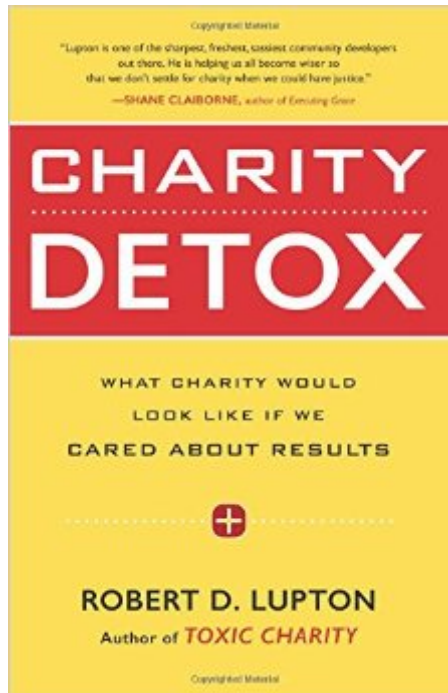


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Charity Detox: What Charity Would Look Like If We Cared About Results



Synopsis

The veteran urban activist and author of the revolutionary *Toxic Charity* returns with a headline-making book that offers proven, results-oriented ideas for transforming our system of giving. In *Toxic Charity*, Robert D. Lupton revealed the truth about modern charity programs meant to help the poor and disenfranchised. While charity makes donors feel better, he argued, it often hurts those it seeks to help. At the forefront of this burgeoning yet ineffective compassion industry are American churches, which spend billions on dependency-producing programs, including food pantries. But what would charity look like if we, instead, measured it by its ability to alleviate poverty and needs? That is the question at the heart of *Charity Detox*. Drawing on his many decades of experience, Lupton outlines how to structure programs that actually improve the quality of life of the poor and disenfranchised. He introduces many strategies that are revolutionizing what we do with our charity dollars, and offers numerous examples of organizations that have successfully adopted these groundbreaking new models. Only by redirecting our strategies and becoming committed to results, he argues, can charity enterprises truly become as transformative as our ideals.

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Customer Reviews

The author of *Toxic Charity* is at it again. Lupton insists that most of the work we do in the name of charity does more harm than good. Proclaiming that the only effective charity is the kind that asks more from those being served, rather than less, he lifts capitalism onto a pedestal and incriminates socialism and philanthropy as building dependency rather than affirming that the recipient also has

something of value to offer. Lupton's arguments are convincing. His focus is primarily on poor communities, and his conclusion is that the best thing you can do for a person is give him or her a good job. Why capitalism? Only for-profit businesses produce enough wealth to create enough jobs to lift a community out of poverty. Perhaps the worst thing you can do is give a person a handout. Lupton is presumably a Christian, but he's not a fan of mission trips. They don't contribute to local economies: mission trippers come to serve, not consume. They spend their money on airfare and projects rather than on merchandise and excursions. They flood local consumers with free goods, naively undercutting local businesses, the very system locals depend on for their livelihood. The research of a friend of Lupton showed that between 1992 and 2006, a half million workers in Nigeria lost their jobs due to the inflow of donated clothing. But perhaps even worse is the effects of repeated "charity": Feed a person once, it elicits appreciation. Feed him twice, it creates anticipation. Feed him three times, it creates expectation. Feed him four times, it becomes an entitlement. Feed him five times, it produces dependency. So what can we do for the poor? For one, don't denigrate big business or the drive for wealth.

I'll publish a clearer review later but suffice to say that once again Bob Lupton is inserting a brilliantly coined word into the world of community development. "Sanctified Self-Interest" Go read the book, but here are a few noteworthy quotes and observations of my own to get you interested: "When the pressures of survival take precedence over the motivation to achieve, hope begins to flicker. Resignation is inevitable, and poverty of spirit begins to take root. When hard work yields only continued poverty, the person understandably abandons his or her ambition; a work ethic loses its meaning." "We can think of our vehicle with 'economic, social, and spiritual wellness' on each gauge. Things that fill it up are: motivation, planning, training and independence. If they're actually moving the poverty needle, our efforts must be yielding as evidence: increased drive and an increased focus on goals, educational advancement and improved self-sufficiency. Without question or doubt, "a decent job, with the potential for advancement & adequate benefits is essential if a family is going to escape poverty." But that will only make the neighborhood's poverty worse if that family takes their mobility and leaves the neighborhood. That's why community development is critical. "When the fabric of a community is re-woven with capable neighbor/leaders, when it once again becomes a healthy place for children to grow up, the Community then becomes an environment that not only retains its upwardly mobile residents but attracts new ones as well." "What capitalism needs in order to fulfill its promise is concentrated compassion, or something I like to refer to as sanctified self-interest.

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