



40 Ways to Address Philanthropy with Clients

We know from multiple surveys of clients, particularly high net worth clients, that the great majority are philanthropic. They want to make a difference. They feel a debt of gratitude for their good fortune. They want to set an example for the next generation. And yes, some prefer to give voluntary gifts (charitable donations) rather than involuntary ones (taxes).

We've also heard that it can be awkward to enter into these conversations. Here are some thought-provoking questions that can help you segue to a conversation about your clients' values and philanthropy. Everything we read tells us they will be glad you did.

If you have a client questionnaire you can include questions like this

1. What kind of involvement have you had with charitable organizations? What about your family?
2. Have you ever considered including a charitable gift in your estate plan?
3. Have you considered how a legacy could include charity?

Going over the questionnaire is one way to explore charitable intent

4. Thank you for taking the time to respond thoughtfully. Has an event or deadline prompted you to begin this process?
5. Have you ever had a wealth or business analysis done?
6. Do you have an estate plan now?
7. Who else are you working with (attorney, financial advisor, accountant, friend)?
8. Is this going well? How comfortable are you so far?
9. I'd like to learn more about what motivates you...what is important to you. It will help us design the best plan for you. It should be about more than taxes. We want to meet as many of your needs as possible. It may feel like I'm probing—but the more I know about what you value, the better your plan can be. There's no question that financial and estate plans are very personal.
10. Do you feel your current plan does a good job of reflecting your core values?

Financial and health concerns

11. Do you have an idea of how much money you will need to feel financially secure?
12. Have you thought about how much you would like to provide your children?
13. What are your thoughts on children and money? Do you have any concerns?
14. Is health something you wish to discuss?
15. If your financial resources were unlimited, how would you spend your time and what might you do with your excess resources?

Philanthropy and giving entrée

16. In my experience, I've seen people walk away with a great sense of fulfillment after thinking about what they might leave to the community, and how their gifts (financial and other) could be used to make difference in others' lives. Our discussion today gives you the opportunity to think about this. Would you be interested in having me help you explore your options?
17. How important to you is the health and vitality of the community in which you live?
18. Do you give to organizations now?
19. Do you volunteer, serve on a board or support friends and family who volunteer?
20. How does this make you feel? Why is it important to you?
21. Are there issues about which you feel strongly? What would you like to see changed or expanded? What excites you?
22. Have you supported efforts to address these issues that concern you? Would you like to learn more about how you could?
23. If one issue is more important than another, please tell me why.
24. Are there things in your childhood and family history that inspire you to care and to give?
25. Have you considered what you might do during your lifetime, versus what you might do through your estate, after your death?
26. What values do you want to pass on to the next generation?
27. How would it feel if you could leave a substantial gift to your children (loved ones), while creating a plan that could also support issues about which you care?

Retirement does not mean inactivity

28. Do you have skills that you feel you could put to use now, or after you retire?
29. Do you want to learn new skills or enjoy hobbies and recreation that you have overlooked up until now?
30. Are there things that you'd like to accomplish in your lifetime that you have not yet achieved?
31. Do you have a plan to achieve them?
32. How might philanthropy be part of that plan?

Gain more direction for possible philanthropic plan

33. Do you want to involve your children in philanthropy?
34. How would it feel to create something in your name that would address your concerns in perpetuity?
35. Have you thought about creating a charitable legacy?
36. What if you could receive some help to narrow down your interests? Would that be of value to you?
37. Based on what you shared already, it seems you are especially interested in (*your alma mater, your place of worship, our hungry and homeless, workforce development ... whatever you heard*). Does that sound right to you?
38. How important is a plan that enables you to leave your enduring mark on the community and world?
39. Although it might not be important to you, most charitable organizations would be proud to recognize your philanthropy. How comfortable are you with that?
40. What else concerns you? How can I help you achieve what is important to you?