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VOLUNTEER MOM PERSONAS THAT CAN LEAD TO UNPAID SELF-ACTUALIZATION ACCORDING TO MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

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Please note: Needs Level 1: Basic Biological Needs and Level 2: Safety Needs are obviously too basic to be achieved through volunteering.

1. The Pusher

Germans love company and so does misery. Volunteering alone is sooo boring and what first grader is going to compliment you on your latest Evereve leggings? Time to recruit your friends! You have a knack for describing volunteer roles as easy, rewarding, flexible, and TOTALLY fun! I mean, would you be wiping down the cafeteria tables on pancake-with-extra-syrup-Thursdays if it weren't completely awesome? If your friends complain you've tricked them into taking your previous crappy role that nearly destroyed you, remind them that their friendship means the world to you. *Level 3: Love & Belonging Needs*

2. The Gossip Genetrix

Your name is first on the sign-ups for all the volunteer openings that allow you access to teachers and administrators. You also love roles that give you a front row seat for watching other moms screw up. When you have secret information, you can share it or use it to blackmail at your leisure. And the more you know, the more you find out. *Level 3: Love & Belonging Needs*

3. Big-Idea Businesswoman

As a mom who gave up an impressive career to focus solely and intently on your kids, you have credentials that people need to know about. Never miss an opportunity to help teach the alphabet with the letters behind your hyphenated surname. And what better way to add LinkedIn skills than to lead some committees and delegate the mundane? Best of all, the thanks you receive makes up for all the years you were shat upon at work. Now is your chance to set your *own* unrealistic expectations and ulcer-causing deadlines and truly shine! *Level 4: Esteem Needs*

4. Perpetual Smiler

People wonder what kind of meds you're on and sometimes you honestly can't remember. All you know is you're never fully dressed without a smile and the world is a great place no matter what. All children are cherubs to you, even Dead Eyes Billy, whom you've forgiven for stabbing your kindergartener with his expertly sharpened pencil. Every day you volunteer for recess you're tearfully reminded of Thomas Merton's famous enlightened quote: "There is no way of telling people that they are all walking around shining like the sun." *Level 5: Self-Actualization Needs*

5. Martyr

Life is suffering. God smiles upon your sleep deprivation, Irish quintuplet production, and mastery of the dirty, thankless jobs that no other parent will perform. Go ahead and double-book your own schedule regularly. You are filled with the fire to evangelize to slacker parents by telling them all you do. If your husband complains he never sees you, guilt him into volunteering for a few weekly committees himself. Then ask him to hang your handmade cross-stitched crown of thorns plaque above your side of the bed—you know, the one that reads, "If the crown fits..." *Level 5: Self-Actualization Needs*



Illustration by Sven Barth (<http://razed.us/author/sven-barth/>)

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