



**GET GOOD DONE**

**WE ARE WHAT  
WE REPEATEDLY DO.  
EXCELLENCE THEN,  
IS NOT AN ACT,  
BUT A HABIT.**

**ARISTOTLE**

## SETTING THE SCENE

The United States has a long history of volunteering. The Constitution of the United States allows for the voluntary formation of associations, thus allowing for volunteering. In 2014, volunteers in the United States gave 7.7 billion hours of their time, an amount of work valued at \$173 billion.<sup>1</sup> However, volunteering in America is on the decline of late. “Last year the volunteer rate was 25.4 percent, or 62.6 million people, compared with 29 percent of the population in 2003, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.”<sup>2</sup> One reason for this decline is the economy; as families (with children and mortgages and the many other expenses that families accrue) need to spend more time working, less time is left for community service.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the current volunteer rate is lowest among Millennials, or persons who reached young adulthood around the year 2000.<sup>3</sup> And yet, according to an Associated Press-GfK poll, Millennials believe “citizens have a ‘very important obligation’ to volunteer.”<sup>4</sup> Since Millennials, for the most part, don’t have children to feed or mortgages to pay, they are the most likely group to have time to increase their volunteering. In fact, it is in their best interest to volunteer, as “volunteers have higher odds of finding a job after being out of work than non-volunteers.”<sup>5</sup>

Why is it, then, that Millennials aren’t volunteering? Research shows that there are three main barriers to entry for most Millennial would-be volunteers. First, it isn’t always obvious how we can help, as organizations do a poor job of connecting with potential volunteers. Second, Millennials value variety (and ideally would volunteer for multiple causes) whereas organizations value consistency in their volunteer-base. Finally, volunteers often feel unimportant in the larger volunteer ecosystem.<sup>6</sup>

## RESEARCH

My thesis began with the recognition that there is a contradiction between what Millennials value and what they do when it comes to volunteering. As stated previously, although Millennials do not volunteer in the United States as much as other generations do, Millennials believe that “citizens have a ‘very important obligation’ to volunteer.”<sup>7</sup>

In addition to researching volunteering statistics and individual behaviors, I decided to take advantage of the fact that I, too, am a Millennial, and so I surveyed my peers. Results from a survey of ninety-seven Millennials that I know revealed that only 31% have volunteered in the past month. Though that’s higher than the national average of 21.7%, it’s still fairly low.<sup>8</sup> How can we fix this?

I asked myself, what do Millennials do, if not volunteer? Millennials are addicted to their cell-

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1 (Volunteering and Civic Engagement in the United States)

2 (Bernasek, 2014)

3 (Goldberg, 2014)

4 (Press, 2014)

5 (Volunteering and Civic Engagement in the United States)

6 (Pauley)

7 (Cass, 2014)

8 (Volunteering and Civic Engagement in the United States)

phones; the sight of Millennials walking with heads down and earbuds in is familiar to nearly all New Yorkers. (“with 80% sleeping with their cell phone next to the bed”).<sup>9</sup> Millennials engage in social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Millennials play games on their phones (casual gameplay is most popular with individuals 18-34).<sup>10</sup> Finally, Millennials engage in social media campaigns, such as the Ice Bucket Challenge, which raised \$100 million to battle ALS (a campaign championed by Millennials due to its digital presence).<sup>11</sup>

## FIRST PROTOTYPE

To begin prototyping, I asked myself, how can we leverage these four points of engagement (cellphones, social media, games, and social campaigns) to help Millennials do more good? First, I created an online platform for Millennials to share causes they care about. The platform would connect Millennials with organizations working on those causes. I received largely positive feedback and was able to get a number of participants (the platform had 126 unique visitors in December) despite the platform not being fully functional. However, this platform, while interesting, did not provide a reason for Millennials to make a habit out of social and civic engagement.

## BUILDING HABITS

The science behind habit formation is hotly debated, some saying it takes just twenty-one days to develop a new habit, others saying it is entirely dependent on the task. Surprisingly, programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous, famous for building new habits, aren’t based in science at all. Alcoholics Anonymous works “because it essentially is this big machine for changing the habits around alcohol consumption and giving people a **new routine** [emphasis added].”<sup>12</sup>

This research, as well as the feedback from my first prototype led me to the realization that Millennials need a system to encourage them to make a habit out of volunteering. They need a system that can motivate them to do good in their communities on a daily basis.

## GET GOOD DONE

For my second prototype, I designed an app, since millennials are glued to their cellphones. Get Good Done, a game with opportunities for social media engagement, is an app that encourages you to play well and do good by providing users with engaging acts of social good. Through this app, Millennials can volunteer daily in their communities and begin to make a habit out of doing good and doing it well.

Modeled after popular progress-tracking apps such as Weight Watchers and My Fitness Pal, Get Good Done challenges users with one good deed to complete each day. These deeds range from donating five personal belongings that you no longer need to a local homeless shelter to helping an elderly person cross the street. They are varying in scope and difficulty and aim to get players out and about in their communities. After completing a deed, users

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9 (US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2012)

10 (Mason, 2014)

11 (Kyker, 2014)

12 (Duhigg, 2012)

accrue karma points (naturally, the number of points correlates to the difficulty of the deed). Through the app, users can connect with friends and compare deeds completed and points earned.

## DEVELOPMENT

The actual designing of the app was extremely fun. I am a graphic designer by training and I've never had the chance to design an app before, so I took full advantage of this opportunity to learn a new element of design. I downloaded many, many game and tracking apps<sup>13</sup> to get a better sense of what works well and what doesn't. I focused heavily on the Weight Watchers app and My Fitness Pal app, for both of these apps are habit-forming apps with tremendous usership (upwards of 80 million users worldwide for each). I started toying with my own designs. I asked others what they liked most about their favorite apps and what they liked least.

I've developed what I believe is a calm, gender-neutral design that does not overwhelm users nor impose any stance upon any of the deeds. The style is clean and easy to read, which is particularly important given that it will be viewed on a small screen.

I created every screen of the app (a total of eleven different screens) and the intricate way in which the app strings together. Using Marvel<sup>14</sup>, a digital tool for creating dummy versions of apps with no back-end, I was able to create an interactive front-end version of the app to clarify that it works as planned.

In addition, I developed a list of 365 unique deeds for the app. After all, the app is nothing without the daily tasks for users to complete. Every day, a different one of these deeds will be presented to users as the deed of the day. These deeds are the challenge of the app, the task users are asked to complete in order to garner karma points, build better habits, and impact social change.

## TESTING AND FEEDBACK

The final, most important act of my process was the testing and iterating of the app itself. En lieu of walking individuals through the app one-by-one, I held five separate prototyping parties with a total of fifty-one unique Millennial test-users to test the app in larger groups. I invited friends and encouraged them to bring people I do not know. Over the course of these five sessions, I tested my app (in paper form with users flipping through pages of the various screens and annotating changes and comments) on fifty-one users, received thirty-seven suggestions, and made fourteen changes. Some of the changes were simple (adjusting a color or font size).

Others were more informative. One of my sessions was with the team from Cookshop Creative, a small NYC-based creative agency that has advised me from time to time through this thesis process. We discussed the concept of incentives, which naturally sparked a desire for

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<sup>13</sup> such as Weight Watchers, My Fitness Pal, Foursquare, Venmo, Candy Crush, Angry Birds, Yelp, and several banking apps such as Chase and Mint.

<sup>14</sup> [www.marvelapp.com](http://www.marvelapp.com)

me to research further. I learned that motives for people to act charitably can be divided into three categories: intrinsic motivation (the value of giving is all the motivation that a person needs), extrinsic motivation (there is a material reward or benefit associated with giving), and image motivation (when an individual is motivated by others' perceptions of his or herself).<sup>15</sup>

Since Get Good Done already addresses intrinsic motivation (the desire to do good) and image motivation (the ability to share your success on social media), I decided to integrate an extrinsic motivation component. To do so, I introduced the concept of corporate sponsorships. Sponsors can have month-long in-app ads and when a user successfully earns 100 karma points, the corporate sponsor of that month provides the user with a prize (such as a gift card). This provides users with a more tangible incentive to keep playing each day and provides sponsors with a chance to connect to Millennials. These corporate sponsorships, in addition to providing extrinsic motivation to users, creates financial sustainability for the app; these sponsorships will help cover the cost of running and maintaining the app as it grows.

## NEXT STEPS

Though Get Good Done isn't a live app just yet, I plan to continue my work and lock in some sponsors and investors. I have finalized two versions of a pitch deck, one for sponsors and one for investors, and have already begun to shop it around to various companies for potential sponsorship (including but not limited to Chipotle, Whole Foods, and the Manhattan JCC). I am confident in my ability to get this off the ground; I have a significant amount of fundraising and pitching experience (through my startup, Six Foods<sup>16</sup>, I raised \$100k through Kickstarter and pitch competitions alone).

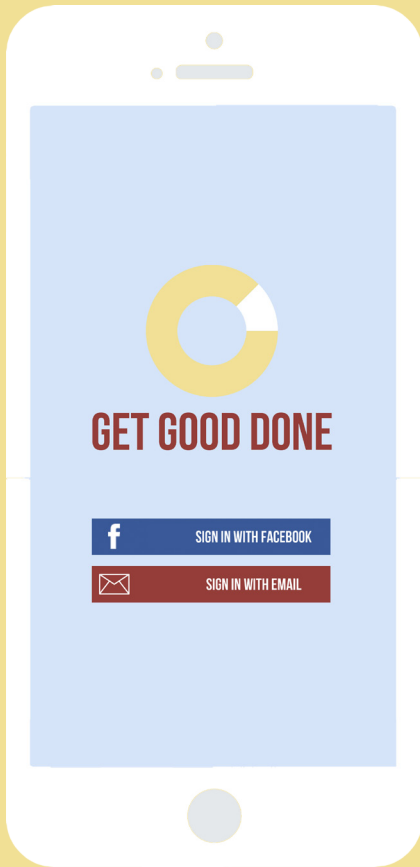
This year, Millennials will surpass Baby Boomers in size, with a projected number of 75.3 million.<sup>17</sup> If these Millennials donate half an hour of their time per week to volunteering for an entire year, Millennials can contribute \$44 million worth of services to society. Get Good Done can make this contribution to society possible, all while engaging Millennial users with deeds that will help them develop their own habits as social changers. That would make for a wonderful world.

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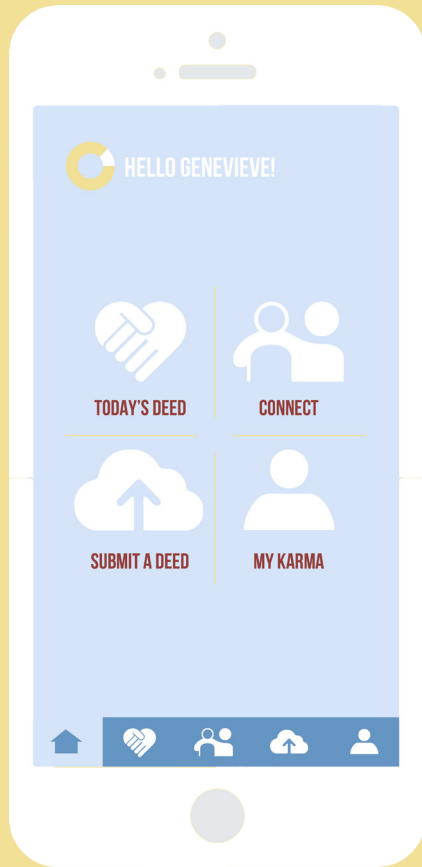
<sup>15</sup> (Dan Ariely, 2007)

<sup>16</sup> [www.sixfoods.com](http://www.sixfoods.com), <https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/sixfoods/six-foods-introducing-chirps-cricket-chips>

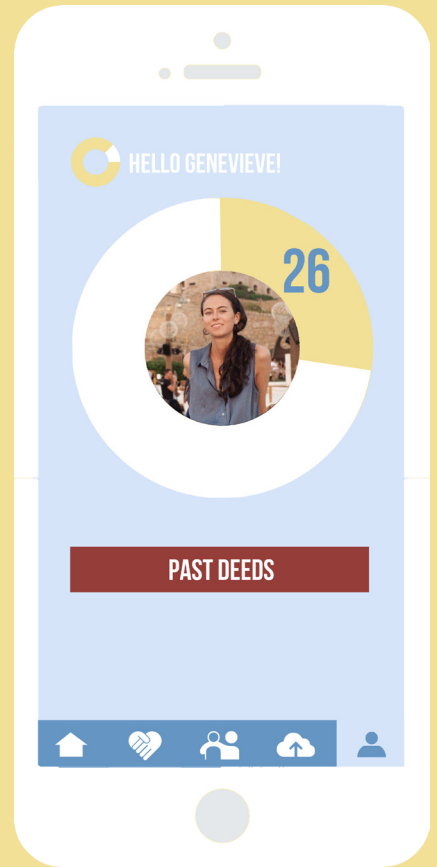
<sup>17</sup> (Fry, 2015)



**SPLASH PAGE**



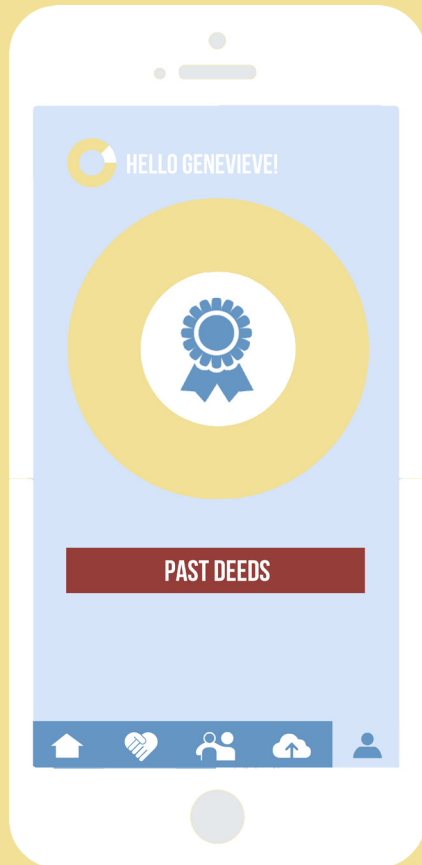
**HOMEPAGE**



**PLAYER'S PAGE**



**TODAY'S DEED**



**100 KARMA POINTS!**



**REWARD**

## A SAMPLING OF DEEDS.

- help an elderly person cross the street
- buy a homeless person a meal
- give up your seat on the subway to someone who needs it more
- walk instead of taking a taxi
- volunteer at a soup kitchen
- pick up litter and throw it out
- hold the door for the person behind you entering a store
- anonymously leave a positive message for a friend
- leave your extra change in a vending machine for someone else to use
- go a day without complaining.
- have a conversation with a homeless man or woman.
- meatless Mondays
- if you're in line at the grocery store with a full cart, let the person behind you who only has 5-10 items go in front of you.
- help someone who looks lost with directions.
- write a letter or e-mail to a good friend or family member to let them know how much you value them.
- smile at everyone you pass on the street
- pass on your books after you've read them for someone else to enjoy. take them to a local shelter or give them to friends.
- try controlling your temper, at least for a day
- seek out people who have a hard time socializing
- tape popcorn to redbox for movie night
- hold that door/elevator!
- thank the mailman
- send a thank- you to someone in the military. it's simple and free here: [letssaythanks.com](http://letssaythanks.com)
- leave an inspirational message in a public place.
- drop off a book to someone who you think might like it
- put a tip in a tip jar somewhere
- leave a nice comment on someone's picture or status on facebook or instagram
- talk to the cashier at the store about their day
- introduce yourself to neighbors and bring baked goods or sweets.
- buy an extra cup of coffee in the morning and give to a co-worker.
- wash your roommate's dishes for them.
- sit with someone who is eating alone.
- recommend your favorite restaurant to a tourist.
- offer someone a piece of gum.
- send a photo in a frame to your parents (or grandparents).
- sign up to be an organ donor.
- give an umbrella to a homeless person.
- encourage someone who is working hard at the gym.
- take a shorter shower to conserve water.
- let your friend vent and listen to her problems.
- tell a street performer how amazing he or she is.
- donate books to the local library or bookstore.
- write a letter to your former schoolteachers and tell them how much they influenced you.
- be proud of all your accomplishments.
- hug someone you love like you mean it.
- ride your bike to work or school.
- while you're out, compliment a parent on how well-behaved their child is.
- when everyone around you is gossiping about someone, be the one to butt in with something nice.
- forgive someone, and never bring up the issue again.
- become a big brother or big sister.
- write someone a letter. like a real letter, on paper. and mail it!
- when you go somewhere to get or do something, ask the people around you if you can pick up anything they need.
- if you spill creamer or sugar on the counter at Starbucks, wipe it up.
- call your grandparents.
- donate your old eyeglasses so someone else can use them.
- write something nice on that person's updates who posts on facebook constantly. they're probably lonely.
- give someone a tissue who's crying in the public, and offer to talk about it, but only if they want to.
- remind yourself that everyone is fighting their own struggles.
- say thank you to a janitor.
- talk to someone at work whom you haven't talked to before.
- frame your friend's favorite lyric or quote and give it to them with a nice note.
- bring a security guard a hot cup of coffee.
- send mail to danny nickerson, a 5-year-old with an inoperable brain tumor.
- make two lunches and give one away.
- before you go to bed, think of three things you're grateful for.
- make plans with that person you've been putting off seeing.
- when you hear that negative, discouraging voice in your head, remember to leave yourself alone
- buy a lottery ticket for a stranger.
- give a compliment about your waiter / waitress to his / her manager.
- instead of getting defensive or angry the next time someone is rude or inconsiderate to you, express compassion for their situation.
- leave money in a public place for someone to find.
- make amends with someone you have wronged.
- be an active listener.
- go a week without using sarcasm.
- know the names of people you encounter every day.
- make a plan to donate blood this month.
- give a child a balloon.
- learn cpr. you could end up saving someone's life.
- say "good morning" to a person standing next to you in the elevator.
- ask someone "how are you really doing?"—and then really listen to her response.



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