

# '158 Things I Can Do To Build Social Capital In My Community'\*

Social Capital is built through hundreds of little and big actions we take every day

*'Be the change you want to see in the world'*  
(Mahatma Ghandi)

1. Organise a street dinner to welcome a new neighbour
2. Attend the ratepayers annual meeting
3. Vote in local government elections
4. Actively support local businesses
5. Volunteer your special skills to a local organisation
6. Start a community garden
7. Surprise a new neighbour by making a favourite dish - and include the recipe
8. Don't gossip
9. Stop and help fix someone's flat tyre
10. Vote in local council elections
11. Get to know your children's teachers
12. Attend P & C meetings
13. Volunteer in your child's classroom or offer being a volunteer on a field trip
14. Answer surveys when asked
15. Help coach a local sports group - even if you don't have a child playing
16. Join a carpool
17. Employers: Give employees time (e.g. 3 days per year) to work on a community project
18. Plan a 'Walking Tour' of a local historic area
19. Have family dinners and read to your children
20. Join a local Emergency Services group
21. Gather a group to clean up a local park or nature reserve
22. Turn off the TV and talk with friends or family

\* Based on the inspiration of 'Better Together Report' [www.bettertogether.org](http://www.bettertogether.org)

23. Provide transport to young people who would not otherwise be able to participate in community activities
24. Bake a cake for work colleagues
25. Join a union
26. Use public transportation and start talking with those you regularly see
27. Call or email an old friend
28. Talk to your children or parents about their day
29. Greet strangers you pass in the street
30. Exercise together or take walks with friends or family
31. Assist with or create your town or neighbourhood's newsletter/newspaper
32. Join a book club discussion group
33. Tell friends and family about social capital and why it matters
34. Write regular letters to your children highlighting why you admire them
35. Reduce the amount of television you watch as a family
36. Plan a reunion of family, friends, or those with whom you had a special connection
37. Participate in programs offered at local library
38. Read the local community newspaper thoroughly
39. Pick it up even if you didn't drop it
40. Hire some local young people for odd jobs around your house
41. Start a tradition
42. Send a "thank you" letter to the Editor of a community newspaper about a person or event that helped build community
43. When inspired, write personal notes to friends and neighbours
44. Attend local art exhibition openings
45. Organise a street garage sale
46. Say hi to others in lifts
47. Offer to watch your neighbour's home or apartment while they are away
48. See if your neighbour needs anything when you are going to the local shops
49. Ask to see a friend's family photos
50. Share with neighbours any surplus fruit from your fruit trees
51. Thank shop assistants for excellent service
52. Donate unused household items and books to local schools, annual fairs or charitable groups
53. Invite the neighbours over for a barbecue

54. Organise a monthly picnic with family and/or friends
55. Pen a letter to the local newspaper about an issue, concern or local opportunity
56. Visit and buy at local markets
57. Join a leadership development group in your community
58. Instigate a lunchtime activity or study group at your place of work
59. Offer to mentor a local young person
60. Document your family history / construct your family tree
61. Take time to know and communicate with young people who live in your street
62. Avoid pigeon holing of young people and generalizing about their behaviour, opinions or ideas
63. Donate blood, and encourage others to do so
64. Confide in a young person. Ask their opinion on issues you are struggling with
65. Work less, play and connect with the community more
66. Record your parents' stories and recollections, and share with your children
67. Plan and plant street verge trees/shrubbery with neighbours and rotate care for them
68. Ask neighbours for help and reciprocate
69. Register for a hobby class and go
70. Encourage the local school to hold a M.A.D. Day - Make a Difference Day, where students identify and work on a project they believe would make their community a better place
71. Highlight with a letter/article in the local newspaper the positive contribution of local young women and men
72. Raise funds for a youth-lead organisation or event
73. Take a daily walk, greet and make eye contact with everyone you pass
74. Organise a vacation with friends
75. Write letters to community members (especially young people) who contribute to the community or achieve in arts, sports, education or service
76. Give regularly to a local food bank
77. Stand for local council
78. Invite some people without family to join your family for Christmas lunch

79. Volunteer for a School Volunteer Program ([www.svp.org.au](http://www.svp.org.au))
80. Organise a 'Walking School Bus' that encourages young people to walk to school rather than being driven
81. Nominate a local young person for a Youth Award
82. Invite a single diner to join your groups table for a meal
83. Support local organisations engaged in recycling e.g. The Girl Guides recycling of cork ([www.guidesaus.org.au](http://www.guidesaus.org.au))
84. Join a local conservation project related to local bush land or creek / river
85. Encourage your children to coach / tutor younger children
86. Contribute to suggestion boxes, especially those related to community activities
87. Be a tourist in your own backyard
88. Share your community and its tourism attractions with visiting family and friends
89. Avoid road rage
90. Ring a radio talk back show and share great aspects of your community
91. Write to your grandchildren regularly sharing important reminiscents about your life
92. Take local tourism brochures with you on holidays and leave with visited organisations / people
93. Volunteer to spend time with a person with a disability to enable a carer to have a break
94. Ask local young people to solve a community problem / issue
95. Encourage and support your children to raise funds for a good idea
96. Suggest to, and offer to help the local school involve their students in the 'Future Problem Solving Program' ([www.fpsp.org](http://www.fpsp.org))
97. Make time to read the local newspaper from cover to cover and contribute a local story
98. Get to know local elected council members and share your ideas and opinions
99. Read a story with a child
100. Learn about the Traditional Aboriginal Owners of the lands where you live
101. Register as an organ donor ([www.hic.gov.au](http://www.hic.gov.au))
102. Learn at least one good joke and share ([www.goodcleanjokes.com](http://www.goodcleanjokes.com))
103. Write to someone who inspired you

104. Participate in Clean Up Australia Day ([www.cleanup.com.au](http://www.cleanup.com.au))
105. Give you phone number to five people in your street
106. Learn CPR ([www.stjohn.org.au](http://www.stjohn.org.au))
107. Offer time as a volunteer ([www.volunteeringaustralia.org](http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org))
108. Adopt FairShare International's 5:10:5:10 formula for making a difference
  - 5: Reject greed and give away 5% of your gross annual income to projects that assist disadvantaged people, enhance community and / or environment.
  - 10: Tread lightly - reduce your use of water, energy and materials by at least 10%
  - 5: Connect with the bright side of the community - build community through contributing at least 5% of your leisure time in direct face to face assistance
  - 10: Build up democracy - take significant democratic action at least 10 times per year to connect practices associated with greed and injustice that hurt people and the environment (e.g. Letters to editor and politicians, join a protest etc)  
([www.fairshareinternational.org](http://www.fairshareinternational.org))
109. Declare your home a violence free zone and make a commitment to never use words or actions that hurt people
110. Don't keep your opposition to violence and abuse a secret e.g. let friends know how you are making your home violence free
111. Raise no violent children e.g. encourage imaginative, cooperative and non violent play, don't use violence as a form of punishment
112. Always insist on people to 'meet, greet and farewell' people at any community event, and offer to do it
113. Make it a practice to talk to strangers e.g. at the supermarket checkout, on the bus, in the seat next to you, on the plane etc
114. Print off your own 'Certificate of Kindness' and distribute when you see random acts of kindness
115. Create a 'friendship Dinner' - 5 to 10 families become part of a monthly shared dinner arrangement
116. Give people the benefit of the doubt
117. Offer a person with a few items to go ahead of you in the shopping queue
118. Enter someone in a competition

119. Surprise someone with a small gift that they may be unable to afford
120. Step aside and allow any frail or elderly person to go ahead in a queue
121. Consciously listen whenever engaged in conversation
122. Seek to accentuate 'the positive in language'
123. Make everyday a 'hug day'
124. If you come across a fallen item off a supermarket shelf, pick it up and put it back on the shelf
125. Pick up a piece of litter everyday
126. Always thanks sales staff or any other customer service staff
127. Join the Australian Kindness movement and create a kindness group, a group enthusiastic about kindness (<http://www.kindness.com.au>)
128. When mowing the nature strip, do the neighbours as well
129. Laugh a lot
130. Believe in fairy godmothers, love at first sight, miracles, happy endings ... and give yourself permission to allow them to happen in your life
131. Pen letters / emails of appreciation to groups who are involved in community building
132. Regularly give surplus books, clothes, toys etc to local charity groups
133. Be gentle with Planet Earth
134. Offer to help people in difficulty - the person without the coin for the parking meter, someone lost, a driver trying to get into a difficult parking spot etc
135. Raise awareness of the ANZAC spirit - 'doing what is right, regardless of the odds of their fears'
136. Become involved with one out of work person to help them find a job
137. Find an expired parking meter if you see a parking inspector in the vicinity
138. Ensure you are correctly enrolled to vote
139. Take an interest in local government issues - observe council meetings
140. Participate in a local Aboriginal community event
141. Attend public consultation sessions on major policy legislation
142. Talk to your children about current affairs
143. Get to know your local politicians - local, state and federal
144. Create a 'Caught You Being Kind' Certificate and give away
145. Join the local neighbourhood / community development association
146. Write a letter to the editor about one issue you care about
147. Walk, do not drive to the local shop

148. Speak out against discrimination of any type
149. Nominate unsung heroes for the Pride of Australia medal - categories include bravery, courage, young Aussie, community spirit, role model, mate ship, environment, fair go, peace and true blue  
([www.news.com.au/prideofaustralia](http://www.news.com.au/prideofaustralia))
150. Join in Neighbour Day (last Sunday of March each year) by introducing yourself to neighbours or organising a street barbeque  
([www.neighbourday.com.au](http://www.neighbourday.com.au))
151. Join the annual 'Walk to Work Day' ([www.walk.com.au](http://www.walk.com.au))
152. Participate in the Visiting Volunteers - when holidaying in a rural area contribute time as a volunteer - restoration projects, general maintenance, teacher's aide, numerous sporting activities etc
153. Instigate random acts of kindness.
154. Give away surplus fruit and vegetables to neighbours.
155. Join a Community Assisted Agriculture scheme and link directly to a rural producer.
156. Join a car pool arrangement.
157. Participate in R U OK? Day (15<sup>th</sup> September).
158. Think of your own action!