

WITH SOUND PLANNING, NO NEED TO TURN A BLIND EYE TO HELPING OTHERS

Would you like to be able to support a charity, a nonprofit, or local homeless shelter, but feel you cannot afford to do so? People spend money on what they value. Naturally, we focus on taking care of our family and ourselves with food, shelter, and other necessities first. Then what is left at the end of the month may be able to go to someone else in need. If not, we sadly look away from being able to help.

I propose a little midyear review for the family budget. Start tracking your spending and figure out where your dollars and cents are going. Then examine these expenses against your values. Throw out those less-than-necessary items (lattes are a common culprit) and create a budget that includes what you *want* to include. Budget so you can give. If this is important to you, then you need to plan to do it; a budget can do just that for you. Put your mind and your heart at ease with being able to do something you have been longing to do.

There are all sorts of spenders in this world. Some are spontaneous and impulsive, some are planners, and some are givers. Every one of these

types of individuals will benefit from setting up a budget, but the giver will feel a sense of fulfillment from not turning a blind eye to giving.

Of course, there are many ways to give that are not monetary. Twice a year, when my daughters were small, we would go through all their clothes. Setting up three piles, we would sort them into a keep pile, give-away pile, and for those that were just plain worn out, the throw-away pile. This not only helped us clean out their closets but provided an opportunity to learn the art of giving.

My oldest daughter now volunteers for an organization that provides snack packs for children in elementary schools who may not have enough food to eat over the weekend. Every Friday, a teacher discreetly slips the snack pack into the students' bookbags.

It is hard to imagine the immense needs in any community, and it is easy to turn a blind eye to them. Contact your local chamber of commerce, city council, or your own employer to ask about local nonprofit causes that need support. Involve the entire family. It will be an experience of giving that you will not regret.

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