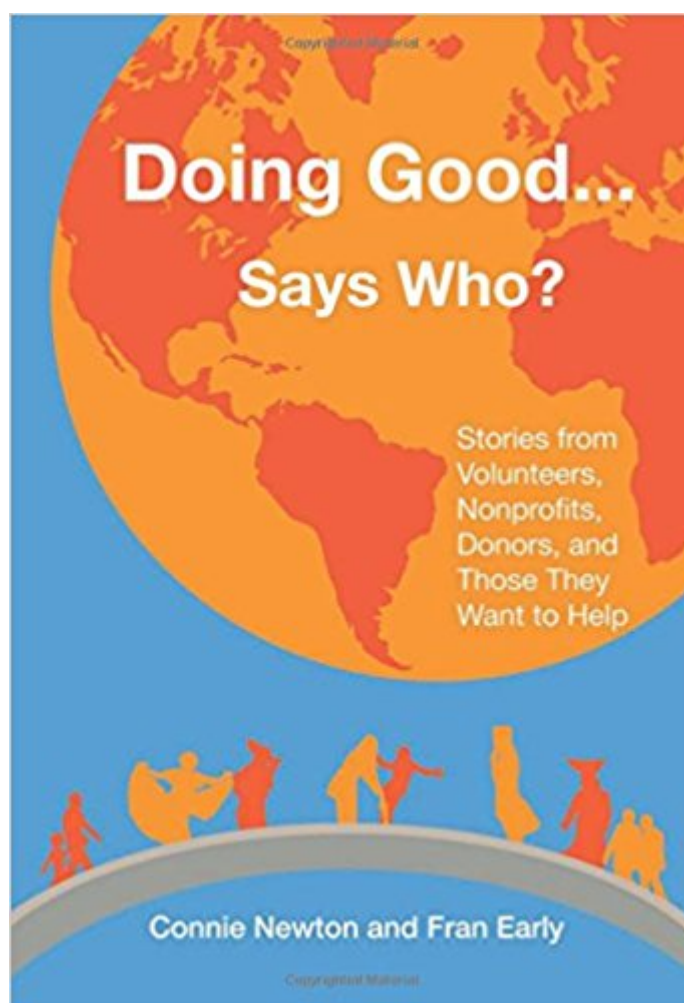


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# Doing Good . . . Says Who?: Stories From Volunteers, Nonprofits, Donors, And Those They Want To Help



## Synopsis

Doing Good. . . Says Who? explores the impact of good intentions from the inside. The authors conducted over 400 interviews and synthesized the lessons learned. The end result is that you are on the ground with volunteers, nonprofits, donors, and--most uniquely--the intended beneficiaries of good will. Through story telling, humor, analysis, practical advice and a discussion guide, five key concepts emerge: 1. Respect and value people 2. Build trust through relationships 3. Do 'with' rather than 'for' 4. Ensure feedback and accountability 5. Evaluate every step of the way These principles will help you evaluate your motivations, question assumptions, and turn good intentions into positive outcomes.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"When wisdom speaks, we would do well to listen. Sixty years of combined, on the ground experience in a poverty culture gives Doing Good&#x2013;Says Who? authenticity and authority that are rare in the hyped-up world of contemporary missions. The authors have earned the right to tell it like it is--and this they do with candor, color and sensitivity. Essential reading for every group, who aspires to do effective mission work."-- Bob Lupton, urban ministry veteran and author of Toxic Charity "The stories ring true and are great at developing the core principles for volunteer service. This teaches people how to not only 'do no harm' but really learn from and work with communities in need. It is as important for donors as students and volunteers."--Ruth Messinger, President, American Jewish World Services "This book should be required reading for all who seek to improve

the lives of the very poor. It teaches by compelling stories that lasting gains can only be achieved by respecting, learning from, and working with those-in-need. Visiting occasionally in a Land Rover to tell people with very different life experiences what they should do or to give them charity simply does not work.”--Richard Schmalensee, Dean Emeritus, MIT Sloan School of Management

”Finding experiences for our students where they can both begin to understand a different culture while serving its people in productive ways is a complex challenge for the very reasons explored in this book. The stories Fran and Connie tell are real and thought-provoking. I strongly commend the read to educators and students alike.”--Larry Schall, President, Oglethorpe University

”When I was working with a group of Mixtec weavers in Oaxaca a leader in the group looked at the board and said, ‘Don’t tell me you have a solution if I haven’t told you I have a problem.’ The authors really get this as the key to successful development.”--Judith Lockhart Radtke, *The Circle of Women*

”Doing Good” addresses a major gap in the literature on humanitarianism. Although there are many critical academic studies of humanitarianism and volunteerism that document unintended--and sometimes downright harmful--effects, these studies are generally not accessible except to the specialist audience. Doing Good gives us an approachable, general audience treatment of these important themes. It should be required reading for all volunteers planning long or short-term global engagements. I intend to recommend it to physicians and medical students who are considering participating in global health missions and research projects.”--Peter Rohloff, M.D., Ph.D., Asso. Physician Global Health Equities, Medical Director, Wuqu’ Kawoq, Maya Health Alliance

--Reviews”Most people think of volunteers as idealistic, generous and courageous. Are we really? What do the so-called beneficiaries say? This book is a unique opportunity to hear the beneficiaries’ voices and help us understand, through some very vivid experiences, some of the challenges of humanitarian work. Here is food for thought for all of us.”--Daniela Abadi, Doctors Without Borders (MSF), midwife and project coordinator

”Connie and Fran have written a remarkable book about the ways in which well intended philanthropic and development efforts in other countries often have the opposite impact. They’ve been watching this play out in Guatemala for several decades and as practitioners on the ground have also developed some powerful principles that maximize the possibility that development efforts will have a positive and lasting impact. In addition to being able to step back and draw on lessons, these two women are really good storytellers.”--Larry Dressler, author of *Standing in the Fire*, global facilitator for corporate development, and co-founder of a Guatemalan non-profit

”Doing Good” Says Who? brings an insightful, real life narrative to the challenges, opportunities, and truths of navigating cross-cultural relationships. Because I have taken groups to Guatemala for more than twenty-five

years, I am thrilled that there is now a book that provides a real life insider's view and practical tools to create healthy sustainable relationships / projects. The authors have both lived and learned by listening to the people and powerfully merging the complex realities of these many perspectives into a solid and truthful narrative. This will be my go-to-book for the people I take to Guatemala and all those I know in the not-for-profit and business arenas who want to 'Do Good' with others."-- LeeAnn Heinbaugh, MA, Journeys In Living, Santiago Atitlan, Guatemala "The writing is so lively, interesting, and well organized--so worthwhile for many. I could never imagine how you were going to put all the stories you had heard into a book--and how you would present the material without angering a lot of people who'd organized charitable efforts. You have done it splendidly."--Ann Cameron, author of *The Most Beautiful Place in the World* and many other books. "It is laudable that you are making the investment of time and effort to share your rich field experiences with others. Too often experiential learning remains locked up and so others do not benefit from mistakes and successes."--James E. Austin, Emeritus Professor and Co-Founder of the Social Enterprise Initiative at the Harvard Business School, Co-Author of *Creating Value in Nonprofit -- Business Collaborations* "Doing Good" -- "Says Who? speaks with directness, wisdom, and humor to the quandary we ministers face all the time -- how in trying to do good, we inadvertently hurt or harm or hold back those we want to help. The book mainly focuses on foreign outreach, but the lessons here are applicable in many, many areas."--Rev. Stephen Kendrick, author of *Douglas and Lincoln: How a Revolutionary Black Leader Struggled to End Slavery and Save the Union* --Reviews "I have read this important piece of work and very much enjoyed it. The way that you have taken care to expose yet protect your subject is admirable."--Kristin Houck, Executive Director, Namaste Direct (microcredit NGO) "In *Doing Good* -- "Says Who? reminds us that helping should be less about intention and more about attention--including attention to the unintended consequences of our 'caregiving.' This book serves as a caution to those of us privileged enough to escape the negative impacts of development decisions that have more to do with funding and branding bureaucracies than the learning, compassion and healing that can enable more stable, peaceful communities."--Robert Zuber, Ph.D, Global Action non-profit consultant at the United Nations "This book questions long-held assumptions and raises important questions on how to engage issues of global poverty. Most good sustainable development initiatives all start with an asset based community development framework that holds up local knowledge and resources and empowers people to do for themselves what needs to be done. This book re-enforces that fundamental truth."--Rob Radtke, President, Episcopal Relief "Gracias de Corazon por todo el sacrificio y le agradezco al Director de Transcito que les dió sabiduria para lograr publicar este

libro. Gracias de Corazon a nombre de las mujeres que protagonizaron este cada letras de este libro. Gracias.”--Hilda Mendoza, Guatemalan NGO staff “Your work is important and needed. Your stories point to specific problems in mission that people need to be aware of as they deal with cross cultural challenges . . . you’ve named them well. For example, your story about Lucy and the medical clinic, and the various experiences of people related to the clinic, both the locals and the missionaries, are spot on and highlight significant challenges in mission work.”--Rev. Dr. Ted Geiser, Missionary/Director of Mission Development, Episcopal Diocese of Colombia, President of Global Episcopal Mission Network “This book is a work of love and great respect for a country and people the authors know well. It will make a difference in how people try to ‘do good’ in Guatemala and beyond.”--Katharine Hobart, Ph.D. Regional Advisor and Faculty, Boston School of Social Work “Impressive. Just in the Introduction a lot of major points ring true from my personal experience volunteering as a teenager and leading missions to El Salvador over the past three years. Also pedagogically I think this is spot on as far as being a wonderful resource for teens and young adults. Working with young people, I’ve found that stories are the best way to invite them to engage challenging topics and question what they think are the ‘correct’ answers.”--Sam J. Gould, Director of Youth Ministry, Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts “I really like the book. It should be required reading for all volunteers. When I was reading it I thought about the groups of kids on a mission from somewhere, who we always see on the plane when we go to Guatemala. Each of those kids should have a copy.”--Ruth Kastle “If you take missionary work seriously this book is a must read. If you take cultural exchange seriously then this is the book for you. The stories invite you to understand more clearly what it means to preach the gospel at all times and use words when necessary. The authors teach us what it means to begin doing what is good, true, and beautiful which is as important at home as it is abroad. Take off your shoes when you read this book, you are reading on holy ground.”--The Rev. Mark Bozzuti-Jones, former Jesuit missionary to Brazil and Priest for Pastoral Care at Trinity Wall Street --Reviews

Connie Newton and Fran Early have spent their lifetimes committed to service, as board members, donors and everyday volunteers at home and abroad. They’ve worked in intercultural education, community organizing, corporate service, sociology research and human rights, and have spent the last seven years researching this book. Continue the conversation at [doinggoodsayswho.com](http://doinggoodsayswho.com).

I wish this book had existed before my first mission trip experience. I’m doubtful that it would have pierced my fantasies of “rescuing the poor from

despair. With one week of unskilled labor, but it might have settled my expectations down or at least given me a resource to fall back on once I fell from such a great height of naive arrogance. From the introduction: How do any of us go about recognizing what we don't understand in another culture? How can we know when our efforts are actually "doing good"? Does it matter? In the stories that follow, it matters. (ix) Fran Early and Connie Newton have assembled a collection of stories based on their years of experience living and working among the people of Guatemala and those good-hearted souls who want to improve their situation. These stories are collected from hundreds of interviews, woven together into five themed chapters. Each chapter is a story in itself, compiled from the many interviews into a single narrative. The stories themselves are powerful juxtapositions and memorable misunderstandings, and they range from recovering a stolen toilet to a disastrous offer of a \$10,000 gift to a women's co-operative only made possible by cakes and tamales. You'll meet arrogant doctors and amazing ones; hardworking yet clueless funders; local women whose expertise is invaluable; and a cross-section of volunteers and local Guatemalans you will come to love. I was initially disappointed with the authors' decision to condense and co-mingle the stories into a single narrative. It felt a bit concocted or processed to me, and I wanted the raw experience that I thought I would glimpse in a direct interview. However, upon further reflection, I realized that this was part of their point. If we travel or talk or read about people who are poor or foreign or struggling, we imagine we can have real, unadulterated access to other people's lives. We can't. Their strategy refuses to let us indulge in the illusion that, by this book, we too are somehow getting the real story. While we can grow in compassion and understanding, chances are we won't ever fully be able to part from our own lenses to see things as others do. Such depth requires years of listening, living and learning, much as the authors have tried to practice. What we get here is, in fact, more helpful: it is the critical lens we need to question our perspective and learn to listen more carefully. (And if you, like me, care about research methods and this kind of looseness makes you uncomfortable, start with the appendix. The appendix gives a thorough accounting of their research methodology and documentation of sources. Start there, your questions will be answered, and you will be at liberty to appreciate the stories and their contribution.) Early and Newton identify five guiding principles or key concepts that anyone interested in helping out another community should come to understand. Each of these principles makes up a chapter of the book, one of the interwoven narratives that illustrates the theme, as would a case study. These themes are: 1. Respect and value people 2. Build trust through

relationships. Do “with” rather than “for.”

4. Ensure feedback and accountability.

5. Evaluate every step of the way.

These guiding principles would be helpful tools for local church mission committees; mission trip participants; university service learning centers and students; any congregation or organization interested in forming partnerships (whether international or interfaith or just intercity/suburb); social work students; ministry students; Teach for America volunteers; NGO and non-profit boards of directors; and so many more. Any of these groups of good-hearted souls would benefit from a group reading and discussion of the stories, the guiding principles, and how they impact their work. I typically make frequent notes and underlines in reading a study text, but not this time. Each story deserves to be taken as a whole, like the people they represent. They are not a frozen image or an inspiring quotation. There is no anecdote that can capture the complexity of reality. Only relationship, mutuality and listening with care can begin to get you there.

By highlighting the pitfalls of naïve do-gooders in Guatemala, Newton and Early offer readers nuanced perspective on the well-intentioned American penchant for helping those less fortunate. Far from disparaging or discouraging benefactors and volunteers, this book suggests attitudes and approaches that will enhance the experience for all involved. This carefully crafted book delighted me on several levels: the composite narratives of colliding worldviews flow easily, with a bonus fragrance of present-day Mayan realities; the essential themes are universally relevant for productive interactions between any groups or individuals of unequal power; and the questions so provocatively posed remain without simple solutions. Intelligent human beings will find their own unique answers. While “Doing Good | Says Who?” is a refreshingly human-level departure from the macro economic treatises debating the efficacy of international development aid efforts, the book results from serious research methodology and painstaking care to correctly portray all informants’ realities and viewpoints. As a former Peace Corps Volunteer and 35-year veteran of international development, I still found plenty to learn from reflecting on the questions in the study guide. I would recommend this book without reservation to those contemplating any form of giving, volunteering or world-changing endeavors. Heaven knows there’s much to do. Let’s find respectful, compassionate ways to work together.

These deceptively simple stories about our successes and failures to work across cultures are an

invaluable tool for missionary groups, investors and medical personnel who travel to poor countries hoping to make a difference. Connie Newton and Fran Early distilled interviews with 323 people into five chapter-length stories about feeding poor children in villages, operating a clinic, promoting local industry and engaging in micro-lending. Here are the principles Connie and Fran have identified and developed as themes of this book: Respect and Value the People; Build Trust through Relationships; Do No Harm; With a Heart Rather than a Head; For the Sake of the People; Ensure Feedback and Accountability; and Evaluate Every Step of the Way. An essay at the end of the book cites much of the research, analysis and evaluation that undergird these principles, but the method of presenting them, story-telling, is an incredibly useful teaching tool. The dilemmas good people encounter trying to work across cultures are tough, but not impossible to resolve if we just hold fast to these operating principles. All of the stories are about Guatemala. The authors went back to the persons their principle characters are modeled on to check if they had caught the meaning. Because these are detailed, cultural-specific experiences, they invite workers in other regions of the world to tell their own stories and to transfer the learnings offered here. If you plan to travel with a group to do good in a foreign culture, read this book. If your faith community sponsors trips abroad, read this book and then pass it on to others. It would be a pity to waste our good energy when we can take steps to do better.

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The Employee Experience Advantage: How to Win the War for Talent by Giving Employees the Workspaces they Want, the Tools they Need, and a Culture They Can Celebrate  
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