



The Cathedral Within: Transforming Your Life by Giving Something Back

By Bill Shore

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The Cathedral Within: Transforming Your Life by Giving Something Back

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In this wise and inspiring book, social entrepreneur Bill Shore shows us how to make the most of life and do something that counts. Like the cathedral builders of an earlier time, the visionaries described in this memoir share a single desire: to create something that endures. The extraordinary people Shore has met on his travels represent a new movement of citizens who are tapping into the vast resources of the private sector to improve public life. Among them are:

- Gary Mulhair, who has created unprecedented jobs and wealth at the largest self-supporting human-service organization of its kind, Pioneer Human Services of Seattle.
- Nancy Carstedt of the Chicago Children's Choir, which provides thousands of children their first introduction to music.
- Geoffrey Canada, who has made a safe haven for more than four thousand inner-city children in New York City, from Hell's Kitchen to Harlem.

These leaders, and many others described in these pages, have built important new cathedrals within their communities, and by doing so they have transformed lives, including their own.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

The Cathedral Within uses the metaphor of architecture to look at the way individuals allocate their resources to improve public life. Just as the enduring magnificence of a cathedral is not erected overnight, so, too, the transformation of a society takes many, many years to complete. And just as the construction of a cathedral is less a reflection of its builders' interest in masonry than a testament to the soaring reach of the human spirit, philanthropy is not so much a response to need as to a basic human requirement to give something meaningful back to society.

Bill Shore is the founder of Share Our Strength, a national nonprofit devoted to raising funds for antihunger and antipoverty organizations worldwide, and his book showcases the stories of some of the social entrepreneurs he has come across in the course of his work. Among his chosen visionaries are Alan Khazei, the cofounder of City Year, the community-service program upon which Bill Clinton drew for his own model of a national service, and Geoffrey Canada, the president and CEO of the Rheedlen Centers, designed to provide a safe haven for inner-city children. These leaders and many others, Shore argues, represent a kind of symbiosis between the need to improve oneself personally and the drive to transform the community. *The Cathedral Within* also contains an excellent resource directory of community organizations where readers can begin their own process of giving back. --*Patrizia DiLucchio*

From Booklist

This book is not about religious consolation or giving. It is about helping, and finding that more rewarding than business or politics. But that still makes it sound too much like a self-help tome. It is an explanation of why helping is important and how sound helping organizations are succeeding these days, when government helping programs are scaling back and dying out. Shore directs Share Our Strength, an organization that helps organizations concerned with alleviating hunger and poverty, especially for children. Indeed, trotting out some fine illustrative stories about what children need from his own fatherly experience, Shore posits children's health and welfare as the quintessential reasons for helping work. As for the success stories in helping work today, Shore profiles seven. The most striking commonality among them is entrepreneurial spirit: if these nonprofit agencies don't already have for-profit subsidiaries, they are seriously considering them. For they see, as Shore emphasizes, that charity and redistribution of wealth (taxes for government programs) must be supplemented by "creating new wealth" through producing and selling goods and services. So young or dissatisfied businesspersons looking for meaningful work should consider helping work, Shore suggests, engaging in it as if it were the work of building a cathedral--seemingly endless but endlessly rewarding: think of it as a cathedral within. *Ray Olson*

From Kirkus Reviews

A loving, courageous call to arms from Share Our Strength founder and executive director Shore. Shore's book is hardly a standard nonprofit policy wonk's approach to hunger and poverty. Its full of surprises, not the least of which is that he believes that the days of the nonprofit charity organization are essentially over. In this era of unprecedented wealth, people are actually donating less to charity, and recent government cuts in welfare and food stamps bode ill for the hungry people of America. What is needed is nothing less than a paradigm shift, says Shorean entirely new approach to social justice. The author proposes that nonprofits enter into sustained, profitable partnerships with corporations, ending the frustrating annual hand-to-mouth quest of nonprofit fundraising through long-term licensing agreements, marketing arrangements, and profit-sharing. (An example of this would be many public radio stations' partnerships with Store-of-Knowledge

novelty shops or American Express's well-publicized ``Charge for Hunger" alliance with SOS.) Shore, of course, provides many inspirational stories of how this is being accomplished across the country. He recounts moments when ordinary people crossed the line from inaction to action and began to make a difference, including an indefatigable Denver chef and a pots-and-pans salesman in Ohio who strive to involve their businesses with the fight to end hunger. In other cities, community action groups such as CityYear, the Chicago Children's Choir, and Seattle's unconventional Pioneer Human Services are putting community-wealth building into action, with impressive results. Shore is firmly committed to his views but never preachy; one of the most touching ``Everyman" elements of the book is how he grounds SOS's goal of saving children with raising his own two kids, Zach and Mollie. He realizes that ``writing about children in the abstract has its dangers" and extends this to a greater dedication to resist objectifying or distancing America's poor. Positively invigorating. Essential for community activists and business leaders alike.

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

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Harold Morris:

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