

## "What Motivations You"

*"Why do you, or even why would you, volunteer for ARES/RACES"*

People volunteer for a wide variety of reasons, especially wanting to help others. But it's also OK to receive some benefits for ourselves from volunteering. Some people are uncomfortable with the notion that a volunteer "benefits in some way" from doing volunteer work. There is a myth in many minds of seeing volunteering simply a form of charity. The best reasons to volunteer, do certainly involve the desire to serve others, but this does not exclude other motivations, as well. Some are decent motivations and some are less desirable. I will try to address both.

Let's start this evening with the idea that volunteering for ARES/RACES, is something much more than something we do for people who are less fortunate than ourselves. Let's think in terms of an exchange. I mean, what it does for others as well as how it benefits us.

By this, I simply mean that most people will likely find themselves in need at some point in their lives. So today, we may be the person with the ability to help, we have the health and the resources needed to serve in ARES/RACES, but we start to realize it may not always be this way, and that tomorrow we may be the recipient of someone else's volunteer effort, to help us or our family, make it through the disaster, that we always thought would strike someone else. The idea simply being, we are all in this thing together, and the volunteer we help train tonight, may be the one who helps save your life tomorrow. And if that is why you choose to volunteer for ARES/RACES or participate in these training nets, there is nothing wrong with that.

Volunteering also includes "self-help." I never met a Sunday school teacher that didn't learn more than all their class. Taking the time to prepare training programs for the group, both on a section level and a local level, will do a whole lot to bring you up to speed on ARES/RACES training, and that alone is a good and valid reason to volunteer to be an NCS on this net as well as others.

What are some other reasons, why people volunteer for ARES/RACES, and are they all good reasons to do so? I am going to do my best to bust these into four groups, but I admit it is not an exact science.

I dread to even mention the first group, but the program would fall woefully short without it. Not very many folks will fall into group #1, but sometimes the smallest voices can make the most noise, and therefore they hurt the cause of all those who do serve with good motives. Tonight, I want you to do your best to pick the group you fall into; you don't have to share your answer with the group if you don't want to, but at least consider the question.

**Group #1** You are motivated for your own reasons like all the rest, but they are not positive reasons to be a part of ARES/RACES team or any other volunteer organization. The following things you find are the reasons that motivate you to be a part of ARES/RACES.

*So that you can feel like Mr. Important. ARES/RACES is Important so you must be important.*

*Maybe your involved with ARES/RACES because you feel guilty about some things you have done, and volunteering helps your guilty concise. It may be helping your guilty conscience, but you may be hurting ARES/RACES.*

*Maybe it is because you want and think you deserve recognition or power. Maybe you do deserve it, but ARES/RACES should not be about power or influence. It should be about serving our served agencies as a team, who then help those victims of emergencies and disasters that need help.*

*Maybe you just want to be able to criticize the group or you want to assure things get done your way, because there is no one else who can do it as good as yourself, and it must be done right.*

*Last and possibly the worst motivation is to build your resume, your legacy or perhaps your obituary, so you can say, I have been there and I have done that and know it all now, I can die in peace.*

If you are honest with yourself and feel like group #1 may include you to some extent, I want to challenge you to listen to the rest of tonight's program, to some of the other reasons you might want to serve in ARES/RACES, and see if you can be motivated to take up a more positive reason to serve.

**Group #2** This list includes motivations the new volunteer might have, but they are not for new folks exclusively. If you are in group #2 you are motivated to volunteer for ARES/RACES because;

*You want to learn and experience something new.*

*You want to be challenged to learn new ideas.*

*You want to feel that you can be a part of something good in Ham radio.*

*You want to make new friends.*

*You want something different from your job to spend time on.*

*You get satisfaction from accomplishing things that make a difference*

*You were pressured by a friend, if the friend was me, then it's a plenty good reason, don't let no-one tell you different, just hang in there.*

*You like to stand up and be counted for a good cause. ARES/RACES is a good cause folks, and all of these reasons are decent reasons to be a part of the ARES/RACES Team.*

**Group #3.** You might have some of the motivations of group #2, but you also have some reasons that mostly focus on wanting to help others in need. So you have some of the following reasons for volunteering for ARES/RACES as well.

*Because it keeps you busy, you have the time, and it gives you a good excuse to do what you love to do which is to help others.*

*Because you want to share your skills with others on the team, and recognition is not what is really important to you, but being on a well trained team IS important to you, and you realize that only a well trained team, that works and trains as a team, will be the greatest help to others.*

*Because you simply want to help other volunteers, those who have helped you, or might help you come tomorrow.*

*Maybe it is because you have seen the devastation and pain a disaster can bring to folks and you simply want to do something, to help victims in a disaster situation.*

Folks any and all of these are great reasons to volunteer for ARES/RACES and it makes me proud to be a part of such a group of people, motivated by the things that are important.

**Group #4** You share some of the motivations of groups two and three, but you think of your motivation in terms of an organizational motives. I mean you feel Ham radio needs to look its best at all times, and the ARES/RACES Image is paramount, if it is to carry out its mission and purpose. This basic principal motivates you, and the following list contains at least some of the things that motivate you to be a part of the ARES/RACES team. You are motivated because,

*You know you need to be trained and ready to play your part on the team.*

*You know you need to test yourself and your equipment; to be sure both are ready at all times.*

*You want to keep your communication and operating skills alive and sharp.*

*You know you are a part of a great team of communicators and you want to show it by your good operator skills whenever you are on the air.*

*You want to know the others in the ARES/RACES community so you will be an asset when needed.*

*You want to demonstrate your commitment to Ham radio and emergency communications, so you continue to train and achieve.*

*You want to gain leadership skills that can be used in all parts of life, Including ARES/RACES, and you are willing to sacrifice if it makes the team better able to serve.*

*You want to do your part to fulfill your duty as laid out in part 97, and help preserve the spectrum.*

*You want to be an agent of change, and have a positive impact in ARES/RACES.*

Folks ARES/RACES is a great part of Ham Radio, it is not the only part, but if the motivations listed in groups two, three or four, are inline with the things that motivate you, then ARES/RACES is the place, to turn those motivations into action. You can be and many of you are, a part of a great team.

You will probably have some other special reasons of your own. That's fine as long as they are not listed in group one, and are not similar in nature. Remember that the motivations you start with may not be the only reasons why you stay.

Once you're on the team, you will continue to serve as long as you and your leadership feel that your efforts are accomplishing something, that your talents are appreciated, and that you make a positive difference. And if you also like the people with whom you work, it is so much the better! As long as you are truly serving, with decent motives, as you strengthen your commitment to ARES/RACES, you can and will see the benefits to both the recipients of your efforts, as well to yourself.