

MORE THAN MONEY

Timeless themes & personal stories | Exploring the impact of money in our lives

Does Your Giving Hit All The Marks?

Responsible or Controlling?

"Make your philanthropy strategic. engaged. effective!" Like an advertisement for toothpaste that promises to make teeth whiter, cleaner, brighter, these adjectives-strategic, engaged, effective-are often slung together as if they synonymously describe a better, more modern way to do charitable giving. To me these buzzwords define three distinctly different qualities of good philanthropy:

- **EFFECTIVE:** giving that produces the desired results (whatever those may be)
- **STRATEGIC:** giving according to a carefully thought-out, overall plan to achieve particular outcomes
- **ENGAGED:** giving that is personally involved, more than just sending money

To explore these differences, I made myself the chart below, and thought about memorable gifts I've made in the past decade. How about that time the waitress jumped for joy when I gave her a \$20 tip for a cup of coffee? That was effective, but neither strategic nor engaged. When my husband Christopher and I contributed \$20,000 toward a staff member's salary for a budding organization reaching out to young adults with wealth, it was part of our long-term strategy to leverage philanthropic resources. The grant was spectacularly ineffective (given that the group folded within the year) but we stayed engaged and helped birth a successor organization, Resource Generation, which has flourished. One of the most "bang for the buck" gifts I ever made embodied all three qualities: Back in the early '80s, when I was committed to the peace movement, I gave \$120 to my hotshot organizer friend Paul so he could print hundreds of copies of a seminal article about the emotional impact of living under nuclear threat. Paul used those articles to seed disarmament chapters throughout Europe, and I stayed engaged with both Paul and the author's work for years. On an entirely different scale is the \$100,000 Christopher and I are giving to More than Money, as one of many "Visionaries' Circle" members funding the organization's expansion. This gift embodies all three qualities as well, and few things have been as thrilling to me as shepherding the organization's growth.

Playing with this chart has convinced me that each quality has value on its own-yet its power is amplified when combined with one or more of the others. Try mapping out your most memorable gifts, and see what you learn!

--Anne Slepian

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