

From *More Than Money Journal* Issue #20: How Much To Give. Anne Slepian and Christopher Mogil, Editors.

But I Don't Have Time!

As the accompanying chart indicates, many of us experience scarcity of time as one of the biggest obstacles to increasing our giving. Our lives already feel impossibly full with work, children, or other interests. For those who feel caught in this extremely common impasse, we offer the steps below as an elegant way to resolve the "lack of time" issue.

STEP ONE: Imagine for a moment that you have no constraints at all on your time and energy...

- How much would you give?
- What level of research and thoroughness would you give the process (for instance, site visits, evaluation, learning about your funding area, talking to other givers, being personally involved?)

STEP TWO: Put the amount from Step One into a charitable giving instrument ...

- A donor-advised account with a community foundation allows you to go ahead with virtually no effort on your part. You could also get help from an attorney to set up a family foundation, or charitable trust, or some other giving structure. By putting the money into a charitable structure you get immediate tax benefits, and with some trusts a steady stream of personal income, yet you can still take your time deciding where and how to allocate the funds.

STEP THREE: Get sufficient help to do the "good grantmaking" you envisioned in Step One. For instance...

- Simplify your philanthropy by giving larger, multi-year gifts to fewer groups.
- Ask foundations that support groups in your areas of interest for "dockets" of funding proposals that they have researched.
- Hire helpers, such as administrative assistants and philanthropic advisors--people who can either take the chore off your shoulders, or help you create ways to put your creativity and heart into your giving.
- Involve friends and loved ones in the research and decision-making, or simply give the decision-making to people you trust.

These options require an initial investment of energy, but once in place will lighten your load year after year.

STEP FOUR: At the end of the year...

- If not all the funds have been allocated through your work in Step Three, consider giving the remainder to a trusted foundation that grants in your area(s) of interest.
- Celebrate the results of your giving, and the satisfaction of knowing you are giving fully.

--Anne Slepian and Christopher Mogil, editors