



Team Red, White & Blue's "Enrichment Equation"

Enrichment = Health + People + Purpose

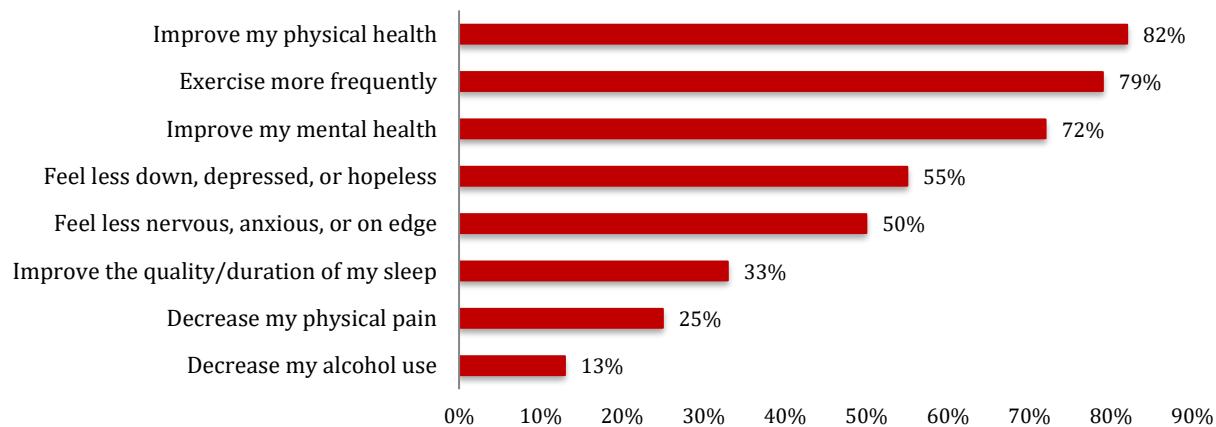
Blayne Smith, J.J. Pinter, & Caroline Angel, Team Red, White, & Blue

Team Red, White & Blue was founded in 2010 as a 501c3 nonprofit focused on *enriching the lives* of America's veterans by connecting them to their community through physical and social activity. We are an intergenerational organization that has now reached over 122,000 members (approximately 70% veteran and 30% civilian) spanning multiple countries and 217 American communities.

In the 2016 [research report](#) that we co-authored with the Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF), we documented the impact that our programs are having on veteran enrichment. This report has become a catalyst for us to initiate a more robust dialogue around the meaning of "enrichment" and how to quantify it.

In our seven years, through trial and error, we have reached a mission statement that at its core is designed to genuinely connect veterans to each other, and our mostly civilian communities, through physical and social activity. We knew that these activities would provide physical, mental, and emotional health benefits based upon the broad medical research on the positive effects of exercise on health. We also knew that facilitating one-on-one interactions, group workouts, and shared social experiences would help veterans make new friends, get to know their local resources, and build a bigger and better network of people to rely on if they needed. Over time, we have seen especially how our service-related social activities and providing opportunities for veterans to be in leadership roles in our chapters has helped fulfill a sense of purpose that was diminishing or altogether gone after leaving military service. In our seven years, we have seen genuine relationships develop, physical and mental health improve, and a sense of purpose regained even in our members who transitioned from service decades ago.

**Figure 1- Health
Agree to Strongly Agree**
Being a part of Team RWB has caused me to...





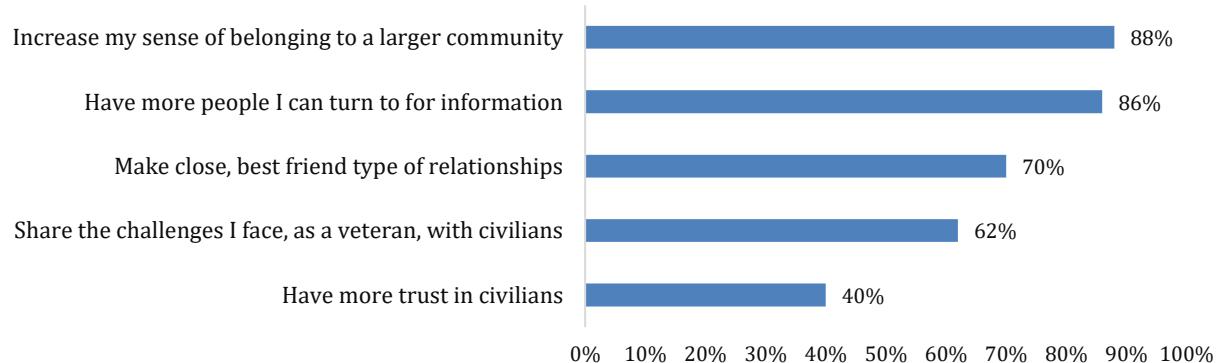
It has taken us half a decade to narrow in on the areas of focus we can best impact as we repeatedly return to the question at the heart of what we do:

So what exactly does it mean to “enrich” a life?

Located squarely in our mission statement is the term “enrich” – at face value, this sounds noble, but what does it really mean? We value the term “enrichment” as an outcome along the spectrum of positive quality of life improvements, akin to sister concepts (found outside the organization in academia), “life satisfaction” and “well being” to name a few – there are others, as well.

A key differentiation from these other concepts listed above, as we view it, is that “Enrich” is a verb, and bears with it a responsibility, one that we whole-heartedly embrace, to act - and a bias for action is a key part of our culture. Therefore, we drive programs and practices that deliver impact. In our early writings on the topic, we have defined enrichment as “creating quality relationships and experiences that contribute to life satisfaction and overall well being.” But for the purpose of even our own understanding, we were, perhaps, only partially right.

Figure 2- People
Agree to Strongly Agree
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More recently we have distilled our outcomes of greatest interest down to three major areas that, most importantly, *we know we can actively intervene upon*: health, people, and purpose.

We define these areas in the following way:

- **Health** - as fitness, sports, recreation activities to improve physical, mental, and emotional well being
- **People** - as genuine, quality, supportive relationships that generate mutual trust, accountability, and connection to the community.
- **Purpose** - as meaningful individual, team, and community experiences that renew identity and enhance direction in life.

We lead our equation with “health”, since shared activity facilitates engagement with other “people”, and those meaningful interactions can reignite “purpose” in oneself and others.



The combination of these three interrelated and mutually reinforcing bands of focus comprises Team RWB's "**Enrichment Equation**".

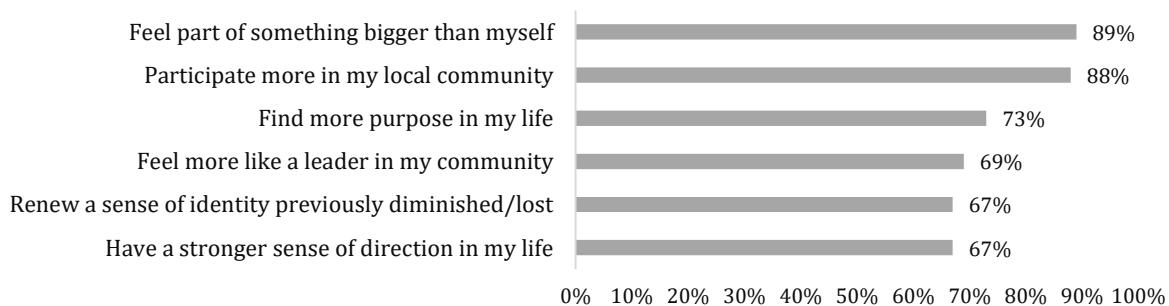
One of the biggest gaps in the veteran philanthropic space, as we see it, is a lack of an effort to quantify outcomes, as opposed to outputs. Thus, while our "**Enrichment Equation**" is useful as a framework to think about positive quality of life improvements, the real value would be to quantify this topic in an academically vigorous way, so that we can start to answer some key questions (this is an example, there are many more):

- How much are we able to enrich a member's life?
- What are the strongest operational predictors of success that drive enrichment?
- How much does it cost to enrich a life?

Therefore, in the IVMF research report highlighted above, we proposed a theoretical basis to our programming, and are actively working on a measurement instrument called the "Enriched Life Scale" to help us accomplish just that. It will help us demonstrate how we are measuring our impact on health, people, and purpose and seeing positive benefits, especially in those members most actively engaged.

While we understand and have addressed the limitations of our research design and surveys in the report, figures one, two and three report what we have learned about our "Enrichment Equation" so far, from veterans who reported being highly active since joining our Team and who responded in 2016 to our annual survey (n=516).

**Figure 3- Purpose
Agree to Strongly Agree
Being a part of Team RWB has caused me to...**



We recognize that our "Enrichment Equation" is not a perfect concept solution. That being said, driving impact on these three areas is likely to yield powerful quality of life gains for individuals. We believe we are at a turning point organizationally as we better come to understand how to create and measure our impact. Our Enrichment Equation focused on health, people, and purpose provides us with a framework to explore how we can positively influence lives.