RORY VADEN HELPED AUDIENCES BECOME *WEALTHY AND WELL-KNOWN*. FIND OUT HOW THOSE SAME MARKETING STRATEGIES CAN ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO DIG DEEP AND CONTRIBUTE TO MEANINGFUL CAUSES.

"No matter how much money we all give to charity, until every person on this planet is fed, and every orphan has a family, and every widow is taken care of and every disease is cured, there's more work to be done."

MOTIVATED TO GIVE

BY **ALEXANDRA FROST**

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Billions of dollars of research go into the psychology behind spending. Why do we buy the products and services we do? What actually draws us to a brand? Those same principles of the psychology of influence apply not only to business marketing but also to philanthropy.

The same drive we have to purchase that new pair of shoes or invest in a course from our favorite influencer can be channeled to motivate people to donate to charities making a difference and to dig into local and global issues to improve the circumstances around us.

Rory Vaden, *New York Times* bestselling author and co-founder of Brand Builders Group with his wife, AJ, spends his days advising individuals how to leverage these principles to become *Wealthy and Well-Known*, also the title of the couple's new book rising up the charts. This summer, Vaden pulled back the curtain to reveal the secrets of building influence and income for *SUCCESS*® readers.

Now, he's pivoting to teach us how to use it for good—and to motivate ourselves and others to get involved in the causes that mean the most to us.

"You never hit the peak of service," he says. "You never reach the culmination.... I think it's important for all nonprofits to realize that while it's always inspiring to serve the many, their work is still worth it even if it serves just one person."

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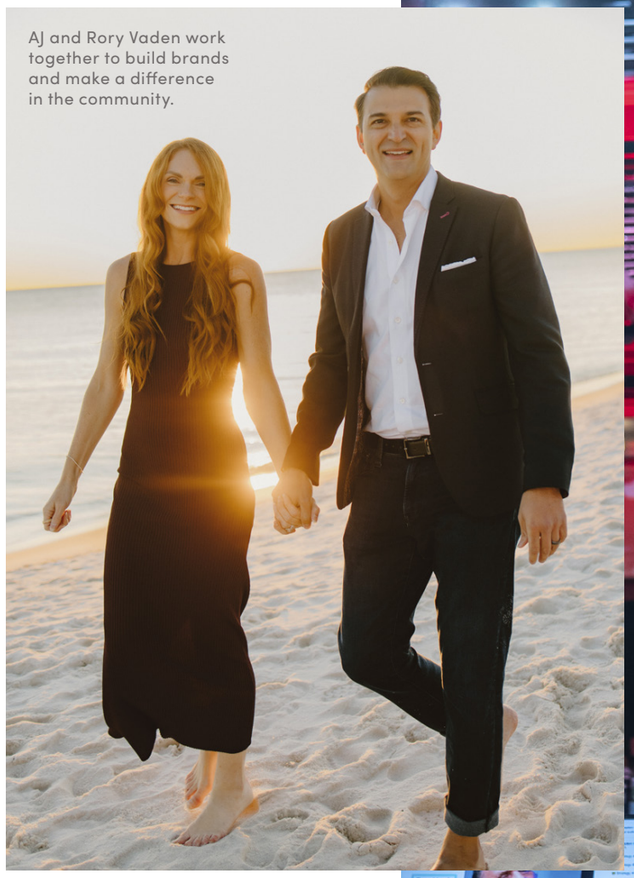
CHOOSING A CAUSE

The potential causes to support are endless, and every day there's more work to be done. Kids are starving across the globe. Entire war-torn regions are suffering. People still can't access clean water. In his first book, *Take the Stairs: 7 Steps to Achieving True Success,* Vaden says, "Success is never owned. It is rented, and the rent is due every day.

No matter how much money we all give to charity, until every person, until every person on this planet is fed, and every orphan has a family, and every widow is taken care of and every disease is cured, there's more work to be done," Vaden says.

According to him, everyone should be motivated to give and help because he calls philanthropy the most "mature form" of motivation. While competition, ambition and recognition are great and motivate many people, he says, ultimately they are unfulfilling without a mission.

Choosing a cause is simple, he says, "Solve the problem that breaks your heart.... We believe that whatever breaks your heart breaks your heart for a reason." He explains that people are "hardwired" to care more about some causes than others. With that in mind, take note of what grabs your attention, recognize the signal to care and do something about it, he says.



AJ and Rory Vaden work together to build brands and make a difference in the community.

ROSEMARY BEACH FAMILY PHOTOGRAPHER



COURTESY OF RORY VADEN

START SMALL

So, what breaks the Vadens' hearts? Child trafficking is often top of mind for the couple. "[It] just destroys us... we feel like we have to do something about that," he says. But just as Vaden can't end all child trafficking, people who care about important causes sometimes feel they can't give enough to make a real difference.

Vaden says the Dollar Club, through Cross Point Church in Nashville, is a cause directly combating that thought process though and is one he and AJ love supporting. The idea is simple, yet life-changing for recipients. Once a month, everyone is asked to donate one single dollar, and all of that money is pooled together to fill one very specific need in the community. "Dollar Club is crushing it and making a huge difference!" For example, they provided a family with $10,000 for medical bills and another family with a much-needed car, all with $1 donations at the root of fundraising.

GET AN ENTIRE TEAM BEHIND A MISSION

Does your company retreat start with a service project? Gathering your team of employees around a cause, such as simply giving a dollar to a specific mission, can be an easy lift that helps engage employees and motivate them to get more involved in philanthropy as individuals and as a group. Rory says you can often find AJ leading service projects with their team such as stuffing bags for the homeless and giving them out.

"[Going] as a team into... a rougher neighborhood, [everyone] is like 'whoa,' and it helps create gratitude, teamwork and then contribution to give back," he says.

You can also help automate giving as a part of company culture, he shares, such as using direct withdrawal from paychecks to specific causes and matching employee giving.

"Solve the problem that breaks your heart.... We believe that whatever breaks your heart breaks your heart for a reason."

USE FUNDAMENTAL BRAND BUILDING PRINCIPLES

Captivating storytelling. Immediacy. These are just a few of the principles of branding and marketing that directly apply to philanthropy and should be prioritized by those trying to promote and advance different causes, Vaden says.

For example, Dollar Club does tear-jerking interviews with those affected, so people who donate see the direct impact, and they share those videos as quickly as possible, for immediacy.

"Immediacy is powerful... [as is] emotion," he says. "Tell the story of one person. Saying we donated $100,000 to the Red Cross is far less compelling than telling the story of one family who lost their home, tell us who they are and what happened."

He recommends motivating others by telling those "granular" stories, focusing on localized impact or how a single life was changed. "That's how you move the masses," he says.

GIVE WITHOUT FEAR

Vaden paints a common picture of someone wanting to give to a homeless person but hesitating because of what the recipient might do with it—"[they say] I'm afraid he's just going to buy booze with it." This is where his faith comes in. "At least as a Christian, I feel like we're not called to assess people's motives. We're called to give," he says.

Another common concern is giving when you aren't sure you have enough. Yet, he says even if you aren't religious, just from an "altruistic" side, helping others in need is just "financial intelligence."

"View money as a tool and less of a source of safety, identity and self-worth," he says, sharing that when people are too attached to it, and too afraid of losing it, they can't "let go" and invest in other causes. Practicing emotionally detaching from it helps you develop a stronger relationship, ultimately becoming more productive and helpful with your money, he says. "When you give money, I very much believe it is one of the most important catalysts to you attracting and making more money. It's a paradox."

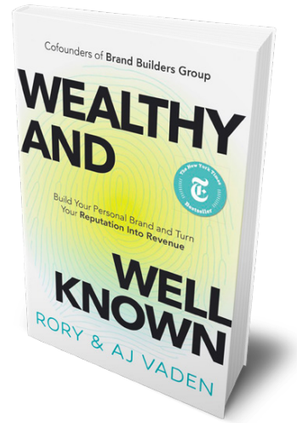
Finally, some people worry they won't be able to give enough to have a real impact. "Do for one what you wish you could do for everybody," Vaden says. "The roadblock is—there's so much need... Why should I donate $5? What is my $5 going to do? But give your $5 to one person on the street.... If we all do that, it adds up."

Vaden points to theories like Darren Hardy's *The Compound Effect*, *The Slight Edge* theory and the power of compound interest as support.

"If it makes a difference for one person, it's worth it," he says.

So, even if it's that single dollar to the Dollar Club or a service project as a work team, giving without fear of what will happen next is a place to start, Vaden shares. "Your highest self is when you're being your highest value to others." ◆

FROST IS A WORK-FROM-HOME MOM TO FIVE LITTLE KIDS AND A JOURNALIST AT PUBLICATIONS LIKE *SUCCESS®, THE NEW YORK TIMES, FORBES* AND OTHERS.



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