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Uncharitable: How Restraints on Nonprofits Undermine Their Potential (Civil Society: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives)

Dan Pallotta

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"Uncharitable is the most courageous and necessary of all of the recent books that have been written about philanthropy and the nonprofit sector."

—Bill Shore, Founder & Executive Director, Share Our Strength

UNCHARITABLE

HOW RESTRAINTS ON NONPROFITS UNDERMINE THEIR POTENTIAL



DAN PALLOTTA

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Dan Pallotta : Uncharitable: How Restraints on Nonprofits Undermine Their Potential (Civil Society: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Uncharitable: How Restraints on Nonprofits Undermine Their Potential (Civil Society: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives):

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A Heritic, thank God, in true Galileo fashionBy Jeffrey S. MillardThe earth is round and our current treatment and ideas of charities are about as useful as a flat earth understanding of the world. I began this book with an interest in starting a non-profit...I finished it with the goal of actually solving a human need problem. Neither of which can happen if we dont fix our outdated and dangerous ideas about how charity should work.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I enjoyed discussing and arguing these ideas and their feasibilityBy CustomerVery thought provoking. I enjoyed discussing and arguing these ideas and their feasibility. I was disappointed by the massive scope in the conclusion. I was hoping Pallotta would offer some tips and tricks of handling the status quo. SPOILER ALERT: Instead, he concluded that our whole society needs to change for nonprofits to be successful. That was an discouraging conclusion.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Pallotta turns upside down the way nonprofits have operated for ...By Stephen MPallotta turns upside down the way nonprofits have operated for 400 years and has compelling reasons as to why the way they have been run is wrong and evaluations of charities based on percentage of overhead versus AMOUNTS going to the cause makes little sense.

Uncharitable goes where no other book on the nonprofit sector has dared to tread. Where other texts suggest ways to optimize performance inside the existing paradigm, Uncharitable suggests that the paradigm itself is the problem and calls into question our fundamental canons about charity. Author Dan Pallotta argues that societys nonprofit ethic acts as a strict regulatory mechanism on the natural economic law. It creates an economic apartheid that denies the nonprofit sector critical tools and permissions that the for-profit sector is allowed to use without restraint (e.g., no risk-reward incentives, no profit, counterproductive limits on compensation, and moral objections to the use of donated dollars for anything other than program expenditures).These double-standards place the nonprofit sector at extreme disadvantage to the for profit sector on every level. While the for profit sector is permitted to use all the tools of capitalism to advance the sale of consumer goods, the nonprofit sector is prohibited from using any of them to fight hunger or disease. Capitalism is blamed for creating the inequities in our society, but charity is prohibited from using the tools of capitalism to rectify them.Ironically, this is all done in the name of charity, but it is a charity whose principal benefit flows to the for-profit sector and one that denies the nonprofit sector the tools and incentives that have built virtually everything of value in society. The very ethic we have cherished as the hallmark of our compassion is in fact what undermines it.This irrational system, Pallotta explains, has its roots in 400-year-old Puritan ethics that banished self-interest from the realm of charity. The ideology is policed today by watchdog agencies and the use of efficiency measures, which Pallotta argues are flawed, unjust, and should be abandoned. By declaring our independence from these obsolete ideas, Pallotta theorizes, we can dramatically accelerate progress on the most urgent social issues of our time. Pallotta has written an important, provocative, timely, and accessible booka manifesto about equal economic rights for charity. Its greatest contribution may be to awaken society to the fact that they were so unequal in the first place.

From BooklistPallotta TeamWorks was the for-profit brainchild behind several campaigns to raise funds for breast cancer and AIDS research and awareness, creating several nationwide, marathonlike events that raised millions. But its founder came under attack for violating the sacred premises of charitable organizations: low profile, low budget, and little or no profit. Pallotta turns on its head the assumption that charity and capitalism should be forever divided. Dont charitable causes deserve the same kind of competitive forces that work to get results in the for-profit sector? Wouldnt social causes be better served if charitable organizations were headed by the kind of bright, aggressive executives that work in the for-profit sector? Pallotta traces the history of nonprofit organizations to Puritan notions of charity and self-denial. He also offers a detailed case study of TeamWorks and other trends in the nonprofit sector that only tweak around the edges of a system that is sorely in need of change if it is to deliver on its mission to improve social inequities or cure diseases.A passionate, thought-provoking look at the nonprofit sector. --Vanessa Bush Philanthropists and charity execs should read [Uncharitable] to ponder, if judiciously, its lessons.Boston Globe