution captures the idealism and generosity sweeping our country, even in the face of serious challenges. Dance to raise money for fighting malaria Organize an office book drive Build schools in Belize on a volunteer vacation Invite friends over for a dinner that benefits the hungry Visit the Amazon and support sustainable rainforests Work in a Kenyan orphanage Clear trails in America's wilderness Clean up rivers in your own backyard Micro-bankroll an African entrepreneur climbing out of poverty Use your 9-to-5 experience to teach business skills in your community or online With amazing stories of everyday volunteers having the time of their lives giving back, social change leader Susan Skog shows how you can join the groundswell of goodwill, whether you volunteer abroad or support efforts locally, and whatever your time, talents, or resources.

About the Author Trained as a journalist, Susan Skog has written about humanitarians and their projects for 20 years. The author of five nonfiction books, including *Peace in Our Lifetime* and *Embracing Our Essence*, her work has also appeared in many leading magazines and newspapers including *The New York Times*, *Newsday*, *Family Circle*, *Prevention*, *Good Housekeeping* and *AARP* magazine. Skog has worked with and volunteered for *BeadforLife*, which supports Ugandan women, many of whom are HIV-positive refugees. She is a former manager at *Engineers Without Borders-USA*, which helps developing world communities realize clean water, energy, and sanitation. A public speaker, Skog has presented at organizations and conferences around the country. She and her family live in Fort Collins, Colorado. Excerpt. copy; Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Excerpt from Chapter One Excavate Your Inner Humanitarian What's calling you, pulling you in? What drew you to this book and its message? The Give-Back Solution can make it easier for you to help the world; it can also help you discover more about yourself and what you really want to contribute. It can help you show the world—and yourself—what you're capable of. Maybe you already know what's compelling you to give back. Some people say they feel a sense of outrage or restlessness at the state of the world. Students say they've heard for years that this is their time to make a difference. Others refer to a moral, spiritual calling or keen sense of destiny, as if their entire lives were leading up to this opportunity to help others. Lots of empty nesters say they've always wanted to venture out and give back for years, and now that the kids are gone, it's time to jet. They say that volunteering with those living on less than two dollars a day is the opportunity—and privilege—of a lifetime. Those who can't travel, but who are grateful for their good fortune and would like to share it with others, also want to engage right from their kitchens, offices, computers. What's your dream? It costs nothing to dream—and everything not to. This is the time to dream, and dream big. If you didn't let your fears, money worries, vacation time, or other limitations hold you back, what would you do? Where do you turn when you're ready to engage for the first time—or again and again? Consult Your Inner Compass Africa kept calling me—for a long time. I just couldn't not do something. So by the time I finally arrived there and walked up the rocky, red-clay hillsides perched above Kampala, Uganda, and entered the beaders' ten-by-twenty-foot mud huts to listen to their stunning stories, it felt like coming home. It felt like an honor to witness what the beaders had survived. Some of them barely escaped machete-waving rebels; some of them had walked hundreds of miles to safety, wounded or naked. Some fought to stay alive with AIDS after their families threw them out. These beaders had survived unthinkable torture and abuse, yet struggled with dignity and pride to survive and educate the children, including the orphans. Most days, the unforgiving African sun would stoke the beaders' windowless homes into ovens long before

noon. But soon I realized that just as much heat radiated off the women, who were on fire and leaving suffering, AIDS, poverty, and despair far behind. They were luminous with the knowledge that, with their own hard work, they were reaching for a new life and making enough money to feed their children, buy them medicines, and send them to school for the first time. In two weeks, I got thoroughly hooked on making a difference in the developing world. As each day passed, I felt compelled to throw my notebook and recorders down and just be with the women and with professional storyteller Connie Regan-Blake, with whom I worked. Our stories merged, as sultry breezes moved through orange-blazing mango trees and noisy white cranes dipped and swayed on the wind overhead. The readers are discovering their place in our increasingly woven, wider world, one necklace and bracelet at a time. At the same time, we're each discovering our connection to each other.

**Figuring Out Your Connection** To better help you find your own connection in the wide world of give-back choices, consider these questions.

1. Listen to your give-back call. What's it saying and asking of you? Tune into your inner compass and see where it leads you. Trust your instincts, your hunches for what feels right. Perhaps for years you've been drawn to helping orphans in Africa or nurturing the sea turtles of Costa Rica. What comes instantly to mind?
2. What brings you here now? Why is this the right time to act? Has something happened to galvanize you? Were you shocked by a conversation about Darfur around the watercooler at work; or do you have a year off before you start college and want to see a piece of the world while doing a bit of good? Are you recently retired or searching for meaning after years in what feels like a dead-end career? Why now?
3. Are you drawn to a particular part of the country or of the world? Is there an area or region that's particularly compelling to you? Do you want to build a trail in a national park, ease poverty in Appalachia, or tutor kids down the street? Or is there a continent or culture calling you? Can you narrow down the country or region you'd like to support?
4. Do you want to roam? How in-the-trenches and hands-on do you want to be? Do you want to go and volunteer in a developing country for weeks, even months? Are you already feeling the adrenaline rush, knowing an adventure awaits? Do you feel like one foot's already on the soil of a Brazilian village or hiking in Tibet?
5. Do you want to make an impact; right where you are? Is hands-on work in the trenches of Asia or Africa a turnoff for you? Do you feel more concerned about and drawn to helping out your local community or your country? Are you seeing signs of greater poverty, environmental problems, or educational gaps in your own backyard? Maybe you want to step up your volunteering here before you branch out overseas? Does it feel right to make a powerful contribution by raising your voice, opening your wallet, or working for change, right where you are?

**One Volunteer's Journey: Making a Difference at Home** After graduating from college, Lindsay Saperstone wanted a better way to connect herself to her Portland community and to occupy idle time. She started shopping around for a nongovernmental organization (NGO) that met her personal interests, one that was established so she could jump aboard as a volunteer with little experience. "I attended a few community groups' meetings and came across an ad on Craig's List asking for a volunteer willing to help organize one nonprofit's database. I was familiar with the software they use, so I responded to the ad." Saperstone decided to volunteer for Voz ([www.portlandvoz.org](http://www.portlandvoz.org)), a Portland group that deals with immigrants' rights. Voz empowers immigrant workers, particularly day laborers, to gain control over their working conditions and to exercise their collective power to address the issues they face. The job, which consists of entering names of volunteers and donors into a database, is a perfect match for her, Saperstone says. "It furthers a cause I feel passionate about. Plus, I have always been extremely interested in learning about issues facing immigrants in the United States and have wanted to get involved with a group that is so vastly undersupported by society." Saperstone also speaks Spanish, so her work allows her to practice the language. She finds it rewarding to know that she's helping Voz better organize the other volunteers who ask to join them each week. "It doesn't take much time and it means a lot to me," she says. "It is something anyone can do if they keep their eyes open."- 6. Do you want to get up close and personal? Are you sensing the people and feeling the pull of connection? Is it necessary for you to work closely with the people you'll support?
- 7. Do you want an ongoing sense of community? Are you looking for a way to give back; and find camaraderie and a sense of community at the same time? Many people enjoy volunteer work for the sense of belonging to something bigger than themselves, plus the chance to connect on a more meaningful level with kindred people in our often isolated, frenzied lives.
- 8. Do you want to find a group or organization with similar values and aims before you make a commitment? Is it important to you that you hold the same ideals and vision? Do you find it more desirable to support a faith-based or religious organization with a stated mission? Or do you prefer a secular one?