


Living the Good Life

The “good life” in the title of *Making the Good Life Last: Four Keys to Sustainable Living* by Michael Schuler (Berrett-Koehler Publishers, bkconnection.com) is not to be confused with good times. Balance is the objective, not quick fixes. The good life means living lightly on the earth, with simple, joyful elegance.

Four key behaviors are necessary to develop and maintain the good life: 1. Pay attention (act in a purposeful way). 2. Stay put (live in one place long enough to become part of a community). 3. Exercise patience (don’t act till the time is right). 4. Practice prudence (consider the long-run consequences of your decisions).

Most people in nonprofits understand how satisfying such behavior can be, but we must remind ourselves to be mindful and prudent yet not averse to risk, to develop community ties, and to be patient without becoming complacent. Doing so will not only fulfill us as individuals but also make our organizations more rewarding. 

—reviewed by Terrence Fernsler

Are You a Strategic Leader?


Little you do as a leader matters more than your ability to be strategic. Ask yourself these questions to see whether you’re a strategist:

Do you see strategy not as a problem to be solved but as a continuous, daily responsibility?

Is it clear to you that you aren’t omnipotent? Do you recognize what’s within your control and what isn’t?

Are you constantly refining and updating your strategic plan?

Do you keep asking basic questions about what your organization does and how you do it? (Who do you serve? What do you do that’s different or better? Why does that difference matter? Are you doing today what you need to do in order to matter tomorrow?)

Is your strategic vision statement short, specific, and affirming? Does it avoid jargon and clichés, such as “outstanding,” “best in class,” or “leading”? Does it capture what you do rather than use vague words such as *superior, expert, or empower*? 

—adapted from *The Strategist*, HarperBusiness Press, harpercollins.com

Honor Your Defects, Fear Your Gifts

Your greatest strengths can beget your greatest weaknesses – in two ways:

You may use your main strength so often that it becomes corrupted. For example, an aptitude for consensus-making can become chronic indecision. Conversely, if you’re a decisive hard-charger, you may disregard the opinions and input of others. When you turn to your best tool in all situations, you’re far less effective than you could be.


You may overlook other, even more useful abilities. Focusing on your most obvious aptitude can keep you from practicing and bolstering other leadership qualities. For instance, if you’re a smooth, articulate, convincing talker, you may not develop your capacity to listen and reflect.

Fear Your Strengths (published by the Center for Creative Leadership and Berrett-Koehler, bkconnection.com) clarifies the special importance of two key dualities:

- **Leaders need to be both forceful** (taking the lead) and enabling (making it possible for others to lead).
- **Leaders need to have a focus that is both strategic** (looking ahead and positioning the organization for the future) and operational (getting results in the short term).


The authors’ research finds countless cases in which organizational leaders put all their resources and attention toward one of those dualities while letting the other atrophy. One study concludes that when managers are rated as doing “too much” of either forceful or enabling behavior, there’s a 90% chance that they’re also doing “too little” of the other behavior.

Here are steps you can take to be sure you aren’t over-using one proficiency at the expense of another:

1. **Do some role-playing exercises** with a friend, colleague, coach, or mentor. Let your partner take on the role you usually play, while you get into the mindset of the opposite skill set.
2. **Pay attention to the idioms you prefer.** If you use words like “schmoozing,” for example, you probably focus on hard data and concrete results at the expense of networking. Take a close look at any terms you use in a dismissive or derogatory way. Look for the value in what you ordinarily deride.
3. **Ask a few people you trust for their view of your leadership style.** Be clear that you want their honest feedback (and be willing to hear it). Ask them not what you’re good at but what they’d like to see more of in terms of your leadership behaviors.
4. **Spend a day doing the antithesis of what you normally do.** If you tend to talk a lot, stay quiet. If you usually hang back, make an effort to interact more often. Write about what you learn from this counter-intuitive practice.
5. **Take the free assessment** at fearyourstrengths.com/self-assessment/ to see if you’re using any key leadership behaviors too much or not enough.
6. **Be fully present so you can see what leadership prowess the situation requires.** Move out of autopilot, and grasp the steering wheel with both hands.
7. **Make a point of surrounding yourself with people whose leadership skills are different from yours.** If you’re a people person, be sure you have a task-oriented co-leader nearby. Then make an active effort to learn from one another. 

The Mission Myth

What is the mission myth? It's the idea that your organization succeeds because of its mission. Not true, says Deirdre Maloney in *The Mission Myth* (makemomentum.com). Your mission may be what drives you and why your organization exists. But to thrive, you need to focus on four good-business basics:


- 1. Management.** You must set goals and have a strategy for meeting them. You need good systems – policies and procedures that create parameters, expectations, and consistency. Systems make things less personal, keeping an excess of passion and emotion from interfering with success.
- 2. Money.** Have a plan that breaks down each fundraising strategy (individual giving, earned income, planned giving, and so on) into detail. Get the right people to manage your money. Take some classes so you know the basics of nonprofit accounting yourself.
- 3. Marketing.** Be sure you have a comprehensive marketing strategy, including media relations, an effective website and annual report, and outreach to specific audiences. Use your communication skills not just to inform but to inspire action toward your predetermined goals.
- 4. Measurement.** Understand what you're truly doing for people. Put a concrete value on your impact, and prove your worth to every single stakeholder. Gather both qualitative and quantitative information, analyze it, and report it far and wide. 

Making New Nonprofits More Effective

Many more people could become organizers with the help of *Starting & Building a Nonprofit*, a thorough but understandable guide published by Nolo (nolo.com). Author Peri H. Pakroo recognizes that most new nonprofits are small grassroots organizations, so she pays particular attention to their needs. She walks you through each step to get your nonprofit operating effectively.

Among the topics she covers are budgeting, planning, marketing, managing finances, working with contractors, motivating employees (both volunteer and paid), and preventing loss. Her golden rules of fundraising are essential information:

- **Relationships** are everything.
- **Target** the best potential donors.
- **Build** a compelling and detailed case.
- **Put your board of directors** to work.
- **Focus** on the big picture.


Reading this book can prevent much frustration and failure. It should be on the shelves of every library for local organizers to use. 

—reviewed by Terrence Fernsler

Connecting With Donors

In fundraising, relationships are vitally important. Connections built over time and based on mutual interest are at the root of good fundraising. In *How to Connect with Donors and Double the Money You Raise* (Emerson and Church Publishers), Thomas Wolf uses superb storytelling about raising funds to explain human interaction and human connection.

The best fundraisers listen, ask questions, and respond with empathy. Fortunately, we can learn these skills, as Wolf makes clear. His tales from his own long fundraising career exemplify what happens when you remember a supporter's milestones, or why donors sometimes disappoint us, or how to recover from relationship gaffes.

Donors want to relate to people who are, simply, themselves – people who are authentically driven by the purpose of their work and who know relationship-building is critical to that work. Wolf is a master storyteller, subtly weaving lessons about fundraising, about building donor relationships, and about becoming better stewards of our organizations in the process. 


—reviewed by Terrence Fernsler

Moving Beyond Personal Improvement

For decades, social work focused almost entirely on “fixing” broken individuals – those who seem not to cope well with the social structure. The idea behind therapy was that there was something wrong with these people, as diagnosed by professionals.

Then, quite recently, researchers began to notice that abundant therapy wasn't diminishing social problems. Perhaps the system itself was broken, disenfranchising many people, as *Social Justice in Group Work* (published by Routledge, routledge.com) suggests.

This insightful book, edited by Anneliese A. Singh and Carmen F. Salazar, is a huge step in reversing the oppression of victim-blaming therapy. In a series of essays, authors discuss coping with a system that creates devalued outsiders. Focusing on using group work to help people support one another, the essays describe how facilitators can advocate on behalf of group members, overturn stereotypes, and use groups to explore the issue of injustice.

Social justice work involves community building, not isolating individuals. The contributions in this book provide a picture of how professionals are using group work for social justice agendas, with an understanding that empowerment isn't something they bestow but something group members have a right to discover. This volume should be read by all service providers who want to make substantive change in their clients' lives, and by everyone in organizations that care about social justice. 


—reviewed by Terrence Fernsler

Networking Organizations

Social networks change the way organizations work, helping them reach many more people less expensively. *The Networked Nonprofit: Connecting With Social Media to Drive Change* by Beth Kanter and Allison H. Fine (wiley.com) describes the culture change needed to become a networked nonprofit, using social media to achieve societal goals.

Just as organizations must break down silos internally, they must do so externally. They must allow input to alter and improve their plans. Learning to work with many volunteers online can add to the work of staff, but there are ways to manage that work. Social networks include monitoring tools to help demonstrate participation and measure results. It takes time to turn new online “friends” into donors, but it’s instructive and empowering (for both individuals and your organization) to find ways to help them raise money for your organization.

Transparency and participation at the governance level will strengthen your organization’s position with supporters and like-minded organizations. Engaging more people in governance results in a greater focus on your vision. As social networking becomes the norm for nonprofits, demand for transparent and participatory governance will grow.

Becoming a networked nonprofit means two-way, symmetrical discussion. Networked nonprofits will drive change by sharing, becoming accountable, and responding to social challenges rather than self-perpetuation. This means greater relevancy and accomplishment. This book is necessary for all leaders who want their organizations to progress into the future. 

—reviewed by Terrence Fernsler

Are You Watching for These Fraud Blind Spots?

Ask yourself these questions to see if you’re watching out for the top 10 security gaps identified by experts at RBS Citizens Treasury Solutions (citizensbank.com):

Are you using weak passwords? Hackers have more processing power to crack passwords than ever before, and can quickly test all words in the dictionary to see if the right one comes up. Instead of actual words, use a more complicated combination of letters, numbers, and symbols that aren’t easily searchable.

Do employees keep passwords “hidden” in their top desk drawer? The strongest password in the world won’t protect information if a perpetrator can find the password on a slip of paper in your office. Keep passwords behind lock and key, just as you would cash.

Are you training your employees against social engineering? Many fraudsters find it easier to trick a person into revealing account credentials than to hack into a computer. Training your employees to not provide any user name or password information over the phone or e-mail — even if the source seems legitimate and unless and until the source is independently verified — is a vital measure of protection.

Do you lock your computer when you step away from your desk? As we all know, a minute away from our desk can sometimes turn into much longer, as meetings pop up and we get stuck taking care of a crisis. Again, just as you wouldn’t leave cash lying around on your desk, always lock your computer as well. Also, software such as Trusteer Rapport provides additional high-tech protection against infiltrators who try to break into your computer electronically.

How well do you know your vendors and business partners? While you may share wire instructions with long-time vendors or partners with some confidence, it’s wise to conduct due diligence around new vendors or other payees. Using Positive Pay services for checks and ACH and Payee Positive Pay for check disbursement accounts adds an extra layer of protection.

Do you conduct surprise audits? The American Bankers Association reports that 60% of all fraud incidents involve employees. Surprise audits are a good way to detect and deter occupational fraud schemes so that funds can’t be manipulated ahead of the audit.

Does your organization enforce vacation policies? Make sure that there are periods of time in which employees are away from their desks and have their records available for oversight. This practice has been supported by financial regulators like the SEC for years, and all organizations can benefit from this policy. A one- or two-week window can provide the additional transparency needed to expose internal fraud.

Are dual approvals required for your payments? Implementing banking processes that require dual approvals for activities such as payments and wire transfers is an easy way to minimize certain fraud risks. You can also require additional approvals before a new vendor is added to a payment system, as well as use debit blocks and alerts to reduce the risk of unauthorized payments.

Is there open access to checkbooks? Over 80% of organizations have experienced actual or attempted check fraud, according to the Association for Financial Professionals’ latest fraud survey. Having checkbooks out in the open leaves your bank account information visible and increases the risk of check theft. Always lock up any checkbooks.

Does your organization have on-site collections? Outsourcing collections mitigates the risks that emerge when receivables checks are lying around the office.

The most basic advice is to use common sense — and make sure your employees do, too. Walking employees through scenarios and conducting training around fraud threats can minimize the headaches and real financial losses that happen when fraud occurs.

For more information, see these articles at NonprofitWorld.org:

Want to Avoid Fraud? Look to Your Board (Vol. 28, No. 5)

New Internal Control Guidance: What You Need to Know (Vol. 28, No. 1)


Can Your Organization Afford to Lose \$100,000? Safeguards Every Nonprofit Needs to Implement (Vol. 30, No. 3) 

Eagle, Parrot, Dove, or Owl – Which Are You?

Have you ever discovered a pattern so obvious you can't believe you never noticed it before? Imagine if this pattern could provide a blueprint for understanding yourself and every person with whom you interact.

This framework exists through a simple, four-style model of behavior known as DISC. It classifies each person into one of four personality types: Dominant (Eagle), Interactive (Parrot), Supportive (Dove), or Conscientious (Owl), based on which of the four quadrants of the brain is most dominant.

Taking Flight (takeflightlearning.com) includes a quick assessment you can take to discover which type you are. Then you use the results of your assessment to maximize your strengths, minimize weaknesses, and learn to “read” people better.

The book provides practical applications to help you become a better team leader, coach, and mentor. It's a valuable tool to help you embrace your personal style and your natural gifts and use them to build an action plan for success. 


Learning Leadership

Leaders don't simply manage. They value the people they lead and work with them to uplift their organizations. Effective leaders make a difference, not just in their organizations but also in the lives of the people they touch, as Marta Brooks, Julie Stark, and Sarah Caverhill note in *Your Leadership Legacy: The Difference You Make in People's Lives* (Berrett-Koehler Publishers, bkconnection.com).

The authors explain three simple guidelines to leadership:

- 1. Be a person, not a position.** Know that you're fallible and don't be afraid to let others know it, too.
- 2. Dare to connect.** Listen intently, tell others the strengths you see in them, and broadcast their successes.
- 3. Drive the dream.** Help people see the outcomes of your vision, be willing to risk change, but understand the importance of keeping that task fun.

An interesting theme in the book is that lessons often come to us from unexpected sources. Lessons about leadership and life may come from a gardener, or a neighbor. Leaders must be open to learning, even from unexpected quarters.

How you affect people can inspire them to live better lives than they thought possible, or it can drag them down. In nonprofit organizations we're always trying to uplift and inspire people. This book is an excellent, easy-to-read reminder of how to do that better. 

—reviewed by Terrence Fernsler

Partner Up

Creating the right partnerships was key to the success of the LiveStrong Yellow Band Campaign. This cause-related marketing venture, conducted by the Lance Armstrong Foundation, raised millions for cancer research. In *Banding Together for a Cause*, Rachel Armbruster, who led the campaign, explains decisions made along the way.

Part memoir, part case study, her book (published by John Wiley, wiley.com) emphasizes the value of building relationships and getting the most out of them, not just in terms of revenue but in terms of branding and other long-term benefits as well. Not only does Armbruster share key components of success, but she also takes a critical look at where the campaign fell short. For example, she feels the Lance Armstrong Foundation could have engaged some partners better.


Armbruster admits to learning much from her work on the campaign, and sharing that knowledge can make future cause marketing campaigns more successful. Her hope is that we apply what she learned to develop relationships that will allow our organizations to have positive impacts on the lives of many people.

She details all aspects of forging relationships, including how to start a conversation with someone you're just getting to know. Here, for example, are some of her conversation starter do's and don'ts.

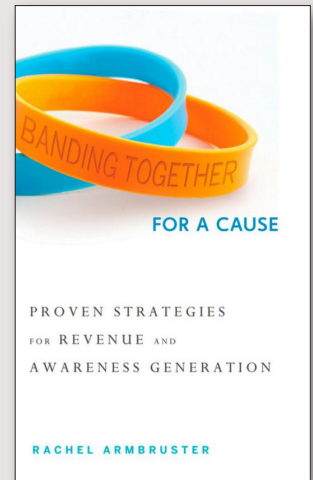
Do's

- Have you heard about...?
- What advice can you share about...?
- What has your experience been with...?
- What book are you reading?
- Tell me about yourself.

Don'ts

- Don't start by asking what someone does for a living.
- Don't talk about yourself first.
- Don't pitch the partnership before you know anything about your potential partner. 

—reviewed by Terrence Fernsler



“Newman’s Own Exception” Quietly Passed


While the Trump tax overhaul has drawn the greatest share of public attention, the more obscure Bipartisan Budget Act promises to have a major impact on private foundations and nonprofits – one that owes a big debt to Cool Hand Luke himself, Paul Newman.

The Philanthropic Enterprise Act, which became law as part of the Bipartisan Budget Act, allows private foundations to own for-profit businesses if certain requirements are met. Private foundations were previously prohibited from owning more than a 20% voting interest (or in some instances a 35% voting interest) in for-profit businesses. However, the new law expands the “Newman’s Own Exception,” so called because Newman’s Own Foundation, established by the late actor Paul Newman, has been lobbying for this legislation for the past nine years.

Newman co-founded the food company Newman’s Own, Inc., in 1982, and upon his death in 2008, left his entire interest in the company to his foundation. Under the prior rules, the foundation was required to divest itself of the business interest by November 2018. Now with this new exception, the foundation can continue to own and operate the business using the profits earned on his namesake cookies, salad dressings, and other products for its charitable causes.

New subsection (g) of Section 4943 of the Internal Revenue Code lists six requirements for a private foundation to own a for-profit business. The most important of them are (i) that the business must be controlled by the private foundation through 100% ownership of the voting stock, (ii) the private foundation cannot be controlled by the family members of the original creator of the private foundation, and (iii) all profits of the business must be distributed to the private foundation.

Attorney Andrew Katzenberg (kkwc.com/attorney/andrew-s-katzenberg/), senior counsel in Kleinberg Kaplan’s estate planning and administration practice, notes that the new rules may have some unexpected and unwelcome consequences:

“Though the intention of this legislation appears to be in the right place, especially when it comes to the dilemma facing the Newman’s Own Foundation, creating a new general exception that applies to all private foundations ultimately might not have the desired result,” Katzenberg tells us. “What remains to be seen is how this new exception will be utilized. The purpose of the prior law was to prevent wealthy families from using private foundations as tax shelters for their business interests. Until the IRS issues regulations, there is considerable potential for the exploitation of the new provisions. But until then, let’s raise our glasses filled with Newman’s Own lemonade to the Newman’s Own Foundation.” 

Zero Tolerance



Harassment Rampant in Fundraising Field, with Poor Organizational Response, Study Shows

Almost half of all fundraisers have some sort of personal experience with sexual harassment, with a quarter of female fundraisers having been sexually harassed during their careers, according to a survey by the Association of Fundraising Professionals (afpnet.org). In total, 21% of respondents (men and women) were personally harassed, while 16% witnessed harassment, and 26% heard second-hand about incidents of sexual harassment. One in four women and 7% of men have been sexually harassed.

In almost all cases, the perpetrator was a man, and in 65% of the cases, the perpetrator was a donor. More than a quarter (27%) of respondents believe that donors are prioritized and have more rights than they do, and 13% feel that their organization places a greater value on the loyalty of donors than the safety of its staff.

The most common type of sexual harassment, according to respondents, is inappropriate sexual comments (80%). That’s followed by unwanted touching or physical contact (55%).

Harassment isn’t typically a one-time occurrence. Almost three-quarters of harassment victims (74%) reported having had at least two harassment experiences, and 51% have had three or more.

The survey shows that once harassment was reported, often little was done. Respondents who reported sexual harassment say that in most cases (71%) no action was taken against the perpetrator. Over half (53%) are “not very” or “not at all” satisfied with how their manager, supervisor, or organization responded to their allegation of sexual harassment. Even more critically, more than one-third of respondents (35%) have felt a negative impact on their career because they reported their incidents of harassment.

Overall, fundraising professionals believe that the culture within the profession is changing with respect to sexual harassment. More than 9 in 10 (92%) believe that sexual harassment allegations in fundraising are more likely to be taken seriously today than ever before. Most (82%) say the #MeToo movement is having a positive influence on the workplace environment.

In addition, 93% of fundraising professionals want a zero-tolerance policy enacted in every workplace. Seven in 10 feel very strongly that this should be the norm.

For solutions to problems of harassment in the workplace, see “Fighting Harassment & Improving Inclusion” on page 20. 