To be clear, givers are not necessarily nice or altruistic—and they certainly don't lack in

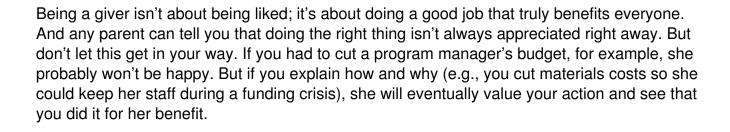
ambition—but they are focused on contributing to more than their own bank accounts, whether



And that mentality is likely to come back around: When you're interested in helping other people succeed, you'll often find yourself with a stronger network of contacts who want to help you in return. For instance, if you happily edit your contacts' resumes or give them tips on their annual solicitation letters, they won't think twice about giving you a recommendation for your dream job or introducing them to your uncle (who just happens to be a major donor prospect you've been chasing for years). And that kind of help can be invaluable in your career.

The Challenge: Look out for Takers

As a giver, it may take some time—or a one-sided professional relationship or two—to realize that some people just aren't as generous as you are. If you notice that someone who isn't interested in "paying it forward" has snuck into your network, make sure you don't overinvest in him or her. You don't have to cut ties completely—but remember that your good deeds probably won't get you much in return. When it comes down to helping givers and takers, know that you'll get more appreciation and long-term respect from the givers.



3. You Can Actually Make an Impact

Believe it or not, givers really can change the world—or at least part of it. Because when givers give, they inspire others to give. In the long run, this can make a big difference: Rather than everyone simply getting a piece of the pie, giving expands the pie.

For instance, consider a department that's obviously overextended with too much work and not enough hands. A taker, in this situation, would likely monopolize the department and concentrate all fundraising efforts on his or her own projects—and as a result, the structure of the organization would crumble as soon as he or she left.

A giver, on the other hand, may try to take on more staff at varying levels of experience, creating a leadership pipeline—not only helping the immediate staffing need, but also preparing leaders to take the organization in the right direction if he or she were to move on. Takers may be able to make immediate decisions and bring in quick funding on the spot, but a giver's power will last longer—because it's based on real relationships and trust.

The Challenge: Be Careful of Burnout

Grant writes that givers burn out when "they're working with people in need but are unable to help effectively." If you are having trouble seeing how your help actually helps—or feel like it's not making an impact at all—consider asking your organization to help illustrate your impact by introducing you to a program participant who benefited from your job or taking on a volunteer role that has a more direct and visible effect.

Although giver tendencies aren't only helpful in nonprofits, our industry thrives on a giver mentality and is at its best when it is fully utilizing our strengths. So, ditch the idea that "greed is good," embrace your generosity, and make sure it's working for you. Everyone will benefit in the long run.

Source: The Daily Muse by Rebecca Andruszka