



The Secret to More Philanthropic Giving?
Encourage More Gratitude
By Fututus Group
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When our company, [Fututus Group](#) first developed its approach to help nonprofits harness AI and Big Data to fund their missions, we faced a problem we didn't expect: "What do we call our algorithm?" It turns out catchy names don't come so naturally to an expert team of data scientists. We decided to keep it simple, basing our moniker on our revolutionary approach to fundraising — turning gratitude into giving.

Voila, the Gratitude to Give (G2G) algorithm was born.

When it comes to increasing donations, there's another important question non-profit organizations should ask: "How might we increase feelings of gratitude?" (We are aware this question may come as a surprise to many nonprofits. After all, their fundraising model typically relies on a different metric: wealth data.) Moreover, the transition to finding one's tribe — the people who most resonate with the mission and feel gratitude towards the organization — isn't always easy for stakeholders to accept. However, when we share key data insights, like the fact wealth data has been shown to only predict about 10% of charitable giving, it often confirms their own experiences.

It turns out, the widely held belief wealth leads to altruism is a myth. Yes, huge donations by the [mega-rich](#) draw headlines, but they aren't moving the philanthropic needle much. Charitable giving remains [mired](#) at 2.1% of GDP, and only 56% of Americans make a charitable donation of any size in a given year.

If wealth isn't the source of altruism, what is? As I discussed in a previous [article](#), philosophers as far back as Aristotle understood gratitude and an emotional resonance with a group, school, or any other nonprofit is what drives donations, whether the individual is rich or poor.

So, how might we better understand gratitude? *Psychology Today* [defines](#) it as, “an affirmation of the goodness in one's life and the recognition that the sources of this goodness lie at least partially outside the self.” It is the recognition others have helped us or positively impacted our lives, leading us to resonate more with a group or cause — to the point we put our money where our hearts are.

Increasing this sense of gratitude can be a major win for other reasons. On the individual level, feeling appreciation is a strong positive for emotional and psychological health. Gratitude makes us kinder in every sense of the word. As UC Berkeley [notes](#), “grateful people are less selfish and show greater empathy toward others, in general.”

Traditionally, the way to increase gratitude came through organized religion. In fact, religious people remain one of the greatest proofs of the fact gratitude leads to giving. Giving USA [describes](#) a “staggering difference between the charitable giving practices of the religiously affiliated and those with no religious affiliation.”

But as fewer Americans attend church these days, we would be wise to consider alternative methods for increasing gratitude. One popular [practice](#) is gratitude meditation. It's no secret our lives are extraordinarily fast-paced and complex in the 21st century. Setting aside time to quietly contemplate what we

are grateful for each day has been shown to mitigate stress levels, not to mention produce wonderful psychological effects.

Other activities producing a positive impact on our gratitude level include daily affirmations, journaling, and the practice of mindfulness, which incorporates many exercises into a mindset of positivity. As evidence, consider this simple but powerful mindfulness exercise from [Mindful](#): “When your instinct to say “thanks” arises, stop for a moment and take note. Can you name what you feel grateful for, even beyond the gesture that’s been extended? Then say ‘thank you.’”

Certainly, gratitude’s role in giving is a constant force. But *what* drives gratitude varies dramatically between nonprofits. Even when comparing two similar institutions, such as dual universities, the factors possessing greater influence on the community’s sense of appreciation can vary to a great degree.

Using the example of university students, their emotional bond with their school may be based on attending a class taught by a world-renowned professor, or their involvement in clubs. Or it may be something as simple as how lenient the university’s parking enforcement officers were with students rushing to reach class on time.

No matter what specific activities cultivate similar grateful feelings towards your organization, Futurus Group can help you measure resonance using customized algorithms incorporating thousands of variables. As this recent [Forbes](#) profile on our company attests, we can determine what factors play a role on how grateful a nonprofit’s community is, and identify what individuals are likely to make a gift to achieve its goals. Without this data, a nonprofit is just taking a shot in the dark — or still relying on wealth data.

If you are ready to learn what drives gratitude for your organization and increase charitable gifts by a multiple of 4x in the process, click [here](#) to schedule a 15-minute call. Together, we can unlock the potential for greater giving using the technological wonders of AI and Big Data.