



5 Ways Giving and Wellness Are Connected

UNDERSTANDING THE LINK BETWEEN
PHILANTHROPY, FINANCIAL WELLNESS
AND HAPPINESS

Financial wellness—the state in which you feel both financially secure and comfortable—is a goal for many. And while there are relationships between money and happiness, giving money away can actually play a role in your overall wellness. Consider, for instance, [a survey](#) by the University of California, Berkeley of 632 Americans. It found that spending money on other people is associated with significantly greater happiness.

These are things we should keep in mind with year-end giving season around the corner, and that makes now the ideal time to discuss your charitable planning with your family, trusted advisors and philanthropic experts. Here are some valuable insights about giving and wellness.

1 Intention Matters /

There are plenty of things we all can do to be happier—and most of them require us to be intentional with our time, actions and thoughts. Numerous studies show that it's not how much we have, but rather *how we use* what we have that has the greatest effect on our happiness, which the Berkeley study reminds us.

2 Happiness Spreads /

Giving to others generates an abundance of benefits, not only for givers and receivers but also for those who witness acts of generosity. The UC Berkeley research also points to a virtuous cycle between giving and happiness: Giving makes people happier, and happier people give more. In fact, in our recent [report of Gen Z and Millennials](#), we found that the next generation cited family as having a strong influence on their own desire to give.

Givers also regularly report increased feelings of satisfaction and competence, along with a greater sense of purpose. In 120 of 136 countries, says UC Berkeley, people who donated to charity in the prior month reported greater satisfaction with life. Furthermore, a Foundation Source study of more than 1,700 Americans who engage in charitable activities suggests that giving helps people feel more connected with their communities, too. People give to help family, their local community and friends or for religious or spiritual reasons.

GIVERS ALSO REGULARLY REPORT INCREASED FEELINGS OF SATISFACTION AND COMPETENCE, ALONG WITH A GREATER SENSE OF PURPOSE



The same is true for those who volunteer. The Foundation Source research found that many people engage in charitable activities by volunteering and aspire to continue doing so in the future. Donating time and expertise along with physical help can switch our focus from our own troubles to the needs of those around us, fostering social connections and benefiting everyone involved.

3 Physical Benefits /

Medical experts are starting to focus on the tangential benefits of giving, too. In a UnitedHealthcare poll of people who had volunteered in the previous 12 months, the large majority felt healthier (cited by 76% of the respondents), had improved moods (cited by 94%) and reduced stress (mentioned by 78%). Similarly, a blog by the Columbia University Irving Medical Center recently said that generosity has the potential to affect health and well-being by boosting a person's mood, self-esteem and the immune system, in turn reducing stress, anxiety and blood pressure. The associated chemicals that are produced by the body in response to giving can also help reduce physical discomfort and aid sleep.

4 Stronger Families /

Engaging in charitable giving is also an ideal way for **family members to bond with one another** and strengthen multigenerational ties for years to come. By volunteering together and collectively determining which causes and charities they support, a family can clarify its values and traditions, improve its interpersonal relationships, deepen its social consciousness, learn new skills and increase their personal fulfillment.

According to 21/64, a consultancy specializing in next-gen philanthropy, the rising generation cites parents and grandparents as having the strongest influence on how they think about giving. Importantly, 21/64 also points to a “talk the talk and walk the walk” combination of direct teachings from parents and grandparents and observed behavior that helps shape and reinforce the views of younger family members. In our work, we’ve found that family foundations cultivate more involvement and strengthen family ties when they create roles for the next generation, tapping into the talents and passions of the younger family members. Doing so can also bolster the trust and communication between generations, something necessary to ensure a successful legacy of charitable ideals.

5 Giving Is Versatile /

Depending on your interests, priorities and resources, the ways you may engage in philanthropy might vary considerably. As you chart a course for your giving, be sure you’re aware of the many options. For instance:

- You can make direct donations to the charities and causes you care about.
- You can set up a donor-advised fund or a private foundation to capture valuable tax benefits and formalize your family’s commitment to giving back.
- You can address philanthropy as part of estate planning to ensure that key values and priorities are passed from generation to generation.

Regardless of how you choose to give, there are philanthropic experts available to guide and assist you to make your generosity as impactful as possible—not only for your intended recipients but also for yourself in a way that enhances your overall wellness and happiness.

QUESTIONS?

Contact us at 800.839.0054 or info@foundationsource.com.

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