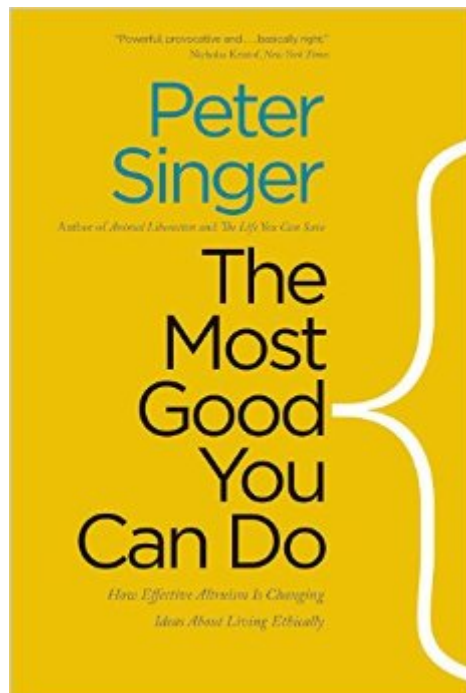


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# The Most Good You Can Do: How Effective Altruism Is Changing Ideas About Living Ethically



## Synopsis

From the ethicist the New Yorker calls "the most influential living philosopher," a new way of thinking about living ethically Peter Singer's books and ideas have been disturbing our complacency ever since the appearance of *Animal Liberation*. Now he directs our attention to a new movement in which his own ideas have played a crucial role: effective altruism. Effective altruism is built upon the simple but profound idea that living a fully ethical life involves doing the "most good you can do." Such a life requires an unsentimental view of charitable giving: to be a worthy recipient of our support, an organization must be able to demonstrate that it will do more good with our money or our time than other options open to us. Singer introduces us to an array of remarkable people who are restructuring their lives in accordance with these ideas, and shows how living altruistically often leads to greater personal fulfillment than living for oneself. *The Most Good You Can Do* develops the challenges Singer has made, in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, to those who donate to the arts, and to charities focused on helping our fellow citizens, rather than those for whom we can do the most good. Effective altruists are extending our knowledge of the possibilities of living less selfishly, and of allowing reason, rather than emotion, to determine how we live. *The Most Good You Can Do* offers new hope for our ability to tackle the world's most pressing problems.

## Book Information

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"Singer's argument is powerful, provocative and, I think, basically right. The world would be a better place if we were as tough-minded in how we donate money as in how we make it." —Nicholas

Kristof, New York Times (Nicholas Kristof New York Times)"In a world getting ever wealthier and more unequal, a book about effective altruism is overdue. What can you be doingâ€” realistically, practically, todayâ€”to make the world a better place? No one has thought harder about this question than Peter Singer, and he answers it with his characteristic clarity and persuasiveness."â€” Elie Hassenfeld and Holden Kamofsky Co-Founders and Co-Executive Directors of the Open Philanthropy Project (Elie Hassenfeld and Holden Kamofsky)â€” Peter Singer is one of the most important thinkers of our time, and this is his most important book. Through the stories of those in the nascent effective altruism movement, he provides clear guidance on what it means to live an ethical life in the face of the worldâ€™s many problems. From charity to career choice to consumerism, this book will revolutionize how you think about doing good."â€” Will MacAskill, author of *Doing Good Better: Effective Altruism and How You Can Make a Difference* (Will MacAskill)â€” Provocative and important â€” |. *The Most Good You Can Do* is a delight to readâ€” Singer is a deep thinker and a wonderfully clear writer, moving smoothly from careful philosophical analyses to vivid stories of extraordinary lives. And even if you are not persuaded that effective altruism is the way to become a betterâ€” and happierâ€” person, you will find yourself deeply unsettled by Singerâ€™s provocative claims about poverty, climate change, animals, art, rationality, and much else.â€” â€” Paul Bloom, author of *Just Babies* (Paul Bloom)â€” From the time of his 1972 paper â€” *Famine, Affluence, and Morality*,â€” Peter Singer has argued that we should be giving more to alleviate global suffering than we usually do. In this new book, Singer introduces us to people who are giving much more and are having fun doing it, and shows us just how easy it is to make a positive difference in the world.â€” â€” Lori Gruen, author of *Ethics and Animals: An Introduction* (Lori Gruen)â€” Singerâ€™s inspiring book challenges us all to take it up a notch in thinking about our giving. Reading this book can change your life; acting on this book can improve the lives of others. â€” Dean Karlan, author of *More Than Good Intentions* and President of Innovations for Poverty Action (Dean Karlan)"An outstanding resource for any donor looking to have an outsized impact on the world."â€” Cari Tuna, President, Good Ventures (Cari Tuna) â€” Peter Singer is the worldâ€™s most influential living philosopher, and this may be his most influential bookâ€” an inspiring and practical guide to living ethically in an age of unmatched opportunity. You cannot escape its pull.â€” â€” Joshua Greene, author of *Moral Tribes* (Joshua Greene)"Peter Singer makes a compelling ethical argument for â€” effective altruismâ€” as a way of life. By giving of our time and resources in a thoughtful and significant way, each of us has the power to save lives and make the world a better place.â€” â€” Lauren Bush Lauren, CEO and Founder of FEED (Lauren Bush Lauren)â€” Singer makes a strong case for a simple ideaâ€” that each of us has a tremendous

opportunity to help others with our abilities, time and money.Â The Most Good You Can DoÂ is an optimistic and compelling look at the positive impact that giving can have on the world.â •â "Bill and Melinda Gates, co-chairs of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (Bill Gates)"We need thinkers such as Singer to test our intuitions...The encouraging message is that we do have the resources to be better... This requires foremost that we believe in the goodness of others. So reading these powerful new books on the existence of altruism could be the first step to making the world a nicer place."â "Stephen Cave, Financial TimesÂ (Stephen Cave Financial Times 2015-05-08)â œRead Peter Singer at your own peril. His arguments about animal welfare and vegetarianism have moved millions to change their lives. The Most Good You Can Do will challenge you to consider how your donations, career choices, and everyday life decisions can maximize good in the world.â •â "Rob Reich, Stanford University (Rob Reich)"Singer&#39;s book is bold, fresh, inspired, reasoned, optimistic. Read it and grow your brain.â •â "Walter M. Bortz II, MD, Huffington Post Blog (Walter M. Bortz II, MD Huffington Post Blog)"In The Most Good You Can Do, Singer lays out a rationale for effective altruism - and a provocative defense of a movement he hopes will spread . . . Singer opens up worthwhile conversations (and practical applications) related to ethical ideals."â "Glenn C. Altschuler, Philadelphia Inquirer (Glenn C. Altschuler Philadelphia Inquirer)"Singer&#39;s argument is powerful, provocative and, I think, basically right. The world would be a better place if we were as tough-minded in how we donate our money as in how we make it."â "Nicholas Kristof, International Times (Nicholas Kristof International Times 2015-04-17)"...easily one of the most relevant moral philosophers working today."â "Jonathan T.D. Neil,Â Art Review. (Jonathan T.D Neil Art Review 2015-09-01)â œThe Most Good You Can Do should be of interest not only to committed [effective altruists] â | but to anyone who cares about the effectiveness of their charitable activities.â | It is a valuable contribution to the philosophical literature.â •â "Travis Timmerman, The Philosophical Quarterly (Travis Timmerman The Philosophical Quarterly 2015-09-01) --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

In a nutshell, what is effective altruism and how does it differ from ordinary charitable giving? Effective altruism is both an emerging movement and the set of ideas behind that movement. The basic idea is that to live a fully ethical life, we should seek to do the most good we can. To discover what will do the most good, we need to use reason and evidence. In contrast, two-thirds of donors to charity do no research at all into the organizations to which they donateâ "they are moved by images that play on their emotions, but give no indication whether the organization is effective at what it claims to be doing. Arenâ™t we all, at the core, self-interested?The book introduces readers

to many of the men and women who are practicing effective altruism. What they are doing will startle many readersâchoosing their careers so that they can donate more, and donating half their incomes to effective charities. Yet typically they donât think of themselves as making a sacrifice. They find their lives more rewarding than they were before they made these choices. So it may not be a question of denying self-interest, but of a different understanding of what really is in oneâs own interests.Â Can effective altruism change the world? Â I find the stories I tell in this book immensely encouraging. There are not many effective altruists yet, but they are already changing the world, and their impact is growing. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

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