



The Why of Giving: The Value of Reconnecting with Values

ERIN BLACKFORD AND JOSH KANTER | MAY 2020

Those who give charitably often feel a “great wave of satisfaction – similar to that of an amazing meal or viewing a beautiful piece of art” (Good2Give). However, for many donors, giving has become increasingly difficult in the face of increasing needs and demands, or transactional in this digital world, sometimes losing the richness and emotional connectivity that comes with being charitable. With the growing demand for data-driven decisions, the how of giving can distract from the personal connection and enjoyment that giving provides.

Often lost in the frenzy of today’s world is that personal and familial values are at the core of why we give. Through our years of working with donors at the Community Foundation of Utah, we have found that actively bringing your values into the giving process increases joy in charitable giving, and reminds us why we were inspired to be charitable in the first place. However, we are often not purposeful about really understanding and incorporating our values into our

giving. “Many of us assume we know our values without taking the time to articulate or prioritize them” (21/64). But where do we begin?

Think of the last time you donated or volunteered for a charitable organization. How did you originally connect with the organization? What inspired you to act? How did you feel while supporting this organization? Perhaps you are a first-time giver - what has spurred you to start giving?



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Most often, as donors our motivation - our why - comes from three different buckets of motivation: familial, community, and personal. Our familial identity is rooted in our family and how we were raised. For example, we may be motivated to give as a result of a family member's experience. "My mom had cancer, that impacted who I am." Our community identity inspires us to give based on our connection to the people around us. "I'm a part of a community service club," or "My workplace hosts an annual volunteering day." Our personal identity is the values we connect with because of who we perceive ourselves to be. "I'm a giver. I give because that's who I am." Using these groups of underlying motivations can help us begin to identify and communicate our values.

Our experience is that clearly articulating values better connects us with fulfilling and successful giving. To help our donors and community with this process, we offer facilitated

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values based meetings and activities. This values-based process can also help connect generations together through the discovery of common beliefs and interests that cultivate a deeper connection among family, colleagues, and charitable giving.

As you begin your journey to discover the why of your giving, let us help you unlock a more meaningful giving experience. If you would like the Community Foundation of Utah to facilitate a discussion for you and your family about charitable giving and values, please contact Hayley Shepherd, Philanthropic Services Advisor, at 801-559-3005 x7 or hayley@utahcf.org.

Good2Give, <https://good2give.ngo/2017/02/28/giving-feels-good/21/64>, <https://2164.net/>

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