

# Making Ripples

by Amanda Bancroft

You're in a pinch and desperate during an emergency. After weighing the options, it doesn't seem like there's anything that can be done. But as despair wraps itself around those involved like a python intending to squeeze the hope out of everyone, suddenly an angel appears. A real angel? Maybe, maybe not. Doesn't matter. Help arrives to save a life or lend a hand or fight injustice. Perhaps you were that help or will be someday.

Religious people sometimes believe in angels or sacred deities who come to earth in times of need, or good Samaritans who are mortal humans and help even those folks who are different from themselves. Secular or non-religious people still use these concepts metaphorically outside the intention of faith, because altruism is a powerful concept. It's amazing to see people helping others despite either great risk to themselves or lack of reward.

Even animal-to-animal altruism has a common appeal (and yes, humans are animals). Books and videos abound showing a member of one species helping another species by befriending or rescuing them. It's cute, it's inspiring, and it also sets a great example for how we humans can live in relation to other humans and non-humans.

It can be scary sticking your neck out to help someone. Especially if that involves a confrontation with another person in order to protect their victim. And we sometimes get it wrong: persons with disabilities do not always need help, so ask first. Minorities do not need a white savior to rescue them, but be an ally and ask what is needed. The best thing to do (if the situation allows) is to find out how you can help before helping

Being an "angel" is also rewarding without rewards. It makes us feel good, of course, and there are usually broader community or family benefits to helping someone. Maybe they're a parent and by helping them, their kids will have an easier life. Helping people in a park will make that park safer for everyone, not just those receiving assistance. You never know what ripples you can make by volunteering to lend a hand at the spur of the moment. If you've ever been rescued by an angel, you know the feeling of relief, joy and renewed hope that comes from living in a community where people care about one another.

There are plenty of online videos demonstrating a person in a crowded area in need of help (being attacked by an assailant, for example) but nobody in the crowd helps. Everyone's thinking that someone else will be the angel today. What if we all thought that everyone needs to be an angel and do everything we're capable of doing to help?

Amanda Bancroft is a writer, artist, and naturalist living in an off-grid tiny house on Kessler Mountain. She and her husband Ryan blog about their adventures and offer tips to those wanting to make a difference at [www.MakeRipples.org](http://www.MakeRipples.org).