

Book review

The Most Good You Can Do

How effective altruism is changing ideas about living ethically

Category: Book Reviews / Non-fiction

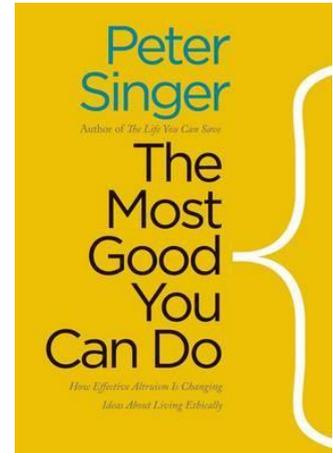
Author: Peter Singer

Year: 2015

Publisher: Yale University Press, US

ISBN: 9780300180275

Audience: For Community



Summary: *Outlining the philosophy of effective altruism*

The Most Good You Can Do is an inspiring and thought-provoking guide to achieving maximal good in society with the resources you have. Written by internationally renowned philosopher and Princeton University professor Peter Singer, the book explains some of the theory and practical applications of a new philosophy called “effective altruism”.

Effective altruism is a growing social movement, encouraging everyone to give an affordable portion of their limited resources to others (be this time, money, or abilities). These limited resources should be directed towards the people, places, or charities where they will achieve the most good, objectively.

Singer would argue that it’s much more effective to give your \$10 to a charity where you know this donation will cure the blindness of 10 children, than it is to give to a charity that cannot produce information on what this \$10 will actually achieve. In the case of the latter, how can you know that you’ve actually contributed any good to society?

A convincing philosophy

It’s a convincing philosophy and surely one that Singer argues well. When you give in this way, not only are you making an effective and observable difference to the world, but you’re also helping to bring some meaning and fulfilment to your daily life. Singer actively encourages you to become effective altruists, by providing a host of strategies and resources to help you decide where to give your limited time, energy, or funds. I particularly appreciated how a section was included on effective New Zealand-based charities to support.

This book serves as a timely reminder that even with your busy schedule and limited funds, you can still make an observable contribution to the lives of others today, through giving effectively.

Reviewed by Kate Loveys, Communications Assistant at the Mental Health Foundation

The Mental Health Foundation’s Resource and Information Service brings you book reviews fortnightly. To view more go to www.mentalhealth.org.nz/books



Phone: 09 623 4810 | www.mentalhealth.org.nz
Units 109-110, Zone 23, 23 Edwin Street, Mt Eden, Auckland
PO Box 10051, Dominion Road, Auckland 1446