
THIS IS YOUR BRAIN ON VOLUNTEERING.

Warning: It's addictive.



1

A REVIEW OF THE FIRST PRINCIPLES

FIRST PRINCIPLE #1 NUEROPLASTICITY

The question...

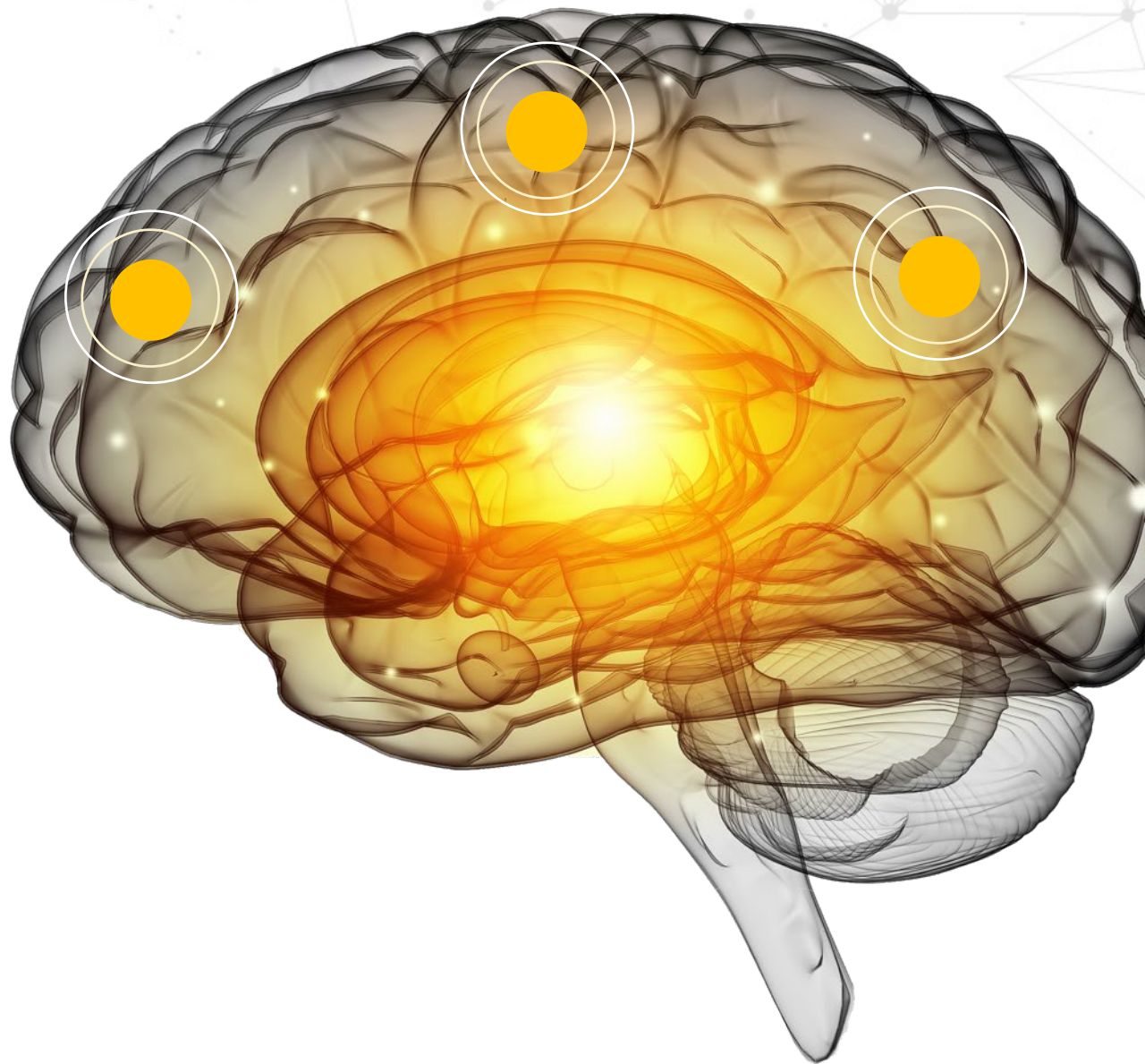
**Why do we
help?**



The Brain's Reward System



The Pain Matrix



Where there
are **in**
groups, there
are **out**
groups.



The dark side of empathy: “in groups” versus “out groups”

Inclusion

Empathy motivates us to protect and prioritize our blood ties and those with whom we identify. We want to avert destruction and avoid pain for our “in groups” because we experience their pain as if it were our own.

vs.

Exclusion

Because we have “in groups”, we also have “out groups”. The less experience we have with another group, the less we identify with them. If the worst comes to the worst, we protect “in groups” and objectify “out groups”.



Neuroplasticity

The solution is
in **rewiring**
the brain

How the brain **changes**



Imagine you're walking on a paved path on a college campus...

ALERT.

ORIENT.

ACT.

New experiences can change preconscious reactions and shift implicit biases.



Dr. Lisa Landowid
@rockyscientist

FIRST PRINCIPLE #2

TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACH



Transactional vs. **Transformative**

- **Psychological** – how I perceive myself in the world
- **Convictional** – What I believe to be true about the world
- **Behavioral** – How I act in the world



TRANSACTIONAL VOLUNTEERING

The focus is the task.

Volunteering is a resource to do something good and “make a difference.”

Events are unlikely to turn into long-term relationships with the nonprofit.

Activities are unlikely to change lives of the participants.

TRANSFORMATIVE VOLUNTEERING

The focus is people.

Volunteering is a means to personal growth through prosocial behavior.

Events are more likely to encourage repeat participation with the nonprofit

Activities have potential to shift how participants think, behave, act, how you see the world and how you live.

FRAME THE EXPERIENCE

The **Keystone Behaviors** are three simple behaviors used to frame the volunteer experience in order create space for **transformation**.



THE BRIEF

The Proximity Effect



THE CHECK-IN

Meet people at their highest level of contribution



THE DEBRIEF

Critical Reflection

WHAT IS TRANSFORMATION?

Transformation
requires a trigger

that forces us to ask,
“Who am I in light of this
new reality?”

**A disorienting
dilemma**

occurs any time you have
an experience that
doesn't fit your
expectations.

A **Brief** that connects volunteers to the meaning behind their tasks does **three things**:

1

Challenges
assumptions

Frame a *disorienting dilemma* about the issue or cause for which you are volunteering.

2

Communicates
task significance

Explain who the task is for, but more importantly, why it matters.

3

Creates **proximity to the beneficiary**

Talk about a real person and their real story. Invite volunteers to imagine what it would be like to live as this person.

When conducting a Debrief, ask **two key questions**:

1

What did you
experience?

2

Was it what you
expected?

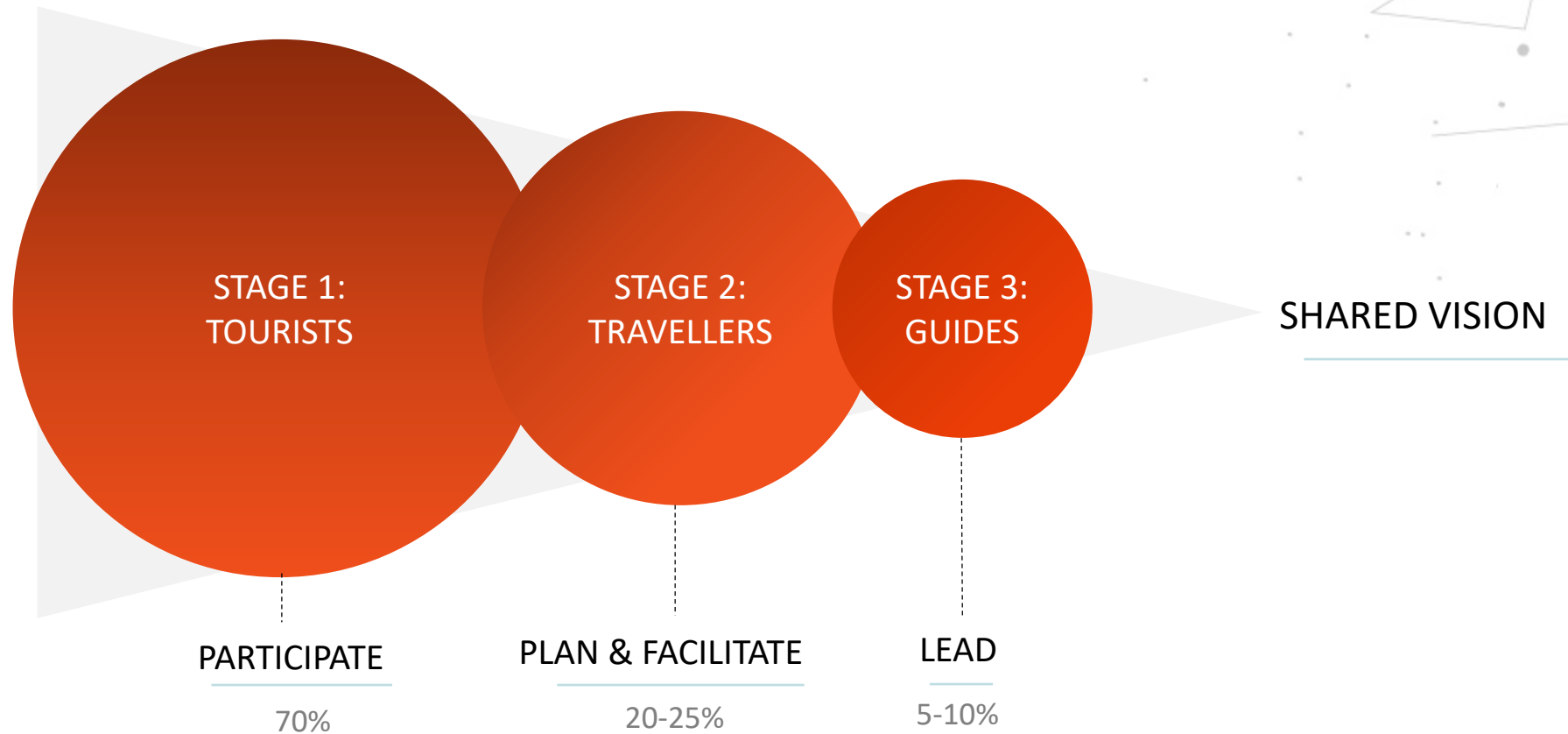
Critical reflection triggers the **sensemaking process**,
which enables us to bring meaning to our experiences.

FIRST PRINCIPLE #3

THE THREE STAGES

THE JOURNEY OF THE VOLUNTEER

Empowering Guides to lead, Travellers to plan and facilitate events, and Tourists to simply participate in a well-planned experience enables employees to move together toward the company's shared social impact mission and vision.



Stap 3

Zo organiseer je vrijwilligersactiviteiten



DE VRIJWILLIGERSREIS

Toerist - Reiziger - Gids



Fase 1: Toeristen

deelnemers die voor het eerst meedoen

Ongeveer **70%** van de medewerkers zit in deze toeristenfase. Vaak zijn het medewerkers die voor de eerste keer vrijwilligerswerk doen, ze 'willen gewoon plezier' hebben. Ze zijn op onderzoek uit, hebben veel vragen, zijn nieuwsgierig en proberen het een keer uit. Als deze eerste ervaring positief is, komen ze nog een keer terug. De uitdaging is om hen 'verliefd' te laten worden op vrijwilligerswerk.



Fase 3: Gidsen

volunteer leaders met veel ervaring

Deze groep ambassadeurs is goed voor **5-10%** van de medewerkers. Als je weet waarnaar je moet zoeken, kun je deze mensen snel identificeren. Zij zijn de organisatoren en de 'do-gooders'. Ze komen ruim voordat de activiteit begint, ze blijven laat, ze regelen alle benodigdheden, nodigen hun hele afdeling of team uit om te komen en praten constant over waarom vrijwilligerswerk zo belangrijk is. Gidsen zijn intrinsiek gemotiveerd. Ze snappen het. En ze willen dat iedereen net zo enthousiast is als zijzelf.

Fase 2: Reizigers

vrijwilligers met een beetje ervaring

Reizigers vormen ongeveer **25%** van de medewerkers. In deze ontdekkingsfase vinden reizigers hun intrinsieke motivatie voor vrijwilligerswerk. Ze hebben specifieke vragen over 'waarom' en 'hoe'. Wanneer ze een gevoel van verbondenheid gaan voelen, gaan ze door en komen terug. Ze zijn op weg om de toekomstige gidsen te worden.



Stap 3

Zo organiseer je vrijwilligersactiviteiten

DE VRIJWILLIGERSREIS

Toerist - Reiziger



Fase 1: Toeristen

deelnemers die voor het eerst meedoen

Ongeveer **70%** van de medewerkers zit in deze toeristenfase. Vaak zijn het medewerkers die voor de eerste keer vrijwilligerswerk doen, ze 'willen gewoon plezier' hebben. Ze zijn op onderzoek uit, hebben veel vragen, zijn nieuwsgierig en proberen het een keer uit. Als deze eerste ervaring positief is, komen ze nog een keer terug. De uitdaging is om hen 'verliefd' te laten worden op vrijwilligerswerk.

Fase 2: Reizigers

vrijwilligers met een beetje ervaring

Reizigers vormen ongeveer **25%** van de medewerkers. In deze ontdekkingsfase vinden reizigers hun intrinsieke motivatie voor vrijwilligerswerk. Ze hebben specifieke vragen over 'waarom' en 'hoe'. Wanneer ze een gevoel van verbondenheid gaan voelen, gaan ze door en komen terug. Ze zijn op weg om de toekomstige gidsen te worden.

25%

RIJWILLIGERSREIS

Toerist - Reiziger - Gids

Fase 1: Toeristen

deelnemers die voor het eerst meedoen

Ongeveer **70%** van de medewerkers zit in deze toeristenfase. Vaak zijn het medewerkers die voor de eerste keer vrijwilligerswerk doen, ze 'willen gewoon plezier' hebben. Ze zijn op onderzoek uit, hebben veel vragen, zijn nieuwsgierig en proberen het een keer uit. Als deze eerste ervaring positief is, komen ze nog een keer terug. De uitdaging is om hen 'verliefd' te laten worden op vrijwilligerswerk.

70%

Fase 2: Reizigers

vrijwilligers met een beetje ervaring

Reizigers vormen ongeveer **25%** van de medewerkers. In deze ontdekkingsfase vinden reizigers hun intrinsieke motivatie voor vrijwilligerswerk. Ze hebben specifieke vragen over 'waarom' en 'hoe'. Wanneer ze een gevoel van verbondenheid gaan voelen, gaan ze door en komen terug. Ze zijn op weg om de toekomstige gidsen te worden.

25%



Fase 3: Gidsen

volunteer leaders met veel ervaring





Reizigers vormen ongeveer **25%** van de medewerkers. In deze ontdekkingsfase vinden reizigers hun intrinsieke motivatie voor vrijwilligerswerk. Ze hebben specifieke vragen over 'waarom' en 'hoe'. Wanneer ze een gevoel van verbondenheid gaan voelen, gaan ze door en komen terug. Ze zijn op weg om de toekomstige gidsen te worden.

Fase 2: Reizigers

vrijwilligers met een beetje ervaring



25%



5-10%

Fase 3: Gidsen

volunteer leaders met veel ervaring

Deze groep ambassadeurs is goed voor **5-10 %** van de medewerkers. Als je weet waarnaar je moet zoeken, kun je deze mensen snel identificeren. Zij zijn de organisatoren en de 'do-gooders'. Ze komen ruim voordat de activiteit begint, ze blijven laat, ze regelen alle benodigdheden, nodigen hun hele afdeling of team uit om te komen en praten constant over waarom vrijwilligerswerk zo belangrijk is. Gidsen zijn intrinsiek gemotiveerd. Ze snappen het. En ze willen dat iedereen net zo enthousiast is als zichzelf.

Stap 3

Zo organiseer je vrijwilligersactiviteiten



DE VRIJWILLIGERSREIS

Toerist - Reiziger - Gids



Fase 1: Toeristen

deelnemers die voor het eerst meedoen

Ongeveer 70% van de medewerkers zit in deze toeristenfase. Vaak zijn het medewerkers die voor de eerste keer vrijwilligerswerk doen, ze 'willen gewoon plezier' hebben. Ze zijn op onderzoek uit, hebben veel vragen, zijn nieuwsgierig en proberen het een keer uit. Als deze eerste ervaring positief is, komen ze nog een keer terug. De uitdaging is om hen 'verliefd' te laten worden op vrijwilligerswerk.



Fase 3: Gidsen

volunteer leaders met veel ervaring

Deze groep ambassadeurs is goed voor 5-10% van de medewerkers. Als je weet waarnaar je moet zoeken, kun je deze mensen snel identificeren. Zij zijn de organisatoren en de 'do-gooders'. Ze komen ruim voordat de activiteit begint, ze blijven laat, ze regelen alle benodigdheden, nodigen hun hele afdeling of team uit om te komen en praten constant over waarom vrijwilligerswerk zo belangrijk is. Gidsen zijn intrinsiek gemotiveerd. Ze snappen het. En ze willen dat iedereen net zo enthousiast is als zijzelf.

Fase 2: Reizigers

vrijwilligers met een beetje ervaring

Reizigers vormen ongeveer 25% van de medewerkers. In deze ontdekkingsfase vinden reizigers hun intrinsieke motivatie voor vrijwilligerswerk. Ze hebben specifieke vragen over 'waarom' en 'hoe'. Wanneer ze een gevoel van verbondenheid gaan voelen, gaan ze door en komen terug. Ze zijn op weg om de toekomstige gidsen te worden.



THREE STAGES IN THE JOURNEY OF A VOLUNTEER

Stage 1: Tourist

“Casual Curiosity”

- New or infrequent volunteer
- Competing priorities
- Interested in straightforward and immediately rewarding tasks
- May participate again if they have a great experience

Stage 2: Traveler

“Meaningful Discovery”

- Ready to own experiences for themselves
- Ready to take on leadership responsibility and/or increased commitment
- May express tension, boredom, or eagerness

Stage 3: Guide

“Intentional Alignment”

- Trusted to run activities when needed
- Naturally able to help others find their way at events
- Understand that while they help, they also benefit from volunteering

2

KEYSTONE BEHAVIOURS FOR TRANSFORMATIVE EXPERIENCES

KEYSTONE BEHAVIOR #1: THE BRIEF

The **Keystone Behaviors** are three simple behaviors used to frame the volunteer experience in order create space for **transformation**.

The three Keystone Behaviors are:



THE BRIEF



GUIDING
VOLUNTEER
EXPERIENCES

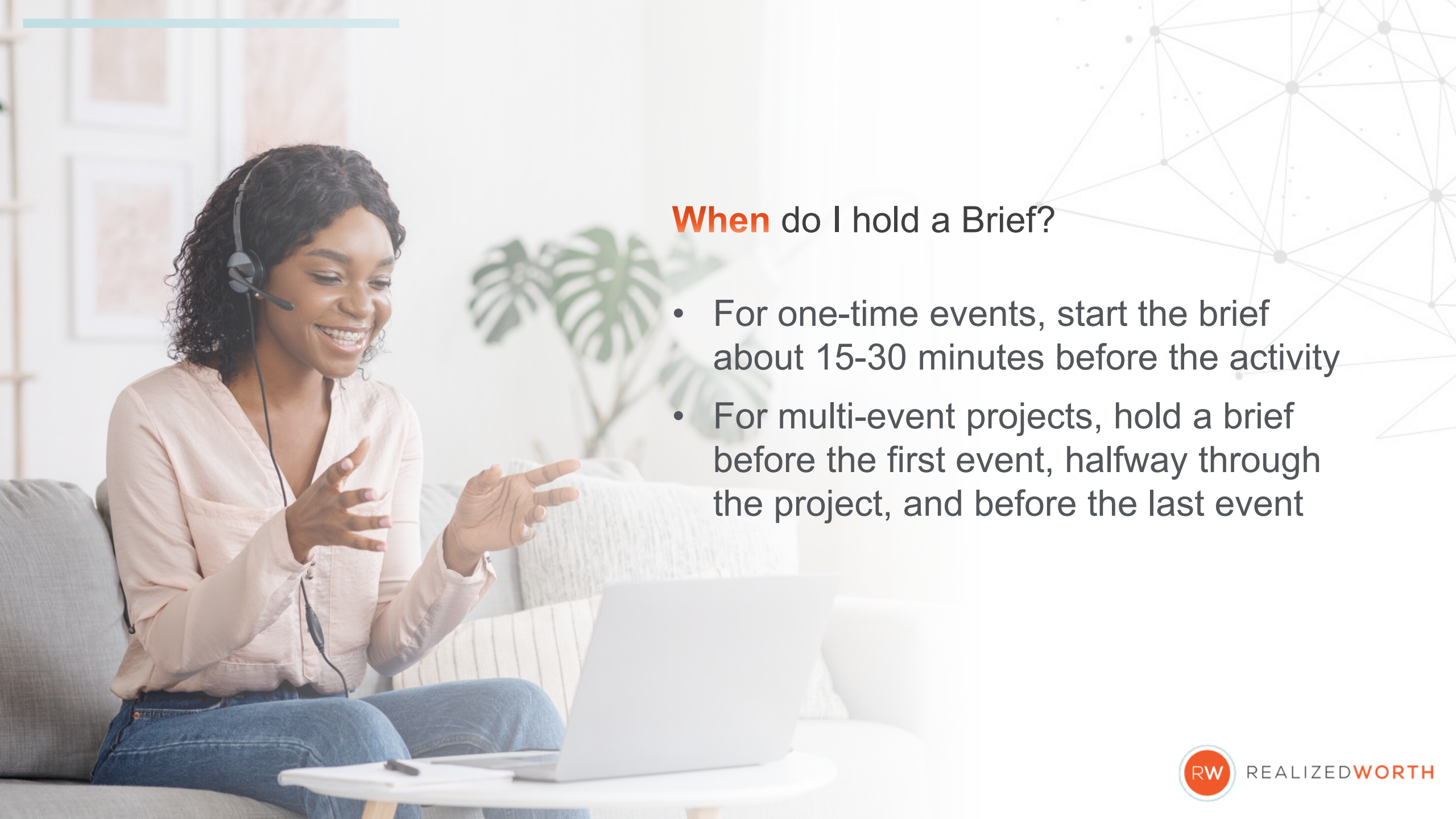


THE DEBRIEF



The **purpose** of the Brief is:

- To help participants consider the real meaning behind the work they are about to complete
- To shift the focus of the event from task efficiency to who the task is for and how it benefits them



When do I hold a Brief?

- For one-time events, start the brief about 15-30 minutes before the activity
- For multi-event projects, hold a brief before the first event, halfway through the project, and before the last event

Storytelling is an important part of the Brief and can be done by:

NONPROFIT
PARTNER

VOLUNTEER
LEADER (YOU)

Remember: The story told during the Brief helps volunteers **connect meaning** to their tasks.

A Brief that connects volunteers to the meaning behind their tasks does **three things**:

1

Challenges
assumption

Introduce a **S** *disorienting dilemma* about the issue or cause for which you are volunteering.

2

Communicates
task significance

Explain who the task is for, but more importantly, why it matters.

3

Creates **proximity to the beneficiary**

Talk about an individual. Invite volunteers to imagine what it would be like to live as this person.

However you choose to conduct the Brief, just **remember**:

WHO

Talk about the people you are serving.

“What would it be like for me to be in this situation, affected by these issues, or a part of this community?”

WHAT

Talk about why it matters.

Tell your volunteer team something about the organization – the size of the cause or the impact of their work.

WHY

Connect it back to your company.

Remind your team why the event fits who you are as a company, and why it matters that you are there together.



KEYSTONE BEHAVIOR #2: GUIDING VOLUNTER EXPERIENCES

Volunteers have **different needs** and various levels of experience.

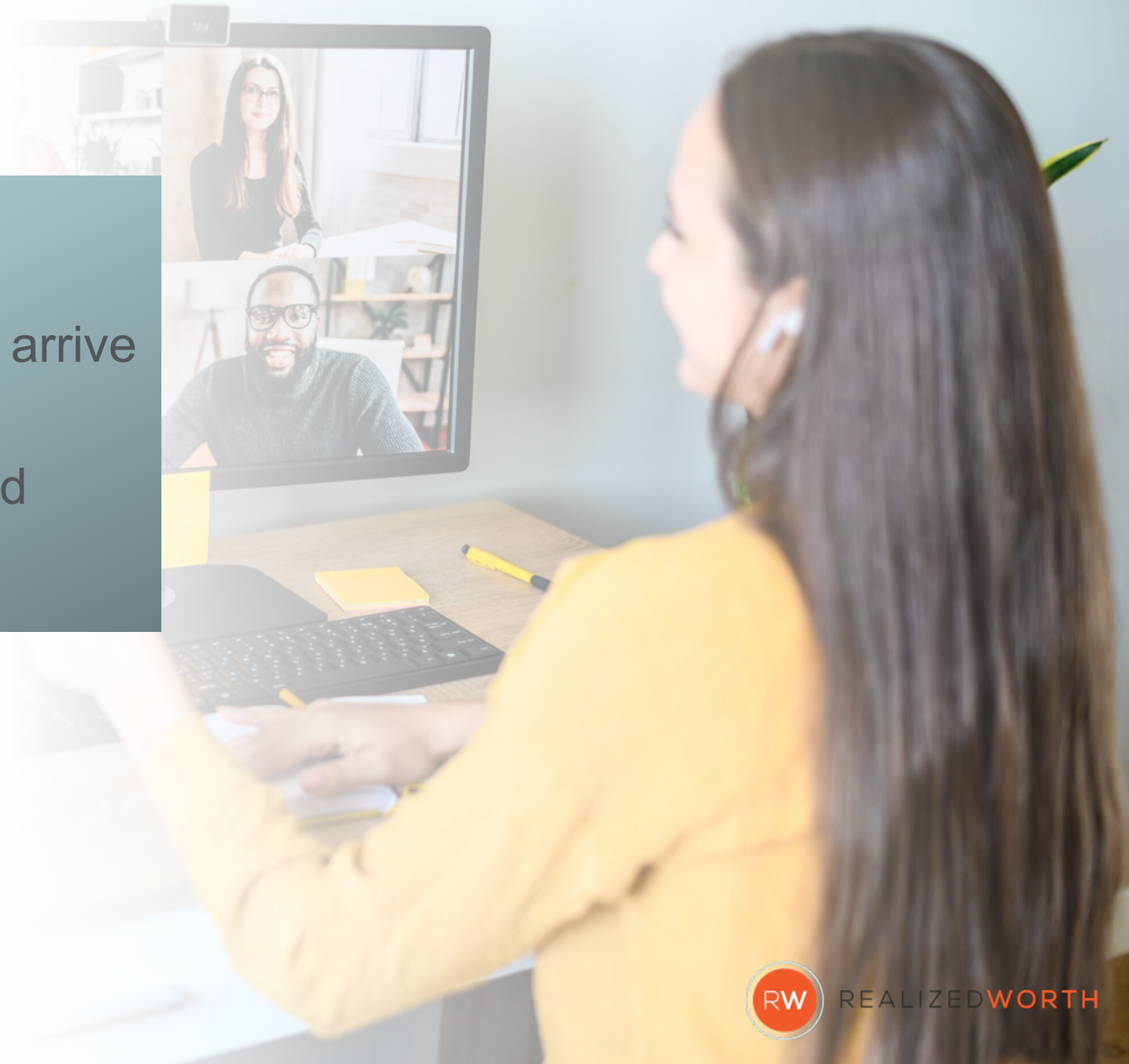
The **purpose** of guiding the experience of volunteers is:

- Being able to recognize where participants are in their volunteer journey in order to meet them at their highest level of contribution, which...
- Creates an environment where they have their needs met, have a great experience, and can keep developing as a volunteer



When do I guide the volunteer experience?

- Always – from when volunteers arrive to when they leave
- Constantly observe, assess, and decide what participants need



Being able to effectively guide the experience of volunteers is contingent on understanding the **Journey of the Volunteer:**

Stage 1: Tourist

“Casual Curiosity”

- New or infrequent volunteer
- Competing priorities
- Interested in straightforward and immediately rewarding tasks
- May participate again if they have a great experience

Stage 2: Traveler

“Meaningful Discovery”

- Ready to own experiences for themselves
- Ready to take on leadership responsibility and/or increased commitment
- May express tension, boredom, or eagerness

Stage 3: Guide

“Intentional Alignment”

- Trusted to run activities when needed
- Naturally able to help others find their way at events
- Understand that while they help, they also benefit from volunteering

As you observe volunteers and assess where they are in their journey, here are some ways to **meet them where they are**:

Stage 1: Tourist

- Assign specific, straightforward tasks
- Make sure they know who to go to for help and what to expect
- Check in regularly
- Ask for lower levels of commitment
- Introduce them to others

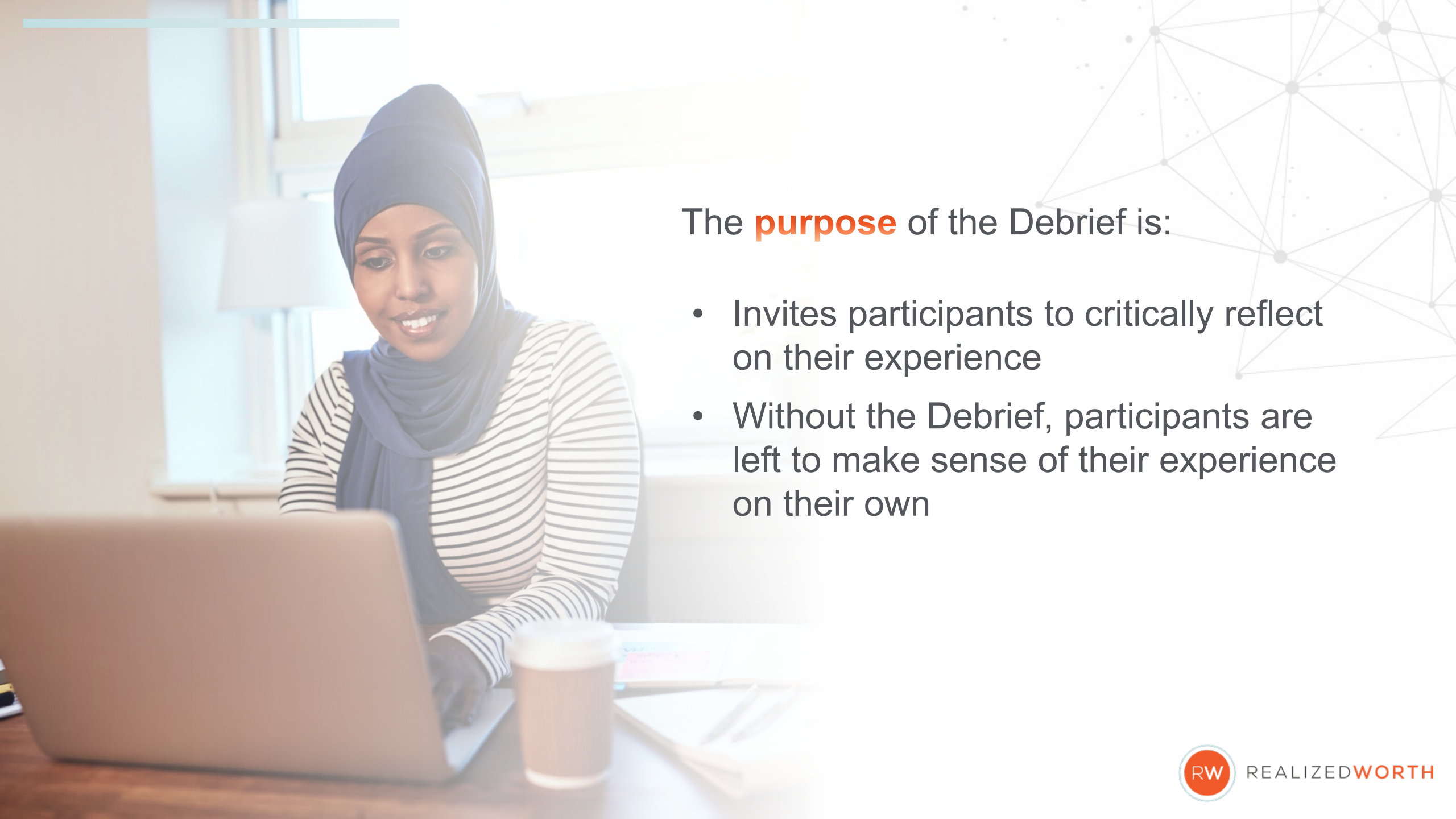
Stage 2: Traveler

- Assign higher levels of responsibility and delegate tasks
- Empower them to check in with other volunteers
- Encourage learning opportunities
- Connect them to the nonprofit to learn more about the organization
- Ask them to come to the next event

Stage 3: Guide

- Collaborate on designing events
- Empower to connect with nonprofits and lead events
- Train them to give the brief and debrief
- Treat volunteering as a leadership development opportunity
- Empower and amplify their voices

KEYSTONE BEHAVIOR #3: THE DEBRIEF



The **purpose** of the Debrief is:

- Invites participants to critically reflect on their experience
- Without the Debrief, participants are left to make sense of their experience on their own



When do I hold a Debrief?

- Hold a Debrief after every event (including each event in a multi-event project); 15 minutes before the event concludes or after the event
- Get everyone to turn on their videos and invite a reflection

What did you
experience?

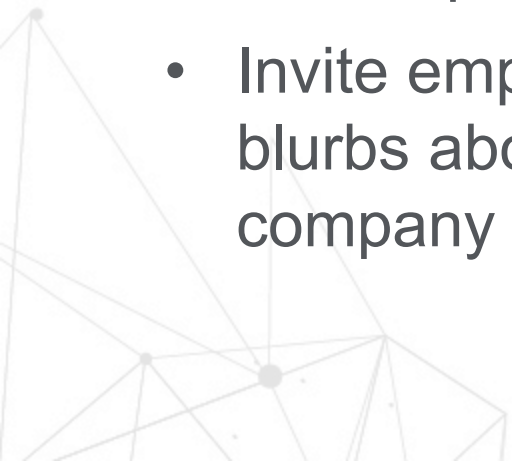
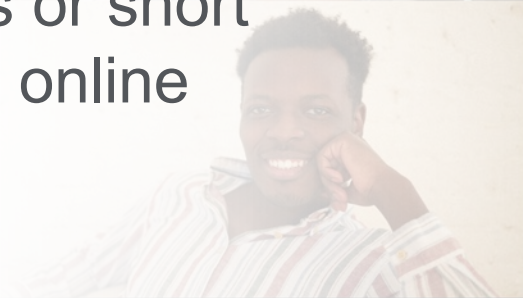
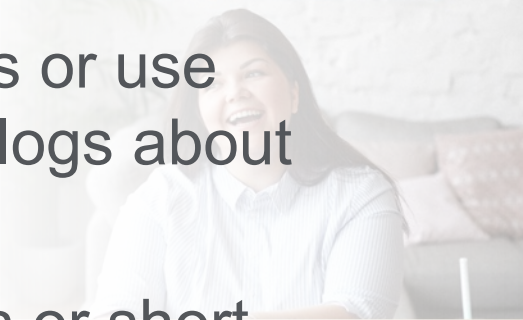
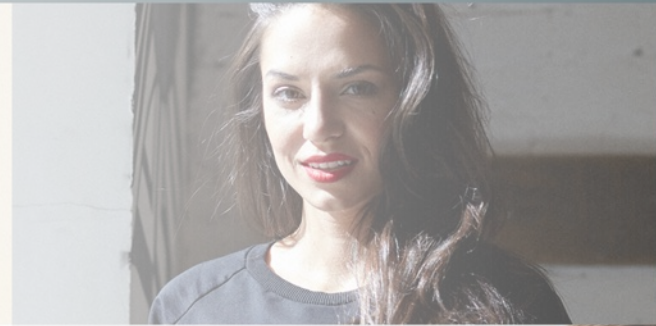
Was it what you
expected?

This is the point where people begin
to **make sense** of what they've
learned about themselves, which
leads to **changes in heart and
behavior.**



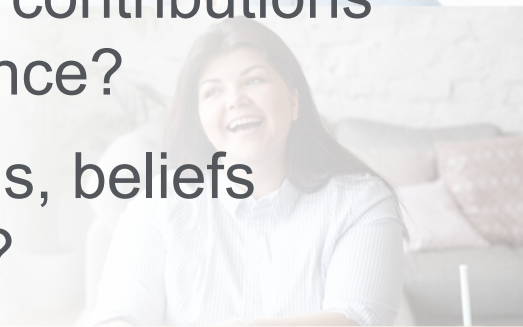
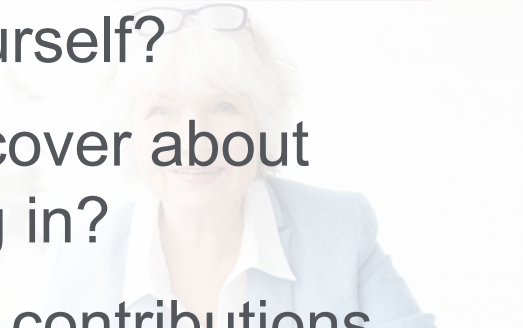
Strategies for creating virtual space for **safe**
and intentional for critical reflection:

- Hold casual “roundtable” video calls
- For multi-event projects, host a virtual “Lunch & Learn” after the events are complete
- Have volunteers write short blogs or use social media to send out micro-blogs about their experiences
- Invite employees to share quotes or short blurbs about their experiences in online company communities



Basic questions you can ask as part of a **roundtable discussion**:

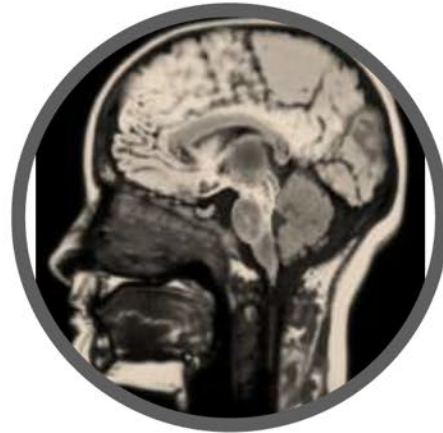
- Did you learn anything about yourself?
- What kinds of things did you discover about the community you were working in?
- What do you think your personal contributions were to the volunteering experience?
- Have any of your values, opinions, beliefs been influenced by volunteering?
- What is your biggest takeaway?
- How have you been challenged?
- What changes are you considering for yourself?



EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CYCLES

- rational dialogue
- abstract conceptualization
- frontal integrative cortex analysis

- committed action
- active experimentation
- motor cortex action



- disorienting dilemma
- concrete experience
- sensory cortex stimuli

- critical reflection
- reflective observation
- temporal cortex reflection

Transformative Learning Cycle
(Mezirow, 1978/1991; Herbers, 1998)

Experiential Learning Cycle (Kolb, 1984)

Whole-Brained Learning Cycle (Zull, 2002)

3

EXPERIENCE DESIGN FOR CONTINUED ENGAGEMENT

THE QUESTIONS

1. What does it take to ***trigger the first*** volunteer experience?
3. What ***tactics will encourage volunteers*** to come back?
2. Why does it matter ***that volunteers return*** for repeat experiences?



Mindset Shift: **The real purpose of volunteering**

From Programs to Movements: Programmatic elements are important, but they are a stop on the way to something far more significant.

From Participation to Agency: Instilling a strong sense of agency in employees to make a difference is key to generating long-term, measurable impact.

From Helping to Belonging: When we focus on the change that takes place in the person helping as well as the person being helped, volunteers begin to see themselves as people who “belong” to the community, the issues, the people – rather than someone separate who “helps.”

The Big Question:

What is the true potential of your role?

You have an opportunity to meet volunteers where they are and facilitate volunteer experiences that make it possible for transformation to occur.

Participants may shift from:
First-time volunteer to long-term advocate.

Skeptical bystander to willing participant.

Individuals who make decisions based on empathy and compassion.

ABOUT REALIZED WORTH

Since 2008, Realized Worth has offered strategic consulting services to some of the biggest brands in the world. We help companies successfully create or evolve their employee volunteer strategy through a comprehensive design, transition and implementation process that results in a scalable, robust employee program. It's our mission to bring meaning to action through our Transformative Volunteering approach, which teaches employees how to practice behaviours that create engaging, effective and impactful volunteer projects for their peers.

With a wide range of over 100 clients including Apple, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, SAP, Altria, Deloitte, Microsoft, Abbott Labs, McDonald's, AstraZeneca, and others, Realized Worth's specialized expertise is uniquely suited for the corporation seeking meaningful impact through its employee volunteer programs.

The co-founders of Realized Worth, Chris Jarvis and Angela Parker, are based in Baltimore, Maryland. The extended team is based throughout the US and Canada. Realized Worth Canada is based in Halifax, Nova Scotia.



www.realizedworth.com



facebook.com/RealizedWorth



[@RealizedWorth](https://twitter.com/RealizedWorth)



linkedin.com/company/Realized-Worth