

University of Nebraska - Lincoln  
**DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln**

---

Journal of Women in Educational Leadership

Educational Administration, Department of

---


4-2003

# Review of Reinventing Fundraising: Realizing the Potential of Women's Philanthropy by Sondra C. Shaw and Martha A. Taylor

Jean M. Haar

Minnesota State University - Mankato, jean.haar@mnsu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/jwel>

 Part of the [Educational Administration and Supervision Commons](#), and the [Women's Studies Commons](#)

---

Haar, Jean M., "Review of Reinventing Fundraising: Realizing the Potential of Women's Philanthropy by Sondra C. Shaw and Martha A. Taylor" (2003). *Journal of Women in Educational Leadership*. 86.  
<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/jwel/86>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Educational Administration, Department of at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of Women in Educational Leadership by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

## Book Review

Jean Haar

***REINVENTING FUNDRAISING: REALIZING THE POTENTIAL OF WOMEN'S PHILANTHROPY.* Sondra C. Shaw and Martha A. Taylor. San Francisco. 1995. 257 pages**

Studies of women note the unique nature of female leadership (Aburdene & Naisbitt, 1992; Helgeson, 1995; Sergiovanni, 1995). As women's leadership roles in the workforce increase (Helgeson, 1995; Ruderman & Ohlott, 2002), the potential for women's leadership in philanthropy is acknowledged. In *Reinventing Fundraising: Realizing the Potential of Women's Philanthropy*, Shaw and Taylor address the potential of women philanthropists—and make special note that, whether women inherit, earn or marry money, they are becoming a powerful financial force. Lederer (1991) and Taylor (1998) emphasized that American women now control 60% of the nation's investment wealth and constitute 43% of the nation's wealthiest individuals. Some of these women are using their financial resources to exert an influence on society. Furthermore, while women are building fortunes and developing financial skills, they “have not forsaken their commitment to a better world, and some have taken the lead in transforming philanthropy” (Shaw & Taylor, 1995, p. 3).

### **Overview**

*Reinventing Fundraising: Realizing the Potential of Women's Philanthropy* increases readers' knowledge about philanthropy, philanthropic leadership, and the empowerment of women. The authors stated, “It became clear to us that previous studies in philanthropy and fundraising spoke only to the ways in which men give and that women give for different reasons—reasons based on their experiences as women” (p. xii). The book was written with three goals:

- To identify the reasons why women have not been taken seriously as philanthropists, even though historically their contributions have significantly influenced our nation's human services, cultural, and educational institutions
- To document the growth of women's potential for giving, the experiences of women philanthropists, and model programs focusing on women's giving that have already been developed by certain nonprofit organizations and institutions
- To develop new conceptual program models for institutions and organizations to follow as they initiate programs tailored for their own female constituents. (p. xiii)

Shaw and Taylor conducted their study in 1991. Data were collected through interviews, focus groups, and discussions with “more than 150 women philanthropists and scores of development professionals to discuss women and philanthropy” (p. xiii). Based on their findings, Shaw and Taylor rejected the notion that women give less to charity because they are unenlightened philanthropists. Instead, after exploring the history of American women's

philanthropy and identifying contemporary women's motivations for giving, Shaw and Taylor contend that women are aware of their potential to give. Shaw and Taylor use this awareness to share a new approach to fundraising—an approach focused on women's giving.

In this review, philanthropy and the differences in women and men's approaches to philanthropy are addressed. Then, changes occurring in fundraising and philanthropy and philanthropic leadership are discussed. The review concludes by focusing on women's characteristics with giving as well as their motivation to give.

## **Philanthropy**

One dictionary definition of philanthropy is that it is “goodwill toward all people.” This definition applies to both women and men philanthropists. However, while both give to improve society, women and men's approaches are different (Conroy, 1998; Herman & Associates, 1994; Kirstein, 1975). Shaw and Taylor (1995) note, “Women prefer to think of their philanthropy as selfless and involving a high measure of fellowship, obligation, and the ability to make a difference” (p. 86). Responses from women philanthropists “indicate altruism accompanied by a sense of self-employment and the reward of feeling part of a larger community—an association that can improve the present and influence the future” (p. 86).

Kirstein (1975) described philanthropy as “one method of coping with the shortcomings of modern society, while furnishing a convenient recipient for people's various compulsions to give” (p. 1). Kirstein noted that men give because of religious and social responsibility; feelings of indebtedness, fear, or recognition; or for tax advantages.

## **Change**

“Few themes are as prominent in contemporary fundraising today as that of transition . . . Change is omnipresent, and how to cope with it, manage it, anticipate it, and, ultimately, conquer it is the topic of the hour” (Conroy, 1998, p.1). Fullan (2001) noted, “Change is a double-edge sword. Its relentless pace these days runs us off our feet. Yet when things are unsettled, we can find new ways to move ahead and to create breakthroughs not possible in stagnant societies” (p. 1).

According to Conroy (1998), there have been “changes in regulation, technology, demographics, volunteerism, and donor behaviors” (p. 1) in the area of fundraising and philanthropy. Conroy stated,

Within the last decade alone, one of the most striking changes in fundraising has been the composition of the workforce itself—the dramatic increase in the numbers of women choosing and pursuing fundraising careers. Women now make up the majority of membership (roughly 52 to 60 percent) in the three major professional organizations representing fundraising: the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), the National Society of Fund Raising Executives (NSFRE), and the Association for Healthcare Philanthropy (AHP). (p. 1)

Shaw and Taylor's work demonstrates an understanding of the changes occurring in philanthropy work, the important role women are playing with the changes, and what those

involved with philanthropic endeavors must do to make the most of those changes. More specifically, Shaw and Taylor describe in detail the history of women philanthropists and the influence these women have had on society; they provide insight into the philanthropic work of contemporary women, and they provide a conceptual program model for involving women in all aspects of philanthropic work.

### **Leadership**

Shaw and Taylor's observations about women and philanthropy leadership also demonstrate an understanding of the context of philanthropy. This understanding is important as "productive leadership . . . depends on recognizing and responding to the unique challenges and features presented by particular types of organizational contexts" (Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1999, p. 23).

Philanthropic leadership is similar to Bolman and Deal's (1995) concept of "leading with soul." Bolman and Deal stated that, "Leading with soul requires giving gifts from the heart that breathe spirit and passion into your life and organization" (p. 12). Leading with soul also depicts women's methods of leading. Sergiovanni (1992) noted, "Women... tend to emphasize successful relationships, affiliation, power as a means to achieve shared goals, connectedness, authenticity, and personal creativity" (p. 136).

Leadership methods pioneered by women include (a) inclusive organizational forms that celebrate points of contact among people from all organizational levels, (b) communication, methods that are driven by personality, not only mission and (c) recognition of employee relationships as familial more than hierarchical (Helgeson, 1995). These leadership methods are mirrored in Shaw and Taylor's design for campaigns:

Campaigns are about people, not about buildings or endowments. They are about people caring, people asking, and people giving. The most successful capital campaigns will be those that involve the most people at all levels and phases.

Campaigns are about relationships. They are about developing and maintaining connections between our institutions and constituencies.

Campaigns are about communicating and listening to what people say. They are about understanding and assimilating messages and knowing whom we are talking to and why. Our messages must be relevant, persuasive, and imaginative. (p. 186-7)

### **Characteristics of Women Philanthropists**

An awareness of women's characteristics can assist with comprehending what it is that encourages women to give. According to Aburdene and Naisbitt (1992), characteristics attributed to women leaders include trust, compassion, empowerment, and understanding. Astin and Leland (1991) used such words as inventive, creative, and risk-taking. Women philanthropists demonstrate characteristics similar to these descriptions. The women philanthropists interviewed by Shaw and Taylor are described as "unique to each and common to them all. All are accessible, intelligent, warm, and innovative, and they have a great passion for life, change, giving, and making a difference" (1995, p. 45).

Women's characteristics also mesh with the general philosophy of philanthropy. Conroy (1998) noted that women are naturally drawn to the values inherent in the nonprofit sector:

“altruism, relationship-centered work, service to society and affiliation with mission-centered organizations” (p. 2). Many women have a deep commitment to the public good (Shaw & Taylor, 1995, p. 5).

The stories of eight contemporary women are shared in *Reinventing Fundraising: Realizing the Potential of Women's Philanthropy*. Shaw and Taylor's summary of the women's potential influence depict their characteristic qualities.

Each woman has created something unique to her individual needs and lifestyle. Each has found a way to integrate her values into her philanthropy. Each is giving money, doing good, and having fun. We are in awe of their confidence and their sense of inner power and competence. Women like these are the role models for a whole new generation of good works. (p. 79)

## **Motivation**

Motivation is another key issue to consider in connection with women and giving. “The ability to bring about change and make a difference ranks number one as a motivation for women's giving . . . For women, making a difference means making a change, rather than preserving the status quo” (Shaw & Taylor, 1995, p. 88).

Besides the desire to change, women's motivation to give is summed up by Shaw and Taylor in the following categories: create, connect, commit, collaborate, and celebrate. Shaw and Taylor noted, “Women have a predisposition to make connections in a humane way that can live on after their lives are over. If they are allowed involvement in the creative process of developing philanthropic innovations, not Band-Aid solutions, they are very likely to create things that will live on far beyond their lifetimes” (p. 90).

In connection with collaboration, Shaw and Taylor said, “To juggle the complex roles of wife, mother, daughter and worker, women have to be able to negotiate, mediate, and adapt . . . Consequently, women should be in a unique position to understand the necessity and economic advantages of developing unity and working with others to solve problems” (p. 95). This collaboration can create partnership and connections for women.

And, finally, celebration can motivate women. Shaw and Taylor state that fundraising and giving can be fun through celebrations. They report that celebration can “overcome resistance” to give so that “both asking and contributing can become more than an obligation or a responsibility” (p. 95).

Overall, when considering motivation factors, it is not enough to appeal to women's emotions. Women want facts before they give. An awareness and understanding of women's motives for giving is crucial for improving contributions. Shaw and Taylor state, “[By] reviewing women's motivations for giving, we see that by helping them establish their priorities and create and nurture programs that serve their priorities, we are assisting them in carrying out their philanthropic intent through their considerable means” (p. 100).

## **Conclusion**

Shaw and Taylor refer to philanthropy as the next frontier for women. *Reinventing Fundraising: Realizing the Potential of Women's Philanthropy* provides the reader with the knowledge base and the tools to enter this frontier—a frontier that offers hope and opportunity to

improve society. Shaw and Taylor note, "This is not the first time that women will improve society while crossing a frontier in their own liberation...As women realize their potential as philanthropists, they will again improve society while they themselves benefit from the joy that they derive from giving" (p. 257). Women represent a powerful force for change, and it is women who can lead the transformation of the philanthropic community.

As women's opportunities for growth in their professions have strengthened so can their opportunities to take an active role in shaping and improving society. Shaw and Taylor have provided a strong argument for supporting women and their philanthropic endeavors. Their book is a sound resource as well as a solid reference.

## References

- Aburdene, P., & Naisbitt, J. (1992). *Megatrends for women*. New York, NY: Villard Books.
- Astin, H. S., & Leland, C. (1991). *Women of influence, women of vision*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Bolman, L., & Deal, T. (1995). *Leading with soul*. San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Conroy, J. C. (Ed.). (1998). *Women as fundraisers: Their experiences and influence on an emerging profession*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Fullan, M. (2001). *Leading in a culture of change*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Helgesen, S. (1990). *The female advantage: Women's ways of leadership*. New York, NY: Doubleday Currency.
- Herman, R. D. (1994). *The Jossey-Bass handbook of nonprofit leadership and management*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Kirstein, G. G. (1975). *Better giving: The new needs of American philanthropy*. Boston, MA: Houghton-Mifflin.
- Lederer, L. (1991). "Funding strategies for the '90s." *Ms*. Nov.-Dec. pp. 38-42.
- Leithwood, K., Jantzi, D. & Steinbach, R. (1999). *Changing leadership for changing times*. Buckingham, PH: Open University Press.
- Ruderman, M., & Ohlott, P. (2002). *Standing at the crossroads: Next steps for high-achieving women*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Sergiovanni, T. (1992). *Moral leadership: Getting to the heart of school improvement*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Taylor, M. (1998). Women development officers: Finding success and satisfaction in a career of service. In J. Conroy (Ed.), *Women as fundraisers: Their experience in and influence on an emerging profession* (pp. 7-26). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

---

## About the Author

*Jean M. Haar* is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership, 115 Armstrong Hall, Mankato, MN 56001, E-mail: [jean.haar@mnsu.edu](mailto:jean.haar@mnsu.edu)