



American Generosity: Who Gives and Why

Patricia Snell Herzog, Heather E. Price

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American charitable giving veers from the hyperbolically generous to the hyperbolically stingy. On some days, no one has a quarter to spare; in times of disaster, Americans will put their lives on hold to build houses for those displaced by hurricanes. The crucial question of who gives and why they do it lies at the heart of *American Generosity*.

Patricia Snell Herzog and Heather E. Price, sociologists who focus on philanthropy, draw on findings from the groundbreaking Science of Generosity initiative, which combines a nationally representative survey of adult Americans with in-depth interviews and case studies. For most Americans, they find, the important forms of giving are: donating money, volunteering time, and taking political action. Focusing on these three types of activity, the authors go on to examine and analyze multiple dimensions of resources, social status, regional cultural norms, different approaches to giving, social-psychological orientation, and the relational contexts of generosity. Herzog and Price conclude that giving is supported by "circles of generosity," which ripple outward in their reach to targets of giving. The book offers not just analysis, but practical tips for readers who want to increase their own giving, for parents modeling giving to their children, spouses desiring alignment in their giving, and friends and community members seeking to support giving by others. The authors also provide explicit fundraising ideas for nonprofits, foundations, and religious leaders.

Thought-provoking and accessibly written, *American Generosity* lays out a broad yet nuanced explanation of giving that sheds important new light on a topic that touches all of us in one way or another.

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