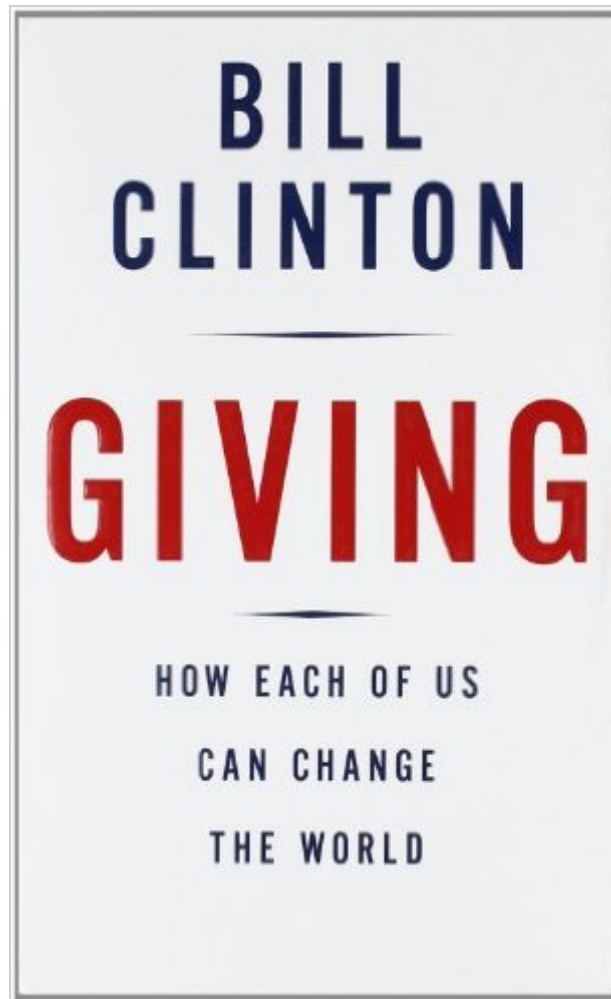


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Giving: How Each Of Us Can Change The World



Synopsis

Here, from Bill Clinton, is a call to action. Giving is an inspiring look at how each of us can change the world. First, it reveals the extraordinary and innovative efforts now being made by companies and organizations—and by individuals—to solve problems and save lives both down the street and around the world. Then it urges us to seek out what each of us, regardless of income, available time, age, and skills, can do to help, to give people a chance to live out their dreams. Bill Clinton shares his own experiences and those of other givers, representing a global flood tide of nongovernmental, nonprofit activity. These remarkable stories demonstrate that gifts of time, skills, things, and ideas are as important and effective as contributions of money. From Bill and Melinda Gates to a six-year-old California girl named McKenzie Steiner, who organized and supervised drives to clean up the beach in her community, Clinton introduces us to both well-known and unknown heroes of giving. Among them: Dr. Paul Farmer, who grew up living in the family bus in a trailer park, vowed to devote his life to giving high-quality medical care to the poor and has built innovative public health-care clinics first in Haiti and then in Rwanda; a New York couple, in Africa for a wedding, who visited several schools in Zimbabwe and were appalled by the absence of textbooks and school supplies. They founded their own organization to gather and ship materials to thirty-five schools. After three years, the percentage of seventh-graders who pass reading tests increased from 5 percent to 60 percent; Oseola McCarty, who after seventy-five years of eking out a living by washing and ironing, gave \$150,000 to the University of Southern Mississippi to endow a scholarship fund for African-American students; Andre Agassi, who has created a college preparatory academy in the Las Vegas neighborhood with the city's highest percentage of at-risk kids. "Tennis was a stepping-stone for me," says Agassi. "Changing a child's life is what I always wanted to do"; Heifer International, which gave twelve goats to a Ugandan village. Within a year, Beatrice Bira's mother had earned enough money selling goat's milk to pay Beatrice's school fees and eventually to send all her children to school—and, as required, to pass on a baby goat to another family, thus multiplying the impact of the gift. Clinton writes about men and women who traded in their corporate careers, and the fulfillment they now experience through giving. He writes about energy-efficient practices, about progressive companies going green, about promoting fair wages and decent working conditions around the world. He shows us how one of the most important ways of giving can be an effort to change, improve, or protect a government policy. He outlines what we as individuals can do, the steps we can take, how much we should consider giving, and why our giving is so important. Bill Clinton's own actions in his post-presidential years have had an enormous impact on the lives of millions. Through his

foundation and his work in the aftermath of the Asian tsunami and Hurricane Katrina, he has become an international spokesperson and model for the power of giving. "We all have the capacity to do great things," President Clinton says. "My hope is that the people and stories in this book will lift spirits, touch hearts, and demonstrate that citizen activism and service can be a powerful agent of change in the world."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Even conservatives will like this book. It's interesting, inspiring, clearly written, not at all political and, believe it or not, only a tad self-centered. Filled with dozens, maybe hundreds, of specific examples of charitable individuals and successful grassroots programs, it argues -- in fact, proves -- that you don't have to be a big shot to make the world a better place. Clinton clearly believes in what he writes; the book is passionate and powerful on topics that, in other hands, would be detached and dull. Besides the subject matter, what I liked best about the book is its organization. Written so you don't have to read it all at once, it breaks down philanthropy into six different categories, and gives each its own chapter. Those are: * Giving time * Giving things * Giving skills * Giving "gifts of reconciliation and new beginnings" (citing everything from the efforts of Nelson Mandela to PeacePlayers International, a group that sets up basketball leagues in the Middle East) * Giving gifts that keep on giving (such as the work of Heifer International, which gives millions of poor farmers free cows -- as long as they agree to donate one its first offspring to someone else) * Giving to good ideas Clinton also includes descriptions of some successful charitable programs that are easy to use

as model strategies for your own ideas, illustrates how businesses can make money out of acting in the public interest, and explains his views on what roles governments (not just Washington, but cities and states) can play.

"Giving: How Each of Us Can Change the World" is an inspirational book that details the power each and every person has to make a difference. Bill Clinton focuses on two things in this book (which, by the way, is much, MUCH shorter than his autobiography, "My Life"). First, the former president provides countless examples of people and organizations that have taken on projects that have had a positive impact on the world. Second, the book demonstrates the many different ways people can give back, either by volunteering, organizing, or making monetary donations. I was extremely impressed by the scope of this book. I thought the whole focus of "Giving" would be on the work the Clinton Foundation has done over the past six years. Although Clinton does use some of his personal experiences as examples, most of the stories in this book are about outside individuals and other non-governmental organizations that are doing amazing things. Clinton praises a wide variety of people for their good works, ranging from Bill and Melinda Gates to a young girl who organized regular garbage pick-ups at a local beach. I recognized a lot of the names and organizations mentioned in this book, but many of them were unfamiliar to me, and it was great to learn about the different things people are doing. So many people (myself included) tend to focus on the negative aspects of the world we live in. We complain about the government, the economy, taxes, etc., but the reality is that there is a lot of good in the world that goes unnoticed. Reading this book was very inspirational because it illustrated how many people care enough to try to make the world a better place. I know that sounds kind of hokey, but it's the truth...and people really do make an enormous difference!

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