

Inspired Philanthropy: Creating a Giving Plan

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Inspired Philanthropy is not only for those lucky few with inherited wealth or lottery winnings—this book is an inspirational work for everyone, giving ideas to those who buy gift wrap to support the local elementary school as well as those distributing generations' worth of accumulated wealth. How refreshing to see a new book devoted not to accumulating more wealth or, even worse, devoted to digging out from a mountain of debt, but one devoted solely to the art of giving.

The book is divided into ten chapters, with several appendices and an index. Reviewing your current giving style is the first step; donors at every level are encouraged to think of themselves as philanthropists and to become comfortable with the idea of giving, regardless of income level. Worksheets and exercises are designed to help you become more systematic and thoughtful with your giving.

Giving of time is treated as seriously as giving of money in this book, which is encouraging for those who volunteer an hour or two every week, but still don't view themselves as philanthropists. These efforts result in a personal giving plan, documenting your intentions toward your favored organizations. Additional exercises encourage you to review and fine tune your plan periodically to be sure you are meeting your stated goals. A particularly useful section in the final chapter is called "Setting Boundaries," providing creative solutions for responding to the many requests for donations you receive, but do not wish to make.

Gary and Kohner, both of whom have years of experience as donors and as activists working with nonprofit groups, present many real-life stories and examples to help inspire you. They do encourage looking beyond traditional routes of giving, for example, local grass roots efforts are favored over the United Way, but a wide variety of giving levels and causes are represented. At the least, Inspirational Philanthropy will encourage you to think about your values and goals; at best, it will stimulate "the small acts you do today [that] contribute to the cumulative impact of a life spent in sharing and caring."

VICKI GERVICKAS (January / February 1999)

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