

SERVICE YOU DIDN'T THINK WAS SERVICE

Shovels and rakes aren't the only tools at your disposal.

By David Dickson

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“Why do dragons sleep during the day?” Wendy asked. And after a few seconds, the punch line: “Because they fight knights!”

I laughed as I paid for my lunch. Wendy, who ran the cash register, always told a joke of the day. This would be another great one to share with Melody, the eight-year-old in our family.

“And here’s one for you from Melody,” I said. “What kind of animal do you never want to play games with?” Pause for dramatic effect . . . “A cheetah!”

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917–2008) taught, “[Laughter] will extend your life and make the lives of all those around you more enjoyable.”¹

Wendy’s jokes have certainly made my life more enjoyable, as well as the lives of my family as I’ve retold them.

But do you know what else those jokes are, besides funny?

They’re a form of service.

So What “Counts” as Service, Anyway?

If you throw somebody a high five as you’re walking down the hall, does that count as service? Absolutely. If in doubt, check out the smile that flashes across their face. (Never pull your hand back at the last moment, though. That’s just *lame!*)

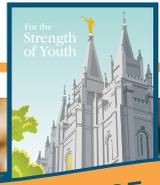
We have countless opportunities to provide small and simple acts of kindness that make a bigger difference in the lives of others than we might expect.

Here are a handful to consider.



GO AHEAD, SHARE A PERSONAL STORY!

Want to become the hero to any teacher during a Sunday lesson? Share your testimony or an experience from your life that applies to the lesson. Ultimately, the person you serve most might be one of your classmates. A less-than-a-minute telling of how you prayed and felt comfort on a bad day last week might be just the advice someone needs to hear.



SERVICE



TEXT SOMETHING NICE.

You have 15 seconds to send a text. You could write, “Hey, wasn’t that movie last night sooooo boring? And that dumb ending! Ugh!” You could certainly do that. But consider instead if you sent, “Hey, I wanted to say thanks for helping me laugh earlier today. I really needed it!” Quick texts of gratitude, kindness, or encouragement can make any day better. In fact, why not send one right now? Ready, set, go!



CHEER YOUR HEART OUT

(pom-poms optional).

So maybe you don’t especially like going to football games. Or soccer games. Or any other event that involves a scoreboard and cheers or jeers from a crowd. Even so, you can still attend your friend’s game and root for them. Simply showing up to lend support often means more to the other person than the couple of hours you spent attending. The same holds true for dance recitals, concerts, engineering exhibits, and any other place a friend or family member is sharing part of what they love.



SHARE YOUR TALENTS.

Can you draw? Bake impossibly tasty breadsticks? Solve math equations faster than a speeding locomotive? Use those talents to enrich the lives of those around you.

We have **countless opportunities** to provide small and simple **acts of kindness** that make a **bigger difference** in the lives of others **than we might expect**.



WATCH YOUR LITTLE BROTHER'S FAVORITE TELEVISION SHOW WITH HIM.

Flying robots with lasers. Time-traveling blue boxes. It's all Greek to you. But your little brother has been begging you to watch his new favorite show with him for months now. Even if it doesn't sound enticing, think of how much it'd mean to him for you to sit down and spend time with him doing his favorite thing. Who knows, you might even like the show too!

SHARE YOUR TIPS AND TRICKS.

Did you know that if you add a little olive oil to the water when boiling pasta, the pasta will stick less to itself? We've all learned cool little gems like this that make life better or easier. Teach them to others!



PRAY.

Most of us recognize that prayer is an enormous help in our own lives. But how much can our prayers affect other people? Consider this. In the Book of Mormon, we learn about an entire city that was spared from destruction because of the prayers of the righteous (see Alma 10:22). We're talking famine, pestilence, swords—the works. All stopped because of prayer. Who in your life could use a little extra protection or help? Pray for them!

Sometimes service opportunities are going to be unmistakable, urgent, and a bit more time-consuming. If your friend's basement floods, for example, they may need more than a friendly word and a warm plate of cookies.

More often, though, you'll find little chances day after day to serve. When these come, take them. You'll soon learn an eternal truth.

There's nothing little about service. **NE**

NOTE

1. Joseph B. Wirthlin, Oct. 2008 general conference.