An innovative guide to how great nonprofits achieve extraordinary social impact. What makes great nonprofits great? Authors Crutchfield and McLeod Grant searched for the answer over several years, employing a rigorous research methodology which derived from books on for-profits like Built to Last. They studied 12 nonprofits that have achieved extraordinary levels of impact from Habitat for Humanity to the Heritage Foundation and distilled six counterintuitive practices that these organizations use to change the world. This book has lessons for all readers interested in creating significant social change, including nonprofit managers, donors and volunteers. Leslie R. Crutchfield (Washington, D.C.) is a managing director of Ashoka and research grantee of the Aspen Institute. Heather McLeod Grant (Palo Alto, CA) is a nonprofit consultant and advisor to Duke University’s Center for the Advancement of Social Entrepreneurship and the Stanford Center for Social Innovation. Crutchfield and Grant were co-founding editors of Who Cares, a national magazine reaching 50,000 readers in circulation between 1993-2000.

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I finished reading Forces For Good a few months ago. Yet I hadnt written about it, because I was observing how the concepts captured in it started to sink in and permeate into the way that we manage our own work in the Diabetes Hands Foundation. I am seeing the truth in the six forces described by Ms. Crutchfield and Ms. McLeod.

1) Advocate and Serve: trying to go beyond serving others to try to affect change at a level that will impact the lives of many more through activism.
2) Make Markets Work: work WITH, not AGAINST the private sector with mindset of trying to help private companies win too, while you help permeate their view of things.

3) Inspire Evangelists: very much aligned with the thoughts by Guy Kawasaki of developing people who will very much preach to others about the work your organization does.

4) Nurture Nonprofit Networks: believing that there is so much room and space for all and that united we stand a bigger chance of growing and accomplishing our goals.

5) Master the Art of Adaptation: change is the only constant... deal with it.

6) Share Leadership: dont become fixated (as a founder) on retaining all power... there are different leaders for different times.

In the end, applying these thoughts and learning from the loads of practical examples offered by the authors, it becomes clear how a nonprofit can have a sustained high impact.

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