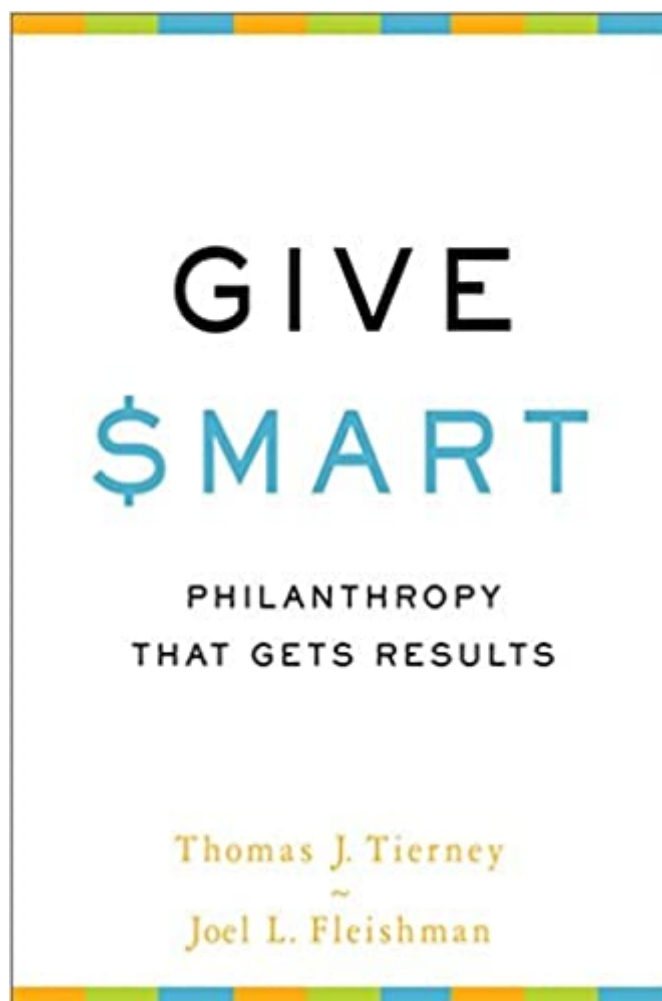


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# Give Smart: Philanthropy That Gets Results



## Synopsis

A decade ago, Thomas J. Tierney left Bain & Company to cofound The Bridgespan Group, a nonprofit focused on helping donors and nonprofit leaders to develop and execute strategies to accelerate social change. In *Give Smart*, Tierney pools his hands-on knowledge with Duke professor Joel L. Fleishman's expertise to create a much-needed primer for philanthropists and the nonprofit organizations they support. Drawing from personal experiences, research spanning twentieth- and twenty-first-century philanthropy, contemporary interviews, and Bridgespan's extensive field work, *Give Smart* presents the definitive guide to engaged philanthropy.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Jim Collins's *Give Smart* is a great gift to the world. By asking questions; the right questions; Tierney and Fleishman guide, advise, challenge, and, as with all great teachers, push us to find our own best answers. If you want your philanthropy to be useful; changing lives, solving intractable problems, making society work better; then engage deeply with this book!

Melinda Gates's: One of the most exciting and important parts of my job as a philanthropist is learning. Over the years, Bill and I have learned so much from the authors of this book, and we are thrilled to see that wisdom collected in *Give Smart* so that everybody can benefit from it the way we have.

Helene Gayle's: Having been on both sides of the check; first working in philanthropy and now as a recipient of philanthropic dollars, I found

Give Smart a must read. The relationship between grantmakers and nonprofit organizations is a delicate dance, one that when done well can achieve incredible social good. Not only does this book provide a practical guide for those who want to achieve high impact philanthropy, it also helps nonprofits understand the aspirations and expectations of the donor. Don't begin, or continue, your philanthropy without reading it. — Paul Brest; Giving away money is easy, but making a real difference is hard work. Give Smart addresses these challenges head-on and provides a strong analytic framework and practical advice for effective philanthropy; replete with compelling examples. Written by two leaders in the field, this is a must-read for the new philanthropist and a valuable resource for old hands as well. — John C. Whitehead; Give Smart is must reading for all philanthropists, large or small. It's written by two people with long experience, and it will make your gifts go farther. — Pierre Omidyar; As Pam and I continue to learn through our own giving, the challenges in creating positive social impact are many and complex. Give Smart provides thoughtful guidance on how to build an effective and personal approach to philanthropy, illustrated through real-world examples, proven methodologies, and insightful commentary. We highly recommend Give Smart to anyone who wants to make a difference, whether in their local community or around the world. — Publishers Weekly, March 21, 2011; An interesting and well-considered guide to go to before you give. — PhilanthropyRoundtable.org, March 31, 2011; A superb guide for donors who want to be as smart in their giving as they have been in business. •

Thomas J. Tierney is the cofounder and chairman of The Bridgespan Group, a nonprofit advisor to the nonprofit sector and its donors. Joel L. Fleishman is professor of law and public policy at Duke University and author of The Foundation.

So much how-to advice is common sense, and yes, much of that in Give Smart is no exception. But I've read three books on the topic, most recently the unfortunate Giving 2.0, which is pretty puerile, and I find Give Smart to be the best of the bunch. Yes, it tells you the obvious: align your values with your donations, have open and honest communication with grantees, and so on, but because the book is borne of considerable experience and cites example after example, there's enough nuance spread through the book to justify the time to read, at least sections of it. For example, grantors should not impose undue reporting requirements on the grantee. Sure, you want to know you're getting value received for your largesse but so often, accountability beyond a modest amount, hurts the organization and its efforts more than it assures you're getting bang for the buck. The book

stresses that you need to restrain excessive desire for micromanaging--you're not the program director, you are the funder and perhaps occasional advisor. The book urges that you put the time in, up front to find the right organization, and then try to keep your involvement modest. You need evaluate not just compatibility of the organization's mission with your values but, just as a venture capitalist might, carefully evaluate the quality of its leadership, its track record of results, and the sense that you'll trust the competence and integrity of their leaders, and yes, enjoy working with them: Donors have the right to derive some pleasure not only from the outcome of their donation but from the process, their involvement with the grantees.

On average, philanthropy is ... well ... average. The current state of philanthropy is that it overhypes and underperforms. Market forces do not come into play, and the power imbalance between donors who have money and nonprofits who seek it can have a chilling effect on real time and useful feedback. Give Smart looks at what it takes to utterly transform this. Outstanding donors demand excellence of themselves and do not settle for mediocre results. They develop true and open partnerships with grantees and are not afraid of failure. They are clear about their values and beliefs and realistic about what they hope to accomplish. They have gone through the process of thoughtfully defining success and have a plan to achieve it. Most tellingly, donors who "give smart" continuously ask "Am I getting better?" and consciously learn to improve over time. Give Smart is a breath of fresh air, challenging all philanthropists to rethink what they do and how they do it in order to get results.

The book gives good advice but much of it applies mostly to mega-donors; those who need a family office or will employ staff to administer their charitable funds.

A book that you must read if you want to know about how philosophy works. Especially about teams work.

Books are boring, this is no different. However, at least I learned a lot.

This book really helped me to change my mindset and lens as it pertains to grantmaking! I will definitely recommend this book to others!

If you want to know about how to be smart about philanthropy this is a must have book.

A must read for anyone developing a giving plan.

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