



Our Time Bank Orientation Attendee Handout

What is TimeBanking?

Time Banking is an Internet-age solution for re-weaving communities, but it's not a new idea. It's actually a new term for an old idea.

During a simpler, older era, many people knew their neighbors and naturally pitched in to help each other.

In today's more complicated city life, such as here in Los Angeles, we get up in the morning, get in our cars and go to work or school. Then we get back in our cars and go home. On the weekends, we get in our cars again and go somewhere. We virtually live in our cars.

Many of us have never really met the people who live next door to us. We may see our neighbors occasionally and wave at them, while getting in and out of our cars or driving down the street.

We don't know what skills and knowledge our neighbors may have. When we need help or advice with something, we hit the yellow pages and seek out services from the money economy ... because that's what the money economy has taught us to do.

TimeBanking helps put the neighbor back into neighborhood. You have the opportunity to offer your skills and knowledge to other members ... or request help and advice from another member.

TimeBanking is based on an hour of your time is worth an hour of my time. Our alternative currency is called a Time Credit.

The money economy puts 'value measurement' up front and relationship building in the background. Time Credits put relationship building in the foreground by leveling the playing field of 'value measurement'. This makes services affordable for everyone.

By joining a TimeBank, you get to know who in your community is really ready to engage in being part of a TimeBank community. Participation in a TimeBanking community has been shown to boost self-esteem, well-being, and there is some evidence for improved health.

TimeBanking uses a simple internet-based system to list what we call Service Ads. These are offers and requests between our members, kind of like a Craigslist. The system also keeps track of Time Credits earned and paid between member accounts.

TimeBanking was founded in the mid 1990's by a visionary lawyer, Dr Edgar Cahn. It has since grown worldwide to over 32 countries spanning 6 continents. There are now over 400 TimeBanks in North America alone.

TimeBanking is all about bringing neighbors together to reweave sustainable communities.

Our Core Values

These five core values are the foundation of TimeBanking. Practicing them is what makes the TimeBank work.

1. **Assets:** We are all assets.
Every human being has something to contribute.
2. **Redefining Work:** Some work is beyond price. Work has to be redefined to value whatever it takes to raise healthy children, build strong families, revitalize neighborhoods, make democracy work, advance social justice, and make the planet sustainable. That kind of work needs to be honored, recorded and rewarded.
3. **Reciprocity:** Helping works better as a two-way street.



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The question: “How can I help you?” needs to change so we ask: “How can we help each other build the world we both will live in?”

4. **Social Networks:** We need each other. Networks are stronger than individuals. People helping each other reweave communities of support, strength & trust. Community is built upon sinking roots, building trust, creating networks. Special relationships are built on commitment.
5. **Respect:** Every human being matters. Respect underlies freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and everything we value. Respect supplies the heart and soul of democracy. When respect is denied to anyone, we all are injured. We must respect where people are in the moment, not where we hope they will be at some future point.

Setting up your Web User Account

Ourtimebank.com is the home of Community Forge, our exchange software that allows us to post and browse Service Ads, record service exchanges, track Time Credit balances, and connect with one another online.

Once you have completed the steps to join, we will create a User Account on www.ourtimebank.com for you. We will use your real name to register, cutesy/coy usernames/nicknames are not allowed. You will get an email from us when this is done with instructions for completing your profile and choosing your password. You will also need to accept our Terms of Membership (which can be viewed on-line at the bottom of our “Join Us!” page).

Please fill out your profile as thoroughly as you can and add your picture. This helps other members get to know you. It also helps our Exchange Matchmaker team connect members with common interests. We can assist members who may be technologically or internet challenged to fill out their profile. Please Let us know if you have questions or would like help.

Your account will not be activated until all the steps of registration are done and your membership is approved. Once activated, you will receive a welcome email letting you know that you can now login to our website and begin exchanging services.

Please read our “Welcome to OTB’s New System!” (located on our “News” page when you login) to assist you in learning how to use our website. If you need help, click on “Contact Us” and send us a message. Or call us at 323 696 0260.

Important Member Guidelines

1. The goal of time banking is not simply the exchange of favors. It is to build a community of support that exists in many families, neighborhoods and communities of faith – but has largely disintegrated in modern, urban society. Therefore, the exchange of services is a means to this greater end.
2. Our messaging system sends out email “notifications” to you. If you reply to an email notification, the intended recipient will not receive your reply. You must login and make your reply on the website.
3. Always give courteous and respectful responses. If a member contacts you, be sure to respond to them even if you can’t perform the service. It’s OK to say no, but be sure to respond to them. We expect our members to respond to each other in less than 3 days, 5 days max.
4. Post offers for services that you enjoy doing. TimeBanking should be fun.
5. Many members exchange services without ever posting service ads. You will find this practice more prevalent between members who have been in TimeBanking longer and know each other well. Approx. 50% of OTB exchanges happen outside the website.
6. Our Time Bank cannot replace the money economy and is not meant to meet all of your needs. Each member is to be respectful of other members' varying abilities. So, please be flexible with your community and manage your expectations accordingly.



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7. Give other members enough advanced notice for an exchange, several days to a few weeks.
8. Clear communication is vital. Be sure to negotiate the terms of the exchange beforehand. Be clear about your skill level and the amount of time it will take. Be sure you both have the same understanding before the service is provided. Discuss the number of Time Credits that will be reported.
9. Monetary expenses for materials and supplies are the responsibility of the recipient. Both parties should discuss costs ahead of time so no one is caught by surprise.
10. The service provider should round up to the nearest quarter hour and, if appropriate, include transportation time in the total. The recipient of the service (person paying) generally posts the service exchange, unless both parties agree to do it differently. The service can be reported online or, if that is not possible, may be reported by phone or email to a coordinator.
11. Confidentiality - If a member is experiencing a difficult situation, please don't share confidential information with other members. If there's a reason to believe that that member's situation may affect other members, please notify a coordinator.
12. You do not need to earn before you start exchanging. Each new member receives 5 Time Credits in recognition of their efforts to join after their account is activated. Then earn 4 more when you post your picture and your first 2 service ads. Finally, you earn 1 last TC after making your first exchange ... for a total of 10 TC's. More free Time Credits can be earned at our events. As an example, you can earn TC's for bringing a dish to share at our potlucks, or helping us setup and cleanup after events. You can earn more free TC's by volunteering at our WRC events.
13. All TC's earned for joining or at events are posted to your account by our Coordinators who are the only ones authorized to make these types of exchange transactions.
14. Receiving is just as important as giving. Do not be afraid of debt.
15. The monthly OTB potlucks, quarterly WRC events, and occasional OTB Dines Out events are a good way to meet your fellow members and find out what they need and can offer. This can be the best and most rewarding way to make exchanges.
16. **Participation is important!** We don't want to lose you to the gremlin of inactivity. Our community thrives on active involvement. If you are not actively making transactions, both giving and receiving, you are not accessing the true power of Time Banking. So, please make sure to use the TimeBank.

Please contact a coordinator if you experience any difficulties including:

- with the website
- with members who do not return calls or respond to emails
- if you are not receiving as many requests as you would like
- if you are receiving too many requests
- if you will be unavailable to participate for a period of time, move out of our area, or must drop out

Notes



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TimeBanking in Action Graphic:

Neighbourhood time banking - One good turn

The **doctor** prescribes time banking so that his lonely patients look out for each other



Sarah designs flyers for **Julie's** music lessons for a free ticket to a story telling evening



Julie gives music lessons and gets her garden weeded in exchange



Jackie bakes cakes for the youth club and young people walk her dog



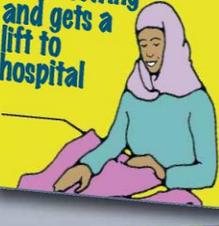
Trudie gives people lifts and in return has Spanish lessons



The **community centre** charges people time credits for events, which they earn building community



Fatima does some sewing and gets a lift to hospital



Joe keeps the churchyard tidy and in return he is learning computer skills



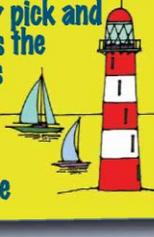
Dave decorates **Elsie's** front room and has a massage from **Rowena**



Bernard teaches **woodwork** and **Yvonne** writes an article for him on his hobby



The **youth club** does a litter pick and spends the credits on a trip to the seaside



George earns credits coaching football and in return **Elsie** does his ironing



The **residents** at sheltered housing teach knitting and get armchair fitness classes



Rose spends her credits on a babysitter and earns them shopping for **Jim**

