



# Top Reasons Why Volunteers Leave

## 12. **Burn Out** – Asking volunteers to do too much.

*This could be as simple as a volunteer taking on a case with 3 or more siblings not placed in the same foster home or city. In this situation, consider a buddy/ partner. **To avoid burnout, ease volunteers into their role and provide lots of support in the beginning.***

11. **Cool Out** – *This is the opposite of asking volunteer to do too much too fast: not asking them to do anything at all. For some volunteers this is the #1 reason for leaving - no one invited me to the workshop, conference, no one told me they needed me, etc. **Don't be timid about asking, and don't lose track of people.** Be especially careful to touch base with volunteers who miss meetings, trainings, appreciation events, etc., so the lack of a role is not the reason to miss the next one as well.*

10. **Keep Out** – *The “old-timers” inevitably gravitate to each other at gatherings, especially when they have been through tough times together, or when they have to work to transact or gossip to transmit. This leaves newcomers sitting painfully alone, watching the inner circle and pondering the invisible “Keep Out” signs we didn't mean to post. You can't stop the formation of cliques, and you can't stop wanting time with your friends. But **you can consciously reach out to newcomers. In larger groups you can institutionalize a buddy system. Pair each newcomer with another newcomer (to compare notes with) and with an old-timer to go to for basic information.***

9. **Pull Out** – *People are more likely to participate when the extent of their participation is safely under their control. Organizational commitments are like personal commitments in this way: no one likes to feel trapped, so the sense that a person is clutching desperately provokes a strong impulse to escape while there is still time. Part of the solution is to project **desire** but not **desperation. The rest is to allow the volunteer to control the commitment;** when a volunteer sets explicit limits (“I don't want a teenager”), respect them.*

8. **Can't Win** – *Nothing scares volunteers more than the sense of futility - either feeling that the work is doomed to defeat or the feeling that goals are so unclear that defeat and victory hardly apply. So instead, help build the sense of efficacy, a sense that goals are worth achieving, that the group can achieve them and that the volunteer is contributing significantly to their achievement. **This means defining explicit short-term objectives as well as the long-term vision, and it means making a fuss each time an objective is achieved.***

7. **Can't Lose** – *In this situation, working for a sure thing strikes people as just pointless as working for the futile longshot. Be especially alert for the anticlimax that follows a victory. **Yes, you want to celebrate the success and be sure to connect it in advance to the next step, and the next step after, so the pause to celebrate is always following by a reason to keep working.***

6. **No Growth** – *Alienated labor is bad enough when you are paid for it. It is intolerable when you are not. Volunteer work should be interesting; it should offer variety; change, a chance for personal growth. Make it fun where you can, and alternate it with more interesting work, like more training, serving on a committee (Legislative Advocacy Teams (LATs), Recruitment & Retention). Maybe some volunteers are*

okay with the boredom or routine but most volunteers want to grow. Although they may not complain (until they quit) most expect the chance to grow. **Look around for the volunteers who may be in a “no grow rut”, and offer them a spicy new challenge.**

5. **No Appreciation** – Volunteers don’t just enjoy being appreciated. **They need it** and without it they tend to lose faith in the value of what they are doing and **they deserve it**. The most obvious is “Thank You,” and the one far most neglected is “Please”. **Perhaps the most crucial piece of appreciation is meticulous attention to logistics: returning phone calls, answering notes, passing along information, scheduling meetings at times when volunteers can make.**

4. **External Opposition** – If family or friends are opposed to a volunteer’s volunteering, odds you are eventually going to lose the volunteer. The obvious solution is to avoid external opposition in the first place. Family and friends are in a real sense contributing some of their time with the volunteer; find ways and occasions to thank them. Better still, lessen the contribution by involving them directly. Even family members who do not want to volunteer themselves may still want to meet the people and get a sense of what goes on (invite to court, tour of the office, orientation, CASA Café, etc.). Also think about the external opposition that rises out of skepticism about the cause rather than the resentment of the competition. **Involvement is the best way to cope with this, too and the second is making sure volunteers bring home a steady stream of ammunition demonstrating the wisdom and effectiveness of the work of CASA.**

3. **Internal Conflict** – Personality conflicts, tensions and even quarrels may be acceptable at home or at a paying job, but not at a volunteer job. Part of the problem is imagining people who share the values to help a child are always going to like each other. Part of the solution is accepting that we may not like each other. Once the conflict is acknowledged, the rest of the solution depends on the style of your organization. Some may mediate the battle, some encourage the battlers to duke it out, some urge them to make up, and some reorganize the work so they won’t have to deal with each other so much. **This is something you will have to determine for your program, how best to handle.**

2. **Policy Disagreement** – Sometimes, the conflict is genuinely over policies rather than personalities. A consensus decision-making process will help here. Though it is longer, it leads to better decisions and unlike voting, it doesn’t produce the disgruntled “few”. **It is crucial to listen to the volunteers on the losing side.** Volunteers who quit over policy disagreement almost always report that their position was not understood by the majority. If you can summarize the disgruntled volunteer’s viewpoint accurately and respectfully, more likely they will accept the decision. A consequence is that the volunteers who weren’t present when a decision was made are the ones most likely to see it as grounds for quitting, so try to make key decisions when the dissidents are there to express their opposition.

1. **Not enough fun** – It stopped being fun.



## What Motivates You Worksheet

Motivational styles affect behavior, outlook on life, the roles a person would like to play, how they prefer to be recognized and how they work with others. These are guides to understanding others. Although a person may respond differently in a variety of situations, certain tendencies may be prevalent. These can provide some insight into why a person acts or responds as they do. Here are some general tendencies:

Types Of Motivation	Personal Characteristics	Person Spends Time Thinking About	What Charges The Person's Battery?
Achievement			
Affiliation			
Power			