

Season 3, Episode 5: Heather McGhee on the Zero Sum Lie

Heather: You can overturn a statute, you can overturn a law or a regulation, but it is very difficult to overturn a new way of seeing the world, a new set of sympathies, and a new set of suspicions of those who want to keep us ignorant and divided.

Grace: Welcome to Giving Done Right, the podcast on everything you need to know to make an impact with our charitable giving. I'm Grace Nicolette.

Phil: And I'm Phil Buchanan. In the summer of 2020, following the murder of George Floyd and the racial justice reckoning that occurred, we saw many donors—individual donors, corporations, foundations—really make racial equity, dismantling systemic racism, facing our country's history, giving more to leaders of organizations serving people of color, giving more to organizations led by people of color a major focus. Then we saw, perhaps predictably, over the last two years, an orchestrated backlash, with many arguing that to focus on racial equity was somehow to turn your back on other issues or on, say, rural white poverty. And today we're going to explore that fallacy and why addressing racism benefits all Americans.

Grace: I can't think of a better person to have on the show to discuss this topic than our guest today, Heather McGhee. She's an activist and author of the recent book, *The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together*. This book has been incredibly powerful for me. It's probably the best new book I've read this year, and we also read it as a staff and discussed it. I learned a lot. It's very well researched, and the stories really stick with you, so I highly recommend it. As always, if you have questions or comments, please email us at gdrpodcast@cep.org.

Phil: Heather McGhee, welcome to the Giving Done Right podcast.

Heather: It's so good to be with you.

Phil: So glad to have you here. And there's so much to talk about. In your book, *The Sum of Us*, you mention drained pool politics and the desegregation of public pools as sort of a defining metaphor, and indeed that's the cover of your book—it depicts a boy jumping off a diving board. Can you tell us more about that historical example and the power of that?

Heather: Thank you to both of you, Phil and Grace, for having me on. So, this is a phenomenon that I came across in my journey that just, you know, floored me. I traveled to Montgomery, Alabama and went to the public park there. It's called Oak Park. There's, at the center of this park, a huge flat expanse, and buried about 10 feet underground is the carcass of what used to be a thousand plus person *public* swimming pool that was part of a building boom of public goods in the 1930s and '40s that were really a fixture of the American landscape. There were about 2000 of them, and they were huge, and they were often free. And yet, many of these public swimming pools were racially segregated. Either explicitly with the whites only sign in sort of more Jim Crow states, or just something that was known by custom and enforced through intimidation and violence in places like Chicago, Massachusetts, and New Jersey, Washington State.

It was really, for me, this idea of: what is a public good? You know, my definition of public goods wasn't the swimming pools—it was things like social security and a massive investment in housing that workers could afford and mass home ownership coming out of the Great Depression during the New Deal and the GI Bill, which put a generation to college and to no down payment home ownership. The American Dream really was the foundation of that, were these public goods, these investments, these policies and procedures and programs that were really about understanding the role of government in setting that foundation, and like the public swimming pools, virtually all of the programmatic public goods that I just described, the policies, were segregated.

So, you had this kind of robust social contract, but with an asterisk. And once the Civil Rights Movement empowered Black families to be able to say, you know, “hey, it's our tax dollars that have funded those public goods all along, and, in the case of the swimming pools, we want our kids to swim too.” You really saw a dramatic thing happen across the country, which is that many towns and cities like Montgomery, Alabama, but not just in the Jim Crow South, decided to drain their public swimming pools rather than integrate them. They literally drained out the water and backed up truckloads of dirt and seeded it over with grass. Then there were private swim clubs and the birth of backyard swimming pools as a fixture of middle-class housing, and all of these things that saw us as a country pull away from the commons, saw the idea of what was public once it was integrated be really degraded in the white political imagination. And ultimately what that's done is in the case of the public swimming pools, right, it had a cost for everyone. White kids couldn't swim for free in the public pool anymore. The whole community lost out on something. And so that's why drained pool politics, which I see being one of the explaining mechanisms for how we went from a country that had kind of figured out the formula for broadly shared middle-class prosperity, to being one in which we've

cut back on public investment in the core sort of building blocks of middle-class life and let them be shifted on to private families in a way that has increased costs for everyone and has let atrophy our function of public problem solving. So, the drained pool metaphor for me helps explain how we got here and what race has to do with it, and how ultimately racism has a cost for everyone.

Phil: One of the things that's so powerful about your work and your book, *The Sum of Us* is the way in which, not only do you document incredibly powerfully with data and historical examples the sort of legacy and current reality of systemic racism in the country, you make the point that is not actually zero-sum, and I just want to talk to you about that and how we can help donors to persist in focusing on racial equity and to resist the backlash that is coming from the right in this moment.

Heather: Well, it's such a good question, and one of the hats that I wear is philanthropy. I am a modest, quite modest, individual donor myself, but I've always thought it was important. And I am on the boards of two big social justice foundations, relatively big, the Open Society Foundations and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

And so, I think about this a lot, particularly for the audience of people who are mission driven and want to see change in the world. And my message to donors is no matter what issue you are focused on, whether it's eradicating poverty and hunger, whether it's women's rights, or reproductive freedom, or climate change, or youth services: racism in our politics and our policy making is making your mission harder. It's making it harder for the organizations and people and causes that you support to win on the issues that you care about. And that's really what I tried to do in the journey that I took to write *The Sum of Us* was ask the big questions about the role that racism plays in our politics and policy making and how much it's actually costing all of us to have a society that is still so structurally unequal and where the forces against progress can be so easily galvanized by zero-sum racial rhetoric. That is basically trying to scare the majority of white Americans into opposing progress for people of color because they're afraid that it might come at their expense, when we know that the opposite really is true, that we will *all* stand to benefit from racial equity.

Phil: Thanks for that. And the arguments that you make in the book and the way in which you describe the things that have been done that have hurt poor white people, but have been done in service, so to speak, of maintaining a racist hierarchy, you know, leads me to wonder how do you break through to people who are trapped in that mindset?

I mean, there's a psychology here that has to shift in some way, and it feels like we had a moment of a lot of people out in the street together that we hadn't necessarily seen out in the street together before. And I don't know where you are in terms of the optimism-pessimism spectrum in this moment, but I'm wondering whether we know how to best sustain that momentum, counter the backlash, break through to people who I think you make the powerful argument are essentially promoting or endorsing policies that hurt them. How do you get folks to realize that?

Heather: You know, one of the things that I write in *The Sum of Us* is that everything we believe comes from a story we've been told. And so, we've really got to be disciplined about asking, who's selling this story to folks, right? How are they profiting from the sale of this story? And so, what you're naming there is the way in which a radicalized right wing is moving policies that are wildly unpopular, that cost our economy in the near term, in the long term, whether you're talking about climate change or the attack on reproductive freedom, or the shortchanging of funds for our schools and the opposition to public health, the list goes on and on. And that's not good for us, right? It's not good for our economy. It's not good for the core audience they're seeking to sway. But ultimately the question is, who is in folks' ears helping them make meaning of the world? And we have a major problem with our information ecosystem right now. We have a set of really well-defined narratives that are about us versus them, real Americans and invaders, about stolen elections. All of this through the zero-sum sort of great replacement lens. And it is frightening how much it has pervaded a part of our politics and our sort of cultural common sense and how racially focused it is, right? That is something we haven't seen in our lifetimes, and it is terrifying. The banning of books and the kind of vitriol that, you know, is on bumper stickers these days about our fellow Americans.

That said, I want to say that I'm firmly on the hopeful end of the spectrum, and I'm firmly on the hopeful end of the spectrum because of people like Bridget Hughes. Bridget is a woman that I met in Kansas City. She is in her late thirties. She's lived in Kansas City her whole life, Irish American, worked in fast food her entire life, married with three kids, both parents make, you know, close to minimum wage. And she really believed much of the us versus them, zero-sum rhetoric that had been marketed to her and sold to her by, you know, politicians who were profiting economically and politically from selling that story to her. And it wasn't until she was organized and began to organize her coworkers in the movement that would become the Fight for \$15. The idea that as a low-paid burger flipper, as she would say, right, someone who flips burgers for a living, that she could actually have a living wage, that she could have healthcare and benefits, that she could afford to feed her family and not just feed the customers that came to her drive through window. That really radicalized her and changed

her and made her realize because she needed collective power in numbers to be able to win a living wage ordinance, to be able to go on strike against her employer, to be able to get media attention, she needed other low paid workers—and who were those other low paid workers? They were Black and Brown people. And she needed to realize that they had more in common than what divided them. And she needed to let go of so many of the stereotypes that she had been sold. So, she says things, like, you know, now I know it's not us versus them, because for us to come up, they've got to come up too, because as long as we're divided, we're conquered. Right? That's something that Bridget told me.

That story of Bridget is in a chapter on workers in the book, and I also was able to go back to Kansas City for a podcast project that I just wrapped that is on Spotify right now and I wanted to be able to ask her, what did you think about yourself? What did you think about Black people, about Brown people? What was the moment when it changed for you? What helped that happen? And time and time again, it was actual in person, one-on-one grassroots organizing that made the transformative difference. Because organizing is storytelling, it is making meaning, it is creating relationships that are not the phony relationship between you and a cable news broadcaster, or you and a politician. It's a real relationship between you and someone who's going to help raise money for you when your lights go out. And good on the ground organizing also helps people make meaning of their lives, gives them a different, you know, “them,” right, than their neighbor, a different reason in the story for why it is that they are struggling, and helps them see how collective action has *always* been what has changed things for the better in society and that they could be a part of it.

Grace: One of the things that you talk so eloquently about in the book is this idea of a solidarity dividend. Could you tell us more about that? Because I think it's very much in line with what you've been saying. And how can donors make sure that whatever they're giving to has a solidarity dividend?

Heather: So, *The Sum of Us*, the book, is really the story of a journey that I took across the country over the course of three years. And then because I'm cruel to myself from time to time, I took that journey again, although to a bunch of different places and new places for the podcast in 2022. And I was really just trying to collect stories of the diagnosis of the problem, how racism has a cost for everyone, how the zero-sum lie is holding back our collective economic progress in issues from affordable college to housing to climate change to education to healthcare, and yet the thing that I kept seeing real on the ground evidence of was sort of the opposite, right? The idea that when people in community come together across lines of race and when they do so not sort of

ignoring the racial history, the racial dynamics, the racial power imbalances, but rather confronting that and working and weaving through those issues, they have so much power, and they're able to actually build the collective power to win nice things like paid family leave and childcare and truly universal healthcare and all of that. And so, solidarity dividends are these gains that I've really found that we *can* unlock in communities, but only by coming together through cross-racial solidarity. It's going to take a multiracial coalition to build the kind of power that it takes to take on powerful polluters or corporate interests, whoever it ends up being, depending on the fight, and that multiracial coalition building needs solidarity. It needs people from different neighborhoods to be able to look at each other and say, you know, we're not the same. Our neighborhoods have been structured differently. Our families' wealth has been structured differently. Our kids go to different schools and there's a reason for that. But we all want clean air and water, right? We all want great parks. We all want our neighbors to be able to live with dignity and not be working in poverty.

And to your point, Phil, the way you opened the conversation by kind of lamenting the loss of the protest energy of the summer of 2020, here's what I found. I found that yes, you know, I'm sitting here in Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn, and I don't see Black Lives Matter signs in every window as I did in the summer of 2020, and I don't know when the last mass protest was in my neighborhood. And yet, across the country, each and every one of the stories that I tell in that podcast, which is, you know, nine different stories of cross-racial coalitions, I talk to people for whom a fulcrum moment, right, a real pivotal moment was the murder of Ahmaud Arbery, of Breonna Taylor, of George Floyd. I talked to white people who had fluency about race, not because they were sociologists, but because they were schoolteachers and stay at home parents and farmers, and they just had absorbed more racial information, more knowledge about our shared history, more understanding of core concepts around privilege and equity, than had been there before 2020. And so that energy, that consciousness raising—it's still with us. You know, the right wing has captured the term, woke from the Black community and used it as an insult. But, you know, it's really meaningful, right? Because you wake up when you come into consciousness about what the world is around you, and it's very hard to be put back to sleep. It's very hard to unlearn concepts that you learned that summer and that you heard and that are now part of the discourse. It's very hard to look at neighborhoods again, the same way once you've learned about redlining, to understand debates about school funding the same way once you've learned about redlining, right? To see the rhetoric around surges in crime, once you've understood the history of the New Jim Crow.

And so, I'm not pessimistic. I don't think that we've lost so much. And frankly, I think that the reason why those who want to keep the vast majority of this country who shares common interests, divided and at odds with one another, those people who want to keep us divided have attacked ideas. They've attacked books. They've attacked schools and lessons and libraries and, you know, language because it is so powerful, because they want people to go back to sleep, to start to try to reject the consciousness raising that happened because they know how powerful it is.

You can overturn a statute, right? You can overturn a law or a regulation, but it is very difficult to overturn a new way of seeing the world and a new set of sympathies and a new set of suspicions of those who want to keep us ignorant and divided.

Grace: I think I'm just reflecting on what you just said, the idea that organizing is one powerful way that people with different backgrounds can be coming together and kind of learning from each other and change can happen that way. So, it sounds like maybe individual donors, one real lever of change would be giving to organizing.

It seems to me that even just this interpersonal dynamic that you describe has changed. I think about the famous conversation that you had with Gary from North Carolina who called in to CSPAN in 2016 when you were on, and he said, you know, he didn't want to be a racist anymore, and you were able to, to really share and kind of change his mind. It does seem to me that those kinds of conversations are becoming more and more rare. I'm curious whether you think that that same conversation would still happen today, or do you counsel us to be really trying to cross lines of difference that way and I think this definitely has a philanthropic angle in that we can give to a number of things, and we may not agree with everything that an organization does, but some things may be really important. And so where do we sort of draw the line?

Heather: So, by that do you mean should donors give to organizations for kind of ideological diversity? You know, even if they want to eradicate poverty, they may look to, like, a conservative food bank or something like that, where, you know, you may not hold the same ideology, but everyone wants to address hunger?

Grace: Yes. That sort of coming together across, like you were just saying, even neighborhoods, are there any lines that we need to be drawing because there can be, you know, some beliefs that are really abhorrent, and how do you think about that?

Heather: Yeah, I think there's *so* many good organizations out there who are doing good work, who are serving and reaching and engaging people who don't pull the same lever that I do in the voting booth, you know, whether it's the United Way or the YWCA or the food banks of the world, and all of these kind of service delivery, very community based organizations, and I think it's very important for us to have social infrastructure that meets people where they are, that creates connections, that gets people what they need, and that isn't trying to build power to change the rules.

That said, I also think that those groups will always be in business if somebody's not trying to build power to change the rules. And I wish that it weren't the case that, simply put, the right and the left, are trying to build are so diametrically opposed, right? I wish we were in the world that we were in, say, 20 years ago, when you had New Gingrich and Nancy Pelosi sitting on a couch talking about climate change.

But I wish that it wasn't now like a fire extinguisher and a match, right? I mean, I feel like we, it would be great if there were more common cause for things that are so common to all of us, right? We're all suffering. Although obviously folks of color, developing nations, lower income, lower wealth people are obviously the frontline communities for climate change, but, you know, the costs are coming to us all.

And so that's one example where, you know, I wish there were more common ground and, in some ways, until the extremism and the sort of nihilism and authoritarianism that is on the rise and that has captured one of the two political parties in our country, and therefore sort of stalled the real policy function of that party, I think it's hard to build the kind of bipartisan coalitions that I wish we could functionally in governance.

I also want to say that when we think about how to counter the extremism right now, how to actually build cross-ideological trust and community: there are many organizations that are working on just that. Whether it is a group like Life After Hate, which is specifically founded by former neo-Nazis and white supremacists who understand what draws people into that world and how to get them out of it. That kind of work is super important. That basic kind of deprogramming work of bringing people out of disinformation, conspiracy theory, and extremism, needs to be supported at scale. It's extremely important to the future of our communities.

There was a big effort by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, a real blue ribbon, bipartisan panel that created an effort called Our Common Purpose

that really looked at the health of our democracy, not just our voting systems, but our civic infrastructure, but our information ecosystem. And it's a really inspiring and actionable list of changes and recommendations that got bipartisan support. And there's now, coming out of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, which I said I'm on the board of and helmed by Stephen Heintz, who's the head of the RBF, an institute to effectuate those recommendations. Again, that's called Our Common Purpose, and I think things like that are places where people who want to give, they want to give to the healing of our country, they want to give to the kinds of structural solutions that will counteract the extremism, that's a really great place to try to learn more. Again, it's called Our Common Purpose.

Phil: On this same topic, because I think this is something that donors struggle with, but really everybody has to think about is this question of how not to give up on building bridges in the way that you're describing, to recognize that people can change and that we need to put resources into helping, as you said, deprogram extremists and, on a one-to-one level, that makes a lot of sense. Is there a concern, though, that we could, in some instances, be normalizing extremism? Like, when is it right to say you know, we actually have to draw the line here. And I ask this question because there have been so many philanthropic efforts that have gotten a lot of attention that are focused on countering polarization. And then sometimes—don't mean to pick on anyone—but I saw a major foundation that had an event on countering polarization in the media, and they invited Tucker Carlson, who proceeded to hijack the platform in a way that was just went predictably, you know, off the rails. I struggle with this, you know, personally, when do we keep working to be in conversation with someone and when, particularly when we represent an institution, do we say, no, that's over the line, we are not going to be in relationship with you because there's a boundary here.

Heather: Yeah. I mean, I think you just need to be smart and strategic. For Tucker Carlson, there's no, I don't think there's any incentive for him, just using that example, to move to the center, to dampen his rhetoric. It's just working. It's working when very little else in his political coalition is really working. Right? They're not running on ideas, they're not running on solutions, they're not running on candidate quality, right? Like this is working. There is a real clear sense that Trumpism, broadly speaking, is, you know, is the ticket. And so, I think it would be a little strange to think that a good panel discussion will change his tune.

And I think I would define the problem less as polarization than white nationalist extremism. And then it's really clear that you don't invite Tucker Carlson. And it is really clear that you want support things like Life After Hate,

and you want to support efforts to both choke off the supply of the ideas and stories that have us pitted against one another, that have political violence become normalized, and we want to flood the zone with the kinds of positive organizing that gives people a way to feel connected and a way to feel like they're part of something bigger than themselves that, you know, is actually about meeting their real material needs and being in solidarity with their fellow human being, right?

There is a reason why we have seen with the loss of union organizing over the past 40 years, broadly, an increase in antisocial behavior, in the loss of kind of more progressive social justice viewpoints among working class white men, particularly, you've got to be there, right? You've got to give people a—as I said, you know, you've got to be in their ear helping them make meaning, and it's either going to be Tucker Carlson or it's going to be their union shop steward, who may be a Black woman. You know, that's another reason why I'm optimistic because support for labor unions is near an all-time high, and that means that people are looking to one another to solve problems.

Grace: I wanted to ask you to delve more into how donors can be expanding their sense of community, because often individual donors are giving to the things that they know, right? So, things that are in their community: local nonprofits, their local schools, and in some ways that can exacerbate inequality. You know, because we're so siloed by race and class these days that the wealth can stay in a white community, for instance. You talk about organizing. What are other ways that donors can help expand their sense of community in this world where it's actually really hard to rub shoulders with people who are really different than you?

Heather: That's a really good question, but to be honest, just setting that intention is really important. Recognizing that it will do something good for you, for your children, for your broader community and region, for you to be involved in the other side of the proverbial tracks from you, for you to care about what the school district that your kid *isn't* in, how it's faring, for you to perhaps enroll your child in that school district and get involved in it—just saying that that matters and that that's good for you and your family and your community is actually a huge step.

And I want to call out here one thing that often, you know, someone might have read a blog post about or read a social media comment about that maybe can make you feel like you're off the hook for doing that work, which is the critique of white saviorism of white people with means getting involved in certain kinds of charities and communities of color and not showing up in the right way.

That's all real, but it's not a reason not to do it. It's not a reason not to get involved. It's just a reason to do it with humility, to do it by listening, by trying to develop an authentic relationship.

I'm reminded right now of an episode on *The Sum of Us* podcast called “The Last Sundown Siren,” where a white kind of outdoorsman guy from California, from Santa Cruz, who does mountain biking in the Lake Tahoe region in Nevada, sort of gets really radicalized by Ahmaud Arbery’s death, right? This idea, as many, you know, joggers and runners and outdoors people did just like, they could see themselves in that moment being hunted down. And something shifted for many white people and other people who just felt so much empathy and horror. So that happened for him, and he ended up getting really involved in some civil rights fights in the area, and I don't want to give too much away, but there were moments when it was just really hard for him to be constantly learning, and quickly, and playing catch up, because we're so poorly educated in this country about our racial history. To be sort of playing catch up to learn about white privilege and the history of race and racism and bring all of that into the room without taking up all the space. To be listening more than leading. To have an authentic relationship with someone and recognize that authenticity entails a lot of self-awareness. It really is about, oftentimes, a person with more positional power, being super aware of that power, of the things that are part of their lives that they think are normal that are not normal for other people, of the power dynamics. That kind of self-awareness is super essential to an authentic relationship. That kind of authentic relationship is super essential to cross-racial and cross-class coalition building and community building, and so it really does sort of all flow from there.

Grace: I think one of the sections of your book that sticks out to me, I believe it was maybe when you were in conversation with the Reverend Jim Wallace around, you know, some people think that understanding our racial history or kind of doing the work is actually more about helping Black and Brown communities. No. It's actually about helping us too, to become all that we could be. Like really understanding our full stories, becoming self-aware, becoming better listeners. And of course, the balance has to be right. Like, we're not doing this just because of selfish motives. But I was really struck by that too. And even what you're describing now of just like the changes and the posture that we need to have towards others when we're learning about this history does change us fundamentally for the better.

Heather: Yeah, it really does. You know, I led a process of racial equity organizational transformation at Demos, the organization that I really grew up with and then led for four years. It's a think tank focused on solutions to

inequality, and it's a 75% white organization. When I became the president of it, I was the only person of color on the executive team. And we did this process, if folks want to know more about it, it's on the website, demos.org/transformation. It wasn't perfect. We learned a lot. But we doubled in size, we became a majority person of color organization, and, ultimately, one of the things I'm most proud of, is how many of the white staff really use the word gift to describe what the process had been for them.

You know, the chapter in my book that you're referencing where I talked to the Reverend Jim Wallace, an Evangelical, the Social Justice Evangelical, is called "The Hidden Wound," where I contend with not just the economic costs of racism, but the psychological costs of racism to white people, which is a whole sort of area work that's been done by psychologists and sociologists and poets and, you know, I don't pretend to swallow the ocean there, but there's a moral cost. And as I write, I think it's in the introduction to the book, I'm not racially privileged as a Black woman in America. But I have always grown up with the privilege of knowing that even though we suffered the most, there was a sort of moral wealth that was my inheritance from looking at my ancestors, looking at the heroes of Black history, and knowing that we could be proud of what we did despite it all, and the vision that Dr. King articulated for this country, not just for Black people. I had to put myself in the shoes of a white person who looks at, that, looks at *Eyes on the Prize*, for example, the amazing PBS documentary of the Civil Rights Movement, which is how most of us learn about the Civil Rights Movement in school. I'm associating myself with Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, and the white student next to me is associating himself with the people holding the fire hoses and shouting at Ruby Bridges. And that's hard. And that is something that we have not as a country really done enough to tell well-meaning, good white people, like, how to square their racial inheritance with their actions now. And so, all of that, I hope that kind of offering as an invitation to many white folks who are trying to figure how to be a good person when there's just so many competing narratives and such a siren call to extremism and white nationalism and zero-sum thinking helps them find kind of a different enemy, choose a different side to be on that is on the side of the many and not the few. And, frankly, be more strategic and smart about what the solutions are to pull our country forward.

Grace: Heather, at the end of every episode, we ask all of our guests, Giving done right, to you, means: fill in the blank. How would you answer that?

Heather: Giving done right means giving to the point that it's a little uncomfortable and giving in a way that ultimately means your gift is no longer needed.

Grace: Thank you.

Phil: Thank you, Heather.

Heather: Thank you.

Grace: I love how she addresses this idea of a zero-sum mindset because I run into this dynamic all the time as a woman of color where the conversation tends to be only about black and white. And as an Asian American, I think surely we can talk about anti-Asian hate without taking away from much needed conversations around civil rights for Black Americans. And I think that for immigrant communities like the ones that I come from, it can feel often like the implicit thing that we're trying to do, even if we don't think that we are, is that we're trying to somehow attain a level of white status. And this book is really, I think, challenging to immigrant communities to help us understand the entire kind of history and dynamic that is here in that we are actually not helping our own communities when we're supporting discriminatory practices towards Black and brown communities.

Phil: I totally agree because like one of the things that she does is described so powerfully in the book, and I think philanthropy can play a role in countering this, the ways that those in power, those who control the wealth, you know, whether it's an auto manufacturer fighting unionization or whatever, *want* to sow the seeds of that division, right? That's the story that they want folks to believe because what will challenge some of the oppressive systems? It is people coming together. So, I think that's why her call for movement building is so powerful and that's also why her sort of generosity is the way I would describe it with white folks who might have a ways to go is so powerful because she knows, like, we need those people to be a part of the alliance.

Grace: I feel personally challenged in my own life to cross those bridges of difference. I mean, one area that she talks about in the book a lot where the rubber really meets the road for me is actually at church because we're really a very disparate group of people of different classes and races coming together trying to, like, share a common life.

And I think that to me, more and more, like, that is the work, right? How do we overcome our own prejudices and work with people who are really different than us to bring about a better world?

Phil: And in addition to religious institutions, it strikes me that one place people do this is at nonprofit organizations.

Grace: Yes.

Phil: Right, they come together to volunteer, to work for their community. And so just to bring it all back to what we talk about here all the time, the importance of this incredible sector of nonprofits supported by philanthropy. I think there's a role to play in community level organizations where people join hands to help neighbors, even though their political ideologies are completely different.

Grace: Yeah. Our civic life is so fractured. We've got to come together. Now is the time to really break down those walls of difference.

Thank you for listening to Giving Done Right. You can find more resources about effective giving and the podcast on givingdoneright.org. You can find us on Twitter, I'm @gracenicolette and Phil is at @philxbuchanan. And if you like the show, please leave us a review on Apple Podcasts, it really helps.

Phil: Listeners, we want to hear from you. Tell us what giving done right is about to you, what it really means, and we'll feature some of our favorites on the show later this season, just send us a short voice memo—one minute or less—to gdrpodcast@cep.org.

Grace: Giving Done Right is a production of the Center for Effective Philanthropy. It's hosted by me, Grace Nicolette, and Phil Buchanan. Our executive producer is Sarah Martin with mixing and engineering by Kevin O'Connell and additional editing by Isabelle Hibbard.

Our theme song is from Blue Dot Sessions, and original podcast artwork is by Jay Kustka. Special thanks to our colleagues, Molly Heidemann, Chloe Heskett, Naomi Rafal, and Sae Darling, for their research and logistical support.