

Celebrating the 25 Anniversary of the Women's Fund of the Fox Valley 2020

Joyful and Effective Giving

By Martha A. Taylor and Dayana Kupisk

*Philanthropy can be one of the most joyful
and meaningful parts of your life.*

Ten Strategies

1. Begin your philanthropy as early in life as possible.

Even if you are unable to give as much as you would like, your gifts will add up and begin to form your legacy. Start impactful giving at any age.

Research shows that even a few dollars spent on others is related to a boost in happiness. You can make a difference now -- don't wait for a time in the distant future or a life benchmark. Donating time is a great way to connect with others and make an impact if you are unable to give financially in the way you would like. For younger people, volunteering can have the added benefit of exploring interests or causes they strongly care about.

2. Find your passion and focus your gifts rather than scattering them.

Think about two or three areas or causes you want to support; make this your philanthropic mission. Consider supporting women as one of your three top priorities.

Focus on a five-year horizon, giving multiple-year pledges and then reassess and consider more longer-term commitments and a legacy gift.

Good giving takes good effort. Focusing your giving means avoiding "feel good" philanthropy – a quick whim that may give you short term glow but doesn't really make a long-term difference to solve problems.

Think about and seek advice from experts about the issues of society you want to address and the most effective way of impacting those issues. For example, do you give money directly to a homeless person, or to a homeless shelter? Pay off loans for all graduates of a college, or give to scholarships?

With each of the issues in these examples, one approach is much more effective than the other.

By focusing on two or three primary organizations/purposes and learning about the issues those organizations face, not only will your gifts have more impact, but you will find your giving much more satisfying.

People need choice, but too much choice can lower happiness and cause doubt about their decisions. Keeping your choices rooted in your values and focused on key areas can help avoid the “paradox of choice.”

3. Parity in household giving has evolved into “our,” “hers,” and “his” giving designations.

In some households, each category is one-third of the household giving. Equality in marriage means equal decision making on philanthropy, no matter whose name is on the paycheck. Women are oftentimes the final decision maker on their family’s assets.

4. Consider your philanthropy as another child — your investment in the future of our world.

When planning your annual gifts and your estate: if you have two children, divide your estate in three, leaving one-third to each child and one-third to philanthropy.

5. If you can, give out of your assets to the causes to which you are passionate.

Consider stock gifts and real estate. Donor advised funds at community foundations are excellent vehicles for effective planning and managing your philanthropy.

6. Give while you live so you can see the benefits of your action and learn how to give strategically.

Consider investing in the infrastructure and capacity building of nonprofits, not just programming which may be “bright shiny” objects to attract you to a cause. Investing in nonprofits’ ongoing staffing costs may be the most strategic and impactful gift for an organization.

In uncertain times, invest all your support in the operating infrastructure of organizations.

By giving while you are living, you can assess how an organization uses your gift and then make decisions for continuing annual support and a legacy.

7. Consider the strength of numbers.

Organize with others to provide a pooled gift that can make a project possible. Establish a giving circle that meets regularly to give strategically together.

Relationships with others are a key predictor of health, well-being, and life satisfaction. Connecting your giving and values with connection to others can give a boost to your impact and personal benefit.

8. Leverage your giving.

Increase your impact by inviting others to support the causes you hold dear – even if as simple as inviting a few donors/friends to join with you in supporting a project. You may wish to consider a larger challenge grant to create important momentum for support of a project or purpose.

Public commitments enhance accountability and likelihood of follow-through, essential for the growth of philanthropy.

9. Teach and inspire philanthropy.

Instill your values and philanthropic spirit in the next generation – emphasizing giving both time and money.

Start early. Lots of creative opportunities exist for inspiring people from a young age to learn about giving. Consider having your child/grandchild/other young person pick a cause and ask for donations in lieu of birthday gifts or work with peers to support a local cause.

Be a philanthropy mentor UP the generations as well – inspiring giving by older family members. Encourage your parents – and others you know are

leaving you an inheritance -- to give a portion of their assets to philanthropy, explaining that you celebrate their commitment to others.

Be a role model in your philanthropy, advise and inspire your family, friends and community.

10. Enjoy your philanthropy.

Celebrate the joy of giving with others including the accomplishments of the organizations you have supported. Gather with like-minded people to affirm your commitment to a better life for humanity.

Symbolic acts of giving make a difference, such as celebrating your birthday with a philanthropic gift that you might not have thought possible. Giving a gift in honor of a dear mentor, friend or family member is a joyful act of passing on and respecting values you wish to support.

Making your legacy commitment enables you to celebrate the meaningful circle of your life.

*Philanthropy can be one of the most joyful
and meaningful parts of your life -- and --
Your Legacy.*

Additional resources

- "Inspired Philanthropy," Tracy Gary, 2007.
- "The Big Picture: A Guide to Finding Your Purpose," Christine Whelan, 2016.
- "A Plan of One's Own: A Woman's Guide to Philanthropy," Forum of Regional Association of Grantmakers, Washington, D.C.
- "The Transformative Power of Women's Philanthropy," Martha Taylor and Sondra Shaw-Hardy, 2006.
- "Reinventing Fundraising: Realizing the Potential of Women's Philanthropy," Sondra Shaw-Hardy and Martha Taylor, 1995.
- "Women and Philanthropy: Boldly Shaping a Better World," Sondra Shaw-Hardy and Martha A. Taylor, 2013.

Martha A. Taylor, MS

Taylor is an international leader in women's philanthropy and one of the founders of the field. She co-authored the first major books on the subject and co-founded the Women's Philanthropy Institute in Madison, Wisconsin, which is now a part of the Lily School of Philanthropy at Indiana University.

For more than forty years, she was Vice President of the University of Wisconsin Foundation, now the Wisconsin Foundation and Alumni Association. She has been active in Madison, Wisconsin and U.S. nonprofit and Lutheran organizations. She is currently Director of Women's Philanthropy Leadership, 4W Initiative – Women Wellbeing Wisconsin and World, School of Human Ecology, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Dayana Kupisk, PhD

Kupisk is a translational researcher who is invested in promoting individual and community well-being through a systems perspective. She is passionate about taking a practical and strengths-based approach to solving the complex problems in our lives, particularly in the context of wise decision-making. In pursuit of this, she remains proactive about translating research into popular and applied formats including individual coaching, published articles, blog posts, workbooks, and community-based learning opportunities.

The Six Cs: Women's Motivations for Giving -- 1995

By Martha A. Taylor and Sondra Shaw-Hardy

Create. Women want to create new solutions to old problems. Women like to be entrepreneurial with their philanthropy.

Change. Women give to make a difference. Women are less interested in providing unrestricted support to preserve the status quo of an organization or institution.

Connect. Women prefer to see the human face their gift affects. Women want to build a partnership with people connected with the projects they fund.

Commit. Women commit to organizations and institutions whose vision they share. Women often give to the organizations for which they have volunteered.

Collaborate. Women prefer to work with others as part of a larger effort. Women seek to avoid duplication, competition and waste.

Celebrate. Women like to celebrate their accomplishments, have fun together and enjoy the deeper meaning and satisfaction of their philanthropy. Women want to experience the joy of giving.

Three Cs for the 21st Century -- 2013

Control. Women are taking control of their lives, finances and philanthropy. Women want more accountability from their philanthropic gifts.

Confidence. Women have gained the confidence to become philanthropic leaders.

Courage. Women have the courage to challenge the old way of doing things and take risks with their giving to bring about change.

One C -- 2020

Challenge. Women are the primary decision maker for most families in the U.S, as never before. Together with men, they will meet the challenges ahead by investing in infrastructure and increasing collaboration with governments and other philanthropists.