

Episode 7: The Giving Done Right Podcast

Melinda: So I would say this is why a lot of times people who come into philanthropy say, "oh, it should be very straightforward and easy to measure my impact." And I keep saying "it's really quite difficult."

[00:00:16] **Grace:** Welcome to Giving Done Right, a podcast on everything you need to know to make an impact with your charitable giving. I'm Grace Nicolette,

[00:00:22] **Phil:** and I'm Phil Buchanan.

[00:00:24] **Grace:** Final episode, Phil!

[00:00:26] **Phil:** Yeah, Grace, I'm excited about it. These have flown by, and I'm looking forward to our conversation today with Melinda Tuan, who is an amazing leader in the world of philanthropy.

[00:00:36] **Grace:** Yeah. Time flies when we're having fun. We're thrilled today to talk to Melinda who has been a trusted advisor to foundations and major individual donors around the country. And she's also managing director of the Fund for Shared Insight. Prior to starting her consulting practice in 2003, Melinda co-founded and ran RedF, a social venture capital fund and was a manager at a national healthcare, nonprofit, and a management consultant.

[00:01:01] **Phil:** And Melinda is somebody who knows philanthropy from so many different angles, nonprofit leader, advisor to individual donors, advisor to big national and international foundations. I don't know that there is someone with more deep expertise and knowledge about the challenge of giving than Melinda Tuan.

[00:01:22] Welcome to the giving done right podcast, Melinda. Great to have you.

[00:01:26] **Melinda:** Thanks for having me.

[00:01:27] **Phil:** Melinda, I met you a long time ago when you were running an organization called Roberts Enterprise Development Fund which was focused on helping at-risk youth. And at the time, I think you had helped pioneer a concept called "social return on investment" or SROI.

[00:01:42] And the focus was on really understanding in some kind of quantified way, the impact of your philanthropy. Do you think that's possible? And has your perspective on measuring impact changed over the years? Talk to us about that.

[00:01:56] **Melinda:** So REDF, which was called the Roberts Enterprise Development Fund, we were focused on and providing employment through social enterprises, so nonprofit-run small businesses, for formerly homeless and low-income individuals. So it wasn't just at-risk youth, but there were a fair number of homeless youth and at-risk youth that were employed through our enterprises. And I would say, you know, our, our attempt to do "social return on investment" or SROI was really from the investor's perspective.

[00:02:24] It was really trying to make a justification in terms of what is the cost benefit analysis of doing this social enterprise work? Because frankly, people were saying, why would you even try to run businesses employing formerly homeless people? Because if they could have gotten jobs, they would have gotten them in the for-profit marketplace.

[00:02:42] But we were making the argument that these supported social enterprises were making a contribution to the field. And that in fact, if you invested dollars, philanthropic dollars in particular, into these social enterprises, you'd be saving society 2, 3, 30 times the amount that you would be putting in from a charitable perspective.

[00:03:03] So we had to choose things that most individuals or nonprofits would not consider desired outcomes for their work, such as fewer hospital emergency room stays, lower usage of food stamps, lower usage of mental health services. I mean, in many cases, some of the things that we were tracking that we wanted to have lower were things that people actually needed to get better.

[00:03:29] So in many ways, SROI was this grand experiment to see, like, could we demonstrate that there was a return on your social investment? And we demonstrated that there is.

[00:03:39] **Phil:** Yeah.

[00:03:40] **Melinda:** I mean, certainly some populations in particular, if you just give them a little more stability, and you'll deal with some mental health issues, and access to healthcare, they won't be showing up in your emergency room, which we know is very, very expensive. But ultimately that argument around SROI was useful mostly for some of our nonprofit partners who had a lot of government funding. Because the government funding sources saw that it would decrease the amount of money that they are expending to provide these services in the emergency room or on the streets with police being called, right?

[00:04:14] Things like that. So the things that we were tracking, again, were more for the argument of 'you should invest in social enterprises because it will save society money in the long run.' And it was an art, not a science. It wasn't a single number that we were driving at. And we also really want to make sure that it was coupled with the actual outcomes for the people that were employed in the enterprises. So you wouldn't just take the savings, but you'd also look at the change in people's lives.

[00:04:42] **Phil:** Would it be fair to say then that for donors, it can be important to understand like the quantified economic impact of a program. But maybe that's not the only thing you would want to know, or it might not be relevant for every program?

[00:04:58] **Melinda:** It depends. So, it depends on what the goals are. So, for example, for the homeless youth that we were employing to some of the enterprises, showing that they were using fewer community services, fewer mental health services, was actually a bad thing. So their social return on an investment number might actually look better because wow! Our savings are a lot of money, because these kids are not using the services. But for disconnected youth, getting them to use the services, getting them to get the food they need, getting them to get the healthcare and mental health treatment that they need, is

really what was necessary to help them be healthy and to live the lives that they ultimately wanted to live. But just putting a number in terms of cost savings was actually the opposite direction of what we wanted to see.

[00:05:48] **Grace:** Your comment makes me think about even now as many children are falling through the cracks in the time of COVID where they're not accessing the normal services that they might typically, if I'm a donor, I think that one thing that I could be very nervous about is that there's just so many things to hold intention. Like your answer was, it depend, right? And so if I see savings over here, and yet there are secondary effects that are actually not positive. It can be really discouraging as a donor to know, all right, well, what am I supposed to do then? Like, how do I understand my impact? What would you say to someone like that?

[00:06:25] **Melinda:** So I would say this is why a lot of times people who come into philanthropists say, 'oh, it should be very straightforward and easy to measure my impact.' And I keep saying it's really quite difficult because you do have to hold all these different pieces in tension.

[00:06:38] And I will just point to a piece that our colleague Fay Twersky from the Hewlett Foundation wrote called "Time for a Three-Legged Stool of Measurement," where she makes the argument that to date, we've been doing all this work around performance monitoring, like, how is the grant going? Then you're doing these evaluations -- they could be these randomized controlled trials, it could be these pre-post surveys, but what we're missing is the perspectives of the people who are ultimately benefiting from the services and programs. And then if you wanted to lay another complicated layer on top of that, you could talk about something like SROI.

[00:07:13] So, I mean, you have like four different categories of ways you could think about impact and outcomes. And those could be very much in conflict with each other, which is why being a thoughtful donor means really holding all those things in tension and understanding what your goals are for your philanthropy, what your goals are for the nonprofit partners, and what the goals are for the individuals -- if there are individuals in terms of what you're giving is about -- what their goals are. I mean, you were talking earlier about how for children, right? Not receiving the services. One of the most heartbreaking statistics that we're seeing right now during COVID is the lower rate of child abuse reporting. And we know that it doesn't mean child abuse isn't happening. It just means that kids aren't in places where people are seeing it, or they're not in interaction with the adults who can help them. Now, if we just took it from a cost benefit analysis, you could say, 'this is great! We're not spending money on child abuse services!' But that is totally the wrong way to interpret that piece of data.

[00:08:15] **Grace:** Is it possible to be too focused on understanding impact? We've seen a spectrum where there are folks who, you know, are counting pennies and nickels as to how the money is spent. And then on the other side, there's sort of the, you know, "pray and spray" where you just give the money and hope that it's doing the best that it can.

[00:08:37] I think that the skeptics that we run into are, are much more on the side of, 'because I can't understand how every penny is spent, I would rather just not give, because I want to steward, you know, my funds as best as I can.' What would you say to them?

[00:08:52] **Melinda:** We think about organizations that we know and we trust because we know them well, because we're involved with them.

[00:08:59] We're on the board of directors. We volunteer. We're...they're in the community. We know them well, that we can trust that they're doing the work that they say that they're doing and not worry about counting every single penny and the return on the investment. Because again, if you're just thinking about the impact from that return on investment on every single penny, you're missing the other aspects of how lives are changed, how the environment is improved.

[00:09:28] I mean, you're, you're missing a lot of those other pieces.

[00:09:31] **Grace:** I think that there can be this ethos out there that says 'if it's not measured, it doesn't exist.' And I remember Darren Walker from the Ford Foundation saying in one of his essays that there are some things in this world that cannot be measured.

[00:09:44] And I think that that's a really hard lesson for donors to learn as they're coming up the curve on how to be more effective.

[00:09:50] **Melinda:** Yeah. And there is a desire to measure everything. I mean, it's interesting because when we think about listening to what people themselves want in their lives? I mean, there can be a such a top down perspective.

[00:10:02] "We know what people need." And REDF, you know, I'm, I'm very partial to REDF, huge fan of REDF, and REDF all along has been very committed to measuring outcomes and being very rigorous in terms of their evaluation of how the social enterprises are impacting the people involved. And, you know, we came up with SROI.

[00:10:20] So you think about us on like one end of the spectrum potentially. But REDF has been participating in Fund for Shared Insight, which is the organization I run now, our signature initiative Listen4Good, which is about elevating the voices, the people, that are ultimately being served through nonprofits.

[00:10:36] And one of the things that REDF did is they realized, "well, we need to think about what the social enterprise employees think about what the good life is to them." Like we ask them about their housing and their job stability, and their wages, and their income and all of that. But what did they actually see as the good life for them?

[00:10:58] And what they heard was that people surprisingly had the same kind of dreams that we do. They want to be happy. They want to be surrounded by family and community. They want to give back to community and find fulfillment and volunteering. Now, those are not things that would typically be on a foundation or a nonprofit's evaluation dashboard, you know? Are people happy?

[00:11:23] Are they feeling fulfilled in community and in family life? And yet those are the things that I want. Those are the things that you want, especially now during COVID like, we want that connection. We want meaningful lives. And so REDF thought about, okay, we're not going to stop tracking all these other outcomes, but we're going to really start to engage the social enterprise employees and what they see as the good life for them.

[00:11:48] **Phil:** There's so much in what you just said, and it connects earlier, you, you were talking about trusting nonprofits. It seems to me, part of what you're talking about here is trusting the people you seek to help listening to them and really hearing what it is they want. Obviously at Fund for Shared Insight, you're focused on that really with institutional donors, big foundations. Our audience on this podcast is, I think, primarily individual donors. How does an individual donor put this kind of listening to those they seek to help into practice? Does that mean, for example, if they're focused on poverty, doing things like giving cash directly, because that gives the intended beneficiary more freedom to use those resources? Or if you're not focused on poverty, let's say you're focused on some other issue area, youth development... how do you do that as an individual donor? Because you might not know any of the people who your philanthropy is seeking to benefit?

[00:12:53] **Melinda:** Yeah, I think that is a challenge for individual donors, but in some ways I think it might actually be easier for individuals. And especially if you're giving is more local.

[00:13:03] When you think about foundations, foundations are so far away from the people they ultimately seek to help because they're like in these offices, so far away, and they're making these huge grants and all that. But as an individual, I think we have opportunities to be engaged in the local community or regional community and actually seeing what's happening on a more regular basis and even spending time in community.

[00:13:26] And I would challenge people to do that in ways that are not extractive but appropriate and COVID safe nowadays. Since the pandemic started, I've started volunteering at my local food bank because I felt like I really wanted to be in a place where the people from the community are coming and be a part of a solution, which is not a systems change solution, but literally food on the table, but to listen and hear their stories and just be there to interact with folks in my community, who I go to church with, who I see at the library, who I see in the downtown and...you know, it's been a really great opportunity for me to feel connected. And I am a donor to the food bank. I mean, that's a very specific example. That's very much community service, direct service related example. But I found that very, very meaningful, and I think it's a challenge to everyone to really figure out how can you connect in a meaningful way on an individual basis with the people you seek to help.

[00:14:29] And part of me is being in a community of faith that's quite diverse socioeconomically. I have some foundation colleagues that are very surprised that I have friends who don't own a computer or don't have a printer and have to come to my house or have me print things out and deliver them to their house.

[00:14:47] But it's because I'm in a faith community where there is that kind of diversity that I'm having a very different lived experience through the eyes and experiences of my friends.

[00:14:58] **Grace:** Can I ask a follow-up question? And this might sound so silly because it's so sort of brass tacks, but when you were talking about volunteering at the food bank, as you mentioned, you're part of a faith community. You also run a large fund. When do you do that? And what does that time commitment look like for you?

[00:15:16] **Melinda:** So it's really not much time. I'm a little embarrassed to say this, but I play tennis a lot as some of you may know. And so I just decided when the pandemic hit and all the tennis clubs shut down, that I should be spending my time doing other things.

[00:15:30] So I took just a portion of the time that I used to exercise, but it's really socialization and fun, to devote to the food bank. So I was doing that on Tuesday mornings for two hours anyway. And I just, instead I'm volunteering at the food bank for three hours every week. And because many of my clients are on the West Coast, they don't know what I'm doing until noon Eastern time.

[00:15:54] It's really been quite selfish on my part because I enjoy it so much, just being there and being a small part of a solution in my local community.

[00:16:04] **Phil:** On this issue of this time, and, and you talked about what you have decided to do in this time. I just want to say, like, I don't know that there's anybody who knows philanthropy better than you, right?

[00:16:15] I mean, you have...

[00:16:16] **Melinda:** Oh, psshaw!

[00:16:17] **Phil:** No, seriously! In the sense that you have focused on questions of measurement, you've worked with individual donors, creating resources, guides to help people give. But you've also got a lot of experience working with big institutional donors. If you just step way back and look at what's happening right now in this country, what are your thoughts on the way in which philanthropy, individual and institutional, is responding?

[00:16:45] Are people doing what you hoped they would do? Are there things that are frustrating you about folks' response as you watch from your perch?

[00:16:52] **Melinda:** Okay. I might start crying. I'm really struggling with this. I mean, I work with some of the best foundations in the country through Fund for Shared Insight and they're huge donors.

[00:17:02] And, you know, at the beginning of the pandemic, the foundations were really worried because they saw the stock market slide and they thought they wouldn't be able to make their commitments to nonprofits. And I'm really excited to see that foundations did make commitments. There's this whole council on foundations' COVID-19 pledge where foundations pledged to give general operating support and convert program grants and to be flexible around reporting deadlines and committed to listening to people in communities most affected by COVID. So all that is good. But at the same time now, like, all of these endowments have recovered plus some. And we heard a recent report in the news, like a week ago, about how the billionaires have made out even better than expected.

[00:17:47] Because they were able to make investments when the stock market took a turn and now they've reaped those investments. And it just breaks my heart that there are so many resources that foundations and individual donors have in their... I have... during this time because I have a stable job and my husband does, too.

[00:18:07] And yet, the folks were already struggling are even worse off. And it's not really clear how their recovery is going to happen. Because they're in the service economy because they are, we're already living paycheck to paycheck. And I, I really struggle with that because again, because I'm more involved with people in my community. And my husband keeps telling me you can't solve everybody's problems.

[00:18:33] And I, I know that, but on an individual basis, and I think with foundations on an institutional basis, you can't solve everyone's problems, but there is just something wrong that foundations and individuals are better off than they were before COVID hit, and the nonprofits are laying off scores and scores and thousands of people.

[00:18:54] And the people they're trying to serve are worse off than ever before. And like, how are we going to recover from this? Like, we talk about trying to get to a, a new normal, but how is that going to happen? Frankly, I'm not really sure.

[00:19:09] **Phil:** I just want to say, cause I can't help myself on this because I hear your...you know, your frustration, Melinda. And I just think about the articles that I've read, you know, since mid-March and two, I think both in the *New York Times*, that I just thought, what on Earth are we doing? One was about, it was in the real estate section, I think, and it was about the difficulty people were having adjusting to living permanently in their second homes.

[00:19:36] Somebody tweeted, you know, "Read the room, *New York Times*." And then another one was just about the huge demand for in ground swimming pools, the swimming pool manufacturers and installers could not keep up with. And people are in their bubbles. How do we get people out of their bubbles? I mean, how do we change what you're talking about? I mean, I guess you don't know how could, you know, but to tap into deeper reservoirs of empathy and motivation to do something to help in this time? When we all know the litany of statistics about disproportionate impact among Latinx, African-American, indigenous people, among folks on the lowest economic strata, regardless of race, how's this going to change?

[00:20:24] Like what can be done to motivate people to step up and give in a way, you know, that's actually at some level, as we talked about with another guest earlier in the season, sacrificial?

[00:20:35] **Melinda:** One of the things that stuck with me, I remember reading your retweet about that *New York Times* article about the second homes and struggling to furnish those homes.

[00:20:45] And then there was a *New York Times* article that's haunted me. I think it was a photo that went with it. It was a hot dog vendor in Midtown, and they were asking him how he was doing. And he said he had sold 10 hot dogs that day. And he usually sells 400 a day.

And I just keep thinking about that gentleman and just, he has a family that he's trying to support by selling hotdogs in Midtown.

[00:21:10] I love buying hot dogs when I'm in Midtown, but I haven't been to New York, nor do I know when I'm going to ever go back because I'm not allowed to travel. And there's no reason for me to go to New York. So, I'm not going to be able to buy a hot dog from him. And yet now, how is he going to survive this? I think reading articles like that helps in terms of empathy.

[00:21:29] It's hard though, with all the other noise that's around you, when all your friends and colleagues are getting there in ground pools and redecorating their homes and doing all that, and you think like something is really wrong. And we know that there's some things... that the divide has been greater and greater over time between those who have, and those who are have not.

[00:21:49] Again, I wish I knew what the solution was. I mean, I think on an individual basis, there are ways that we can definitely open up our pocket books and be much more generous and give and look out for all those who are vulnerable or our lives. Personally, I have this spreadsheet of all the people in my life that like the people that come and clean my house, who everyone's stopped having house cleaners. So like, how do I care for that particular family that is in my life during this time? And how do I advocate for them in this time? Again, but there's limited things that I can do as a person, but just trying to be more thoughtful about who you are in touch with, who's path has crossed yours? Or how can you make sure that your path crosses with those who are in different socioeconomic need?

[00:22:42] **Grace:** Listening to you, I am struck by how, you know, the power of, of giving is not so much in, you know, the headlines that we see of so-and-so wrote a big check to this cause, but it's actually the small, everyday, sometimes mundane and not seen gestures that we all can do to reach out or cross a divide that existed before. And that's so important.

[00:23:06] **Melinda:** And I recognize it doesn't get at the systemic issues that are driving this K-shaped current recovery. And as an individual there's only so much I can do. And I'm trying to do as much as I can and also not be like, "Oh, Oh, I'm so great for doing these things." Cause that's also a problem I have is thinking, "I'm going to solve all these problems myself.

[00:23:25] And aren't a great person?" which I'm not. Just trying to remember that, too, and have humility around what it is that I'm trying to do. But then also in the places where I've been placed with foundations, with an ability to influence, hopefully some individual donors like. What are the things that I can bring to those conversations?

[00:23:45] What are the experiences that we can bring?

[00:23:48] **Grace:** I want to ask you... you lead something called the Fund for Shared Insight. For someone who doesn't work in philanthropy, can you explain what that is?

[00:23:57] **Melinda:** So Fund for Shared Insight. It is a funder collaborative. And there are many different kinds of funder collaboratives, but ours is what's called a pooled fund.

[00:24:06] So each of the 10 foundations that participate put in a minimum of \$250,000 per year for a three-year period, and we have those resources then to make decisions together about how we want to support nonprofits and foundations to listen to the people we ultimately seek to help, and to act on what we hear and to bring these lenses around equity, diversity, and inclusion to our work.

[00:24:33] And it's really timely given all that's been going on with the social unrest and the new sort of realization. That's been in existence for centuries about anti-black racism and the need for us to address the systemic racism in all of our institutions and our actions.

[00:24:51] **Phil:** Melinda, can you tell us where your sort of values and your obvious kind of passion to make a difference in the world came from? What influenced you to pursue what you are doing every day and what you're talking to us about?

[00:25:09] **Melinda:** I grew up in Honolulu, Hawaii, which was such a gift to grow up there. And it's a very multi-ethnic community. And I grew up in a family where my parents had immigrated to the US from China. So immigrant family, not a huge number of resources.

[00:25:27] We were definitely middle-class though, not poor. But in Hawaii, it's very expensive to live there. And so I just, from the very beginning, I think I just had from my mom in particular, who volunteered a lot in the community, and is very generous, had this value around hospitality and generosity. And then growing up in the church where I did this sense and understanding that Jesus calls us to care for the poor and the disenfranchised. And that our calling is to be a part of the healing of the world. And from a very early age like I just loved volunteering in the homeless shelters, and tutoring kids who are in the homeless shelters, and then going to the Shriner's hospital, and doing food drives. It was just something that I really enjoyed doing. So, you know, very selfishly I just really enjoy doing those things. And I had these opportunities through the church and through the community and through school to be involved with those things. And from very early on, I just wanted to be involved in serving people.

[00:26:31] And so the path that I took was really around a faith-informed perspective on how do I best position myself to be in a place where I can serve people? I majored in urban poverty and homelessness. And I, um, did the first study of family homelessness in the islands because I was really seeing a lot of families on the streets or in tents on beaches, looking like they were camping, but clearly they were homeless.

[00:26:58] Um, that was my senior thesis in college. And then I wanted to get more experience so I could bring that experience to the nonprofit sector. And I did a terrible two-year stint at a management consulting firm, and it was awful and I was terrible at it, but I learned a lot and I learned a lot by myself and then eventually ended up having the opportunity to go to Stanford Business School and focus on nonprofit management and entrepreneurship, and then landed at REDF, which was working with all these homeless, former homeless serving individual organizations.

[00:27:27] And it was like my dream job. So I did that for seven years and then my husband got a job at Penn. So then I had to move out into Philadelphia and reinvent myself and end up being a consultant in philanthropy.

[00:27:38] **Grace:** One of the things that I want to ask you about is that I know that in some of your writings, in particular, I'm thinking of a guide that you wrote for donors, that you suggest people think of their giving in three categories. Number one: supporting organizations they've supported over the long-term. Uh, number two: responding to the crisis that we're in right now and then three: recovery. And I'm wondering if you can say more because I know that donors are really wrestling right now to get all that right. Like the balance between all of those and even just understanding the backgrounds of nonprofits they'd support, it's it just seems like a lot. Like, what would your advice be for them?

[00:28:15] **Melinda:** Yeah, so I think you are talking about the piece that I wrote for Goldman Sachs Philanthropy Fund, and it's called "Effective Philanthropy in a Time of Crisis." So, I interviewed a number of people, Phil included, because I like to have experts to inform the things that I write. And it really reflected the way I approached my own philanthropy.

[00:28:33] Now I'm not like a high-net-worth individual, but I thought about once COVID hit, like how do I think about allocating my dollars? And I thought about all right, who is in my immediate circle or relations that I support on an annual basis, or in some cases, individuals that I support on a regular basis, how can I make sure that they know that I'm there for them now? Immediately? And then what are some nonfinancial ways that I can be supporting people? And the examples I gave for individuals were things like, you know, bringing your business to bear. Like if you have space, making sure that that's available for folks or using your transportation network, if you own a transportation company, to help with distribution of food or products.

[00:29:15] In my case, it was just, I really liked to cook! So I knew that there were people that needed food. Now there's a lot of food in my examples, but so I would deliver meals to people, um, in the beginning of COVID and throughout this time. Um, and then the third would be like, how do you think about the long-term?

[00:29:32] And this is where we get into like systems change. Because again, working at the food bank, delivering meals, helping individual organizations, isn't going to address systemic racism and the systemic issues that are creating these situations where we have people who don't have access to food and don't have access to jobs.

[00:29:52] Um, so thinking about what of the organizations are really working on that on a systemic level and investing in those organizations. Um, so trying to think about, you know, a balanced portfolio for your philanthropy is, you know, what are the things immediately local? What are things that are nonfinancial that you can do? And then what are some things that are investing for the long-term, new normal sort of recovery?

[00:30:15] **Phil:** Thanks, Melinda, this has been such a great conversation and you actually, our last guest of our first season, no pressure, but we have asked everyone a final question. And the question is: giving done right to you is what? Fill in the blank.

[00:30:33] **Melinda:** Giving done right to me is giving more than you think you have giving creatively with the resources and the networks that you have access to. Giving in the immediate needs, as well as thinking about the long run. So direct needs as well as systemic change. And ultimately giving with passion because you're going to feel good about the things that you are giving to, if you believe in them, if you're involved, if you're meaningfully connected. So, you know, giving with passion, informed by all those things I just mentioned.

[00:31:15] **Phil:** Melinda, thank you so much for taking the time to talk with us today. We really enjoyed it.

[00:31:20] **Melinda:** Oh, it's a pleasure.

[00:31:29] **Grace:** So Phil, Melinda really gave us a lot to think about.

[00:31:32] **Phil:** She did. I've always regarded Melinda, who I've known for almost two decades, as a sort of evidence-driven, analytical person who really pushes to know what works in philanthropy, what doesn't, an advocate for best practice. And what I really saw in her today is where that all comes from, which is this incredibly generous heart and this deep empathy for others and for people who are struggling.

[00:32:07] And so it's a great kind of capstone to our season because we started our first episode talking about the head and the heart and whether those two things were in tension or went together and here we ended with the fact that it is, it is the heart that compels you to use your head.

[00:32:26] **Grace:** Yeah, Melinda to me is such a moving example of that excellence in philanthropy, whether it's her own giving or sort of the work that she does institutionally in philanthropy.

[00:32:39] And I couldn't help but just really enjoy the little nuggets that she dropped around the time that she spends at the soup kitchen or the spreadsheet that she keeps of people that she wants to look after in her community. All of that is super practical. And I think sometimes we can think that being involved in the community is much more difficult or bigger than it might seem.

[00:33:02] And I think she brought it down to a level that seems like feasible and real.

[00:33:08] **Phil:** Yeah. And I thought it was great that she, like some other guests that we've had on the podcast, talked about her faith and the role that it plays in her giving. And what I kept thinking about, as somebody who is not connected to any particular organized religion, is the bubbles that we're in.

[00:33:28] You know, so for her, her church is a source of interaction with a wide range of people, some of whom are experiencing very different life circumstances than her own. So many Americans with wealth don't have a place where that kind of interaction occurs and, and there's a real danger. And we talked about it in the episode that in our comfortable bubbles, we fail to engage with the suffering of others and therefore we fail to do enough about that suffering. So, um, she really got me thinking about that and about, you know,

what are the various ways in which as a society, we can create more connection across different kinds of divides.

[00:34:12] **Grace:** I think that, you know, part of the conversation we really delved in deeply, philosophically, into how can we motivate ourselves and other people around us who have resources to really give sacrificially during this time when so many people in our communities and globally are struggling so deeply? It's interesting that we finished this season sort of grappling with that question.

[00:34:36] And I guess I'm turning that question. Inwardly myself. I'm also a faith-motivated giver, and I think I really want to grapple with what, what I can be doing even more than typical during this time? I think that if we all gave a bit more sacrificially. A little bit more than makes us comfortable, that actually that may rise to some systemic change as well.

[00:34:56] **Phil:** Yeah, I absolutely agree. So as we wrap up the season, Grace, not to put you on the spot, but stepping back just from the conversation with Melinda and thinking about the seven conversations we've had, what are some of the things that you took away?

[00:35:12] **Grace:** I wish that I could just wrap up giving done right, like effective giving, in this perfect bow that is completely straightforward, digestible, and checking many boxes, to our listeners.

[00:35:25] But I think the main thing that I take away is that solution does not exist. Um, there is a tremendous complexity, art, and science around giving. Well, uh, it doesn't lend itself to easy answers. We need to practice humility, really sit down and take time to listen to those in our communities, um, those we're trying to support, and really understand their problems and challenges.

[00:35:52] Also, I think that there's just such a breadth of work being done in our communities and globally by nonprofits supported by philanthropy. And it really bears sort of learning what is already happening and seeing if we could join forces instead of reinventing the wheel.

[00:36:10] **Phil:** And it is also the case that nonprofits supported by philanthropy have knit together our society in so many ways and in difficult times, and the role that they're playing right now is extraordinary. So, it was fun to be able to talk about some of that here over the last number of weeks.

[00:36:28] **Grace:** So Phil, where can people go for more information about effective giving?

[00:36:31] **Phil:** As always more resources are available on our website, which is cep.org. And also on the podcast site, which has givingdoneright.org, where we have all our episodes and show notes.

[00:36:42] Since it's our last episode of the season, though, I want to shout out to some other really important resources. National Center for Family Philanthropy, uh, check out that website for webinars and reports that help, uh, individual and institutional givers alike.

Giving Compass is a website that is focused entirely on individual donors and they pulled together a lot of other resources into one place.

[00:37:08] Finally your local community foundation, there are 800 across the country, is something that you should check out if you're not familiar with them yet. *The Chronicle of Philanthropy* is a newspaper that covers nonprofits and philanthropy. It's a really good resource. And I also just want to thank them for being a partner in promoting this podcast, which we greatly appreciate.

[00:37:28] I also want to thank *Alliance Magazine*, which is focused mostly in Europe and other parts of the world, and they're focused on philanthropy and they've also helped to promote this podcast.

[00:37:38] **Grace:** If you find yourself wanting more information, wishing this podcast could go on for longer, I want to plug Phil's book, *Giving Done Right*.

[00:37:45] It came out last year. It's a tremendous resource for donors on effective giving.

[00:37:51] **Phil:** Thank you, Grace. And also you're a great resource for donors and you're on Twitter @gracenicolette. I'm on Twitter @philxbuchanan. And you can send us a note by email with any suggestions or comments to GDRpodcast@cep.org.

[00:38:06] **Grace:** And if you liked the show, please leave us a review on Apple podcasts. It really helps.

[00:38:11] **Phil:** I want to thank Melinda Tuan again. The Fund for Shared Insight, which she leads, has funded CEP and initiatives within CEP, particularly our YouthTruth project. I want to thank the CEP podcast team, but especially producer Sarah Martin, who has really brought this idea of a podcast focused on individual donors to life and made it much better than it possibly could have been without her, so huge gratitude to Sarah. I also want to thank research and logistics guru, Molly Heidemann, our terrific colleagues, Jay Kustka, Ethan McCoy, and Sae Darling. Thanks, all.