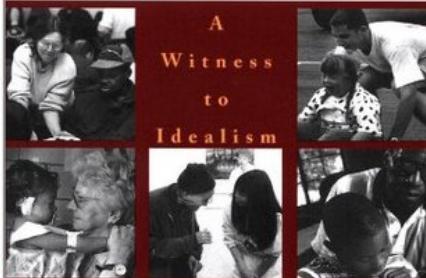


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"A moving and often inspiring account of how individuals try to be  
responsible for their world."  
—*The Washington Post*

# THE CALL OF SERVICE



A  
Witness  
to  
Idealism

*Robert Coles*

WINNER OF THE PULITZER PRIZE

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## The Call of Service

*Robert Coles*

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# The Call of Service

*Robert Coles*

## **The Call of Service** Robert Coles

In this book, Coles explores the concept of idealism and why it necessary to the individual and society.

## **The Call of Service Details**

Date : Published November 15th 1994 by Mariner Books (first published 1993)

ISBN : 9780395710845

Author : Robert Coles

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Genre : Nonfiction, Education, Social Issues, Activism, Philosophy, Academic, School

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## From Reader Review The Call of Service for online ebook

### **Robert says**

I'll post when finished

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### **Lynne says**

Should be mandatory ready for anyone involved in service work. Very thought-provoking reading.

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### **Emily Kelly says**

Robert Coles' The Call of Service is not only a book that should be read by every person involved in some kind of service but by every citizen of the world we live in today. In the novel, Robert Coles' explores the world of those who give their lives or just parts of their lives to service. Inspired by his own parents, Coles seeks to uncover the motivations of those that live for others. Through numerous interviews over many years as well as the relaying of his own experiences, Coles highlights some of the countless reasons why people serve others. The Call of Service discusses several types of services that yield countless satisfactions for the people who serve as well as for those whom they serve. Coles does not just bring us stories filled with positivity and hope, but he also shows his readers the not-so bright aspects of living a life of service, the hazards. The people in The Call to Service are human like the rest of us. They are humans who sometimes make mistakes and feel down about themselves and the world, but they are also humans who make a great deal of difference in the lives of others.

The Call of Service has the power to inspire a new generation of service as well as reignite the passions of those who already been involved with or still are involved in service. As a future teacher, this book has allowed me to contemplate joys and disappointments that I have yet to experience in my budding career. By reading The Call of Service, I feel that I more prepared to take on a life of service. One of the book's chapters is entitled "Young Idealism", and a young idealist is exactly what I am. I have yet to experience what Coles called "the burnout" or the weariness that can come along with giving yourself to others. The Call of Service allowed me to witness another's story and learn from how they overcame their own obstacles along the way. The Call of Service isn't only valuable to young idealists like me, but for those who have long lived a life of service as well. The stories and experiences can connect to those experiences of many others and tell them "you are not alone". I have already found myself connecting the experiences of others to my own. I can relive the laughter and learning that I have shared with a young person through another's experiences. The Call of Service serves to reignite passions for service. Robert Coles offers inspiration to those that have already lived a long life and wish to serve in their more experienced years. Coles shows these people that it is never too late to make a difference. Whether you are already serving your community or wish to do so, The Call of Service is the book to read again and again along your journey of making a difference through service.

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## **Tarah says**

If you work in social services, you should read this book. I headed off a lot of turmoil by reading this book right at the beginning of my career change.

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## **Elise Jensen says**

While this book talks primarily about volunteering, it's also really relevant for people in service vocations. Particularly when working with people generally considered disadvantaged. I think it's a very good guide for helping you examine your motives and attitudes about yourself as well as those you "help."

I was very sorry it happened to be a library book I was reading, had it been a book I bought, it would have been a good workout for my highlighters.

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## **Faith says**

So beautiful, practical, and inspiring. There's nothing like hearing real stories from real people about real lives. And then Coles is there to guide you through it all, to help you wrap your mind around these ideas, which difficult because are really such big ideas and such small ideas at the same time.

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## **Jen Manning says**

A look at the different reasons people feel they are called into a life of service. The benefits received and given by serving. An inspiring book for me!

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## **David says**

Review at my site

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## **Elizabeth says**

I found this book to be very insightful. Coles interviews a broad swath of volunteers and others who serve and comes away with great social and psychological analysis. For all who do service, have done service, or work with others to encourage service.

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## **Kara Merry says**

Wonderful to read and true

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### **Jill Warren says**

This is a must read. A colleague suggested it and I learned so much as did my students.

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### **Kates says**

For some time I have been thinking that I wanted to read a book about why people do service and in what forms. Here is a book that attempts to address it. I have many quotes that stuck out in my mind, although, I admit that many pages in the book either went over my head or just didn't connect with me. I DID get a pretty extensive reading list from the book I think!

"Idealism has many sources, and it must have its ups and downs in every life," - a function, of a person's commitments, state of mind, and family situation, not to mention all those accidental and incidental moments that influence and even give shape to the direction of one's moral energy.

Dorothy Day - "If we were going to forbid hypocrites to work here with us, there'd be no one to do the work, and no one to do the forbidding!"

Dr. King - "A big danger for us is the temptation to follow the [leadership of the] people we are opposing. They call us names, so we call them names. Our names may not be 'redneck' or 'cracker'; they may be names that have a sociological or psychological veneer to them, a gloss; but they are names, nonetheless - 'ignorant', or 'brainwashed', or 'duped', or 'hysterical' or 'poor-white' or 'consumed by hate'."

"You should remind yourself that sometimes you have to rev yourself up if you're headed toward a low period. Talk to yourself, that's what I do. I say, Hey, you, shape up and stop letting your feet work so slow, and your eyes begin to droop. Quicken your step and look at people with your eyes as wide open as possible, and be glad you're there with them, and say to yourself, If you can just help one person out - then you've done your job."

"We would do well to keep the wisdom of Shakespeare (and Tolstoy and George Eliot and other writers) in mind: their capacity to tolerate the paradoxical -indeed, to insist upon the ironies, ambiguities, and contradictions of life."

"...after many conversations with students who are troubled by the "advantages" that come to them as they do their work. One such advantage is the approval they get from others, including admissions committees. But they also see as a problematic "advantage" a kind of enlightenment that can accompany certain experiences."

"He's gone, that kid," Alex told me, "and here I am, with another story in the bank, another account of what I went through which I can tell to people, and write about - and be rewarded, maybe, for the effort with an A for doing two great jobs, first, being out there with the kid, and second, writing it all up."

"Her mind was telling her to stop, take stock, and go a bit easier on herself, lest she become more and more driven, self-preoccupied, inaccessible to family and friends, and, worst of all, smugly self-righteous."

"where do I want to stand in relation to the established order of things?"

"I feel as if I am from another planet, and worse, I feel glad that I'm apart from all of them"

"If you get involved with something that's outside the cultural or political mainstream, something that takes you away from your own community, then when you go back, when you return, you're likely to feel betwixt and between, neither here nor there."

"Enjoy yourself, over it will be hard for you to give of yourself to others!"

"I hope you don't get sentimental about the poor - or yourself as the one who's working with them!"

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### **Erin Payseur Oeth says**

This book came highly recommended, and it did not disappoint. In fact, it inspired the creation of an internship course for our community engagement project and provided a useful framework for the course - exploring the different types of service, different motivations, challenges and consequences of service, as well as looking at idealism across generations. It is a call to service as a way of life, beyond volunteerism or coursework, cultivating within us a call to give more and find more of ourselves in others. I look forward to reading more of Coles' books.

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