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REFERENCE

Giving Is Not Just for the Very Rich: A How-to Guide for Giving and Philanthropy
Susan Aurelia Gitelson
CreateSpace
978-1-4681-1104-0
Five Stars (out of Five)

In the context of the sentiment that American society is becoming increasingly divided along class lines—the "one percent" versus the "ninety-nine percent"—Dr. Susan Aurelia Gitelson's well-written, well-researched book offering guidance to non-billionaire charitable givers is timely and appropriate.

Gitelson says she was exposed to giving at an early age, having grown up in the home of her father, Dr. Moses Leo Gitelson, who was a businessman and philanthropist. She recognizes firsthand that "altruism can give you pleasure," although she backs up this belief with statistics from studies that indicate "people who give are usually happier than those who do not."

The book covers a great deal of territory. First Gitelson offers valuable insight into billionaire donors from various walks of life because, she writes, "The wealthiest donors are important both for their actual contributions and for the examples they set for other people." Readers will surely recognize such names as Bill Gates,Warren Buffett, Michael Bloomberg, and Ted Turner, but may be less familiar with philanthropists like Eli Broad, Reginald F. Lewis, Robert Morgenthau, and Jeff Skoll.

Next Gitelson presents an overview of the major areas for giving—for example, religious groups, educational institutions, science and health organizations, community foundations, and so forth. She lists leading charities within those categories.

The author also shares her "guiding principles for giving wisely," which include cautions about scams and tips for determining an organization's transparency about their administration and fund-raising expenses. She provides a list of the "main watchdog agencies" that evaluate major charities, as well as other evaluation sources.

In the final section of the book, Gitelson addresses the question, "How will your contributions have the greatest impact?" Here, she discusses how a person can match up his or her values with causes and organizations, determine an individual's appropriate level of involvement with an organization, and measure the success of the relationship between the giver

and the receiving organization. A helpful glossary and a bibliography for further reading are also included.

Gitelson successfully combines a discussion that raises important questions about an individual's attitudes toward giving with authoritative information about philanthropy in a volume that is nicely packaged and comprehensive in its scope. Her book lays the groundwork for the reader who has a sincere interest in making a contribution to a worthy cause.

The assumption Gitelson makes is that the large majority of the audience is not "very rich." Indeed, she has written a book that targets the ninety-nine percent; her approach to the topic is, in effect, "philanthropy for the rest of us." That's what makes *Giving is Not Just for the Very Rich* uniquely valuable.

Barry Silverstein