



Knitting for Good!: A Guide to Creating Personal, Social, and Political Change Stitch by Stitch

Betsy Greer

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Every time we knit, we have the opportunity to create positive change in ourselves, our community, and in the world. That's Betsy Greer's fervent belief, and in this book she shows us how. Betsy explores the ways we can use knitting to slow down in a fast-paced culture, while using the craft to benefit charities in our communities, to advocate for worthwhile causes, and to support individuals and communities across the globe. Filled with insights from knitters and crafters on how they use craft to benefit others, *Knitting for Good!* will get you thinking about knitting in a whole new way.

To learn more about the author, visit her website: craftivism.com

Knitting for Good!: A Guide to Creating Personal, Social, and Political Change Stitch by Stitch Details

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From Reader Review Knitting for Good!: A Guide to Creating Personal, Social, and Political Change Stitch by Stitch for online ebook

Heather says

It was interesting... but not sure whether I would recommend it. she is a feminist and it's interesting how she found a way to say knitting is ok for feminists. Lol I was hoping for something other than what it was more or less about. she is really into activism and using knitting for activism. Where I just want to knit to help people. not make any statements. to each their own though

Manny says

Not draws my attention to the following socially conscious knitting/crochet patterns, both available from ravelry.com:

Fuck Trump Scarf

Donald Trump Voodoo Pincushion

Christine says

A friend gave me this book over the holidays and it helped me see my crafting impulse in a couple of new ways, which was great. One new perspective is that of crafting as a way to subvert consumerism. If I make my own bag or socks or sweater instead of buying, the result is a totally unique item that I get to take complete ownership of. This helped me understand why so many of the items in the stores are just not *quite* what I'm looking for.

Betsy Greer also talks about the meditative side of knitting. This part truly spoke to me. I've been known to spend hours on the couch knitting and watching TV in order to clear my mind. Sewing projects begun on a rainy afternoon could last through meals and breaks without me noticing the time at all! Now that there's a baby in my life, the TV is off but the knitting and sewing continue and it helps me find a little bit of peace in all the new madness.

I may never achieve the activism that Greer aims for and describes in her book, but I have started to realize that my crafting might be a worthy undertaking on its own, and not just a silly past time!

Cathy Wood says

This book ranges from Knitting for Yourself to Knitting for Your Community to Knitting for the World. The first section looks at how craft can allow you to express yourself and your creativity and can be used for therapy, as a sort of meditation. The second section looks at knitting both for and with your community, for example, knitting to donate to a local homeless shelter, or going to a nursing home and knitting with residents there. The third section gets more into activism - how consumerism can be combated with making, how craft can be used politically. Each chapter ends with two "Knitting for Good Actions", examples of how the things brought up in that chapter can be enacted, and a pattern.

penny shima glanz says

This line spoke the most to me, though I wish that it didn't need to be written:

"Textiles gave these women a voice; when they weren't allowed to speak, they could communicate their emotions through color, expressing their hopes and fears and anger stitch by stitch." (p 118 note: this refers to a *Advanced Reader's Copy* so your page number may vary).

Greer has done a very nice job in intermingling her experiences, the experiences and personal words of others, and how we ourselves can embrace craftivism. She doesn't preach but offers a view and leaves the reader to learn more and make their own choices.

The included knitting patterns are varied in topic and geared toward the beginner. I didn't take note of the recommended yarns, but as I logged in to write this review, I noticed a few others said they are on the pricey side. I'll try to append this review with some substitutions in the near future. If you need assistance /now/ look at the recommended gauge, fibre type, and how the yarn is constructed (2ply, etc) and go from there.

It's a nice easy and quick read.

Jean says

When I initially borrowed this book from the library, I was under the impression that it was all about knitting charities and how to get involved via knitting. However, I was pleasantly surprised that this was more of a narrative of one woman's journey in life that knitting helped guide.

It does highlight many things I've read about knitting i.e. the meditative state, therapeutic, and a feeling of self-reliance. It was nice reading combined in one personalized narrative. She also highlights knitting and crafting organizations and individuals and how knitting affected their lives.

It also delves in to identity issues that post modern feminists seem to struggle with. In efforts to break free from the domestic chains, we inadvertently shunned every aspect of it despite whether it was good or bad for us. So at points I did think that she does either over-explain or make stretches to attribute things to knitting. Whereas I don't doubt it played an important role in her life, I also felt a bit a skepticism at times when the tone felt more like knitting is THE way in a manner a new convert would enthusiastically with single minded resolve try to convert others.

Aside from that, this is an enjoyable quick read about a woman's journey to find significance in her life or her place in this world. There are some quick references and links to various organizations but by no means

comprehensive.

If you are looking for comprehensive guide to avenues of merging knitting and charitable works, you will be disappointed.

Julie says

Makes me want to be a better person and a better knitter, not necessarily in that order.

Laura Elliott Monroe says

Pros: A fun read, LOTS of inspiration, and some good patterns.

Cons: Why isn't there more of it? ;)

The Bottom Line: Pick it up as a springboard for charitable knitting inspiration!

I have a knitting charity that provides wearable/usable goods for the homeless in my city, and I'm always looking for more ways to contribute to my community via knitting. I was thrilled when my best friend mailed me this book.

Publisher's review: Every time we knit, we have the opportunity to create positive change in ourselves, our community, and in the world. That's Betsy Greer's fervent belief, and in this book she shows us how. Betsy explores the ways we can use knitting to slow down in a fast-paced culture, while using the craft to benefit charities in our communities, to advocate for worthwhile causes, and to support individuals and communities across the globe. Filled with insights from knitters and crafters on how they use craft to benefit others, *Knitting for Good!* will get you thinking about knitting in a whole new way.

The book was published in 2008, and is 150 pages long. It is divided in three parts:

Part I: Knitting for Yourself

Part II: Knitting for Your Community

Part III: Knitting for the World

Part I talks mostly about your connection with knitting, but also delves deeper into your connection to craft. Greer is best known for her website craftivism.com, and talks a lot in this section about how she "found" craft. She also talks about how you can personally awaken the crafter inside yourself (you know, just in case it was undiscovered or dormant or something). While she addresses knitting in most sections, she does mention craft/crafting/craftivism quite often. Part I talks about self-expression and also how therapeutic knitting can be (I can absolutely attest to this). She really hits dead-on how knitting can help you work through a multitude of emotions and decrease your stress, even taking your mind off of some physical pain that you may be experiencing.

Part II, *Knitting for Your Community*, was the section that was the most helpful to me. Greer talks about creating a crafting/knitting community and also connecting to local folks who share the same creative energy.

This section spoke to me profoundly as it not only addressed knitting for the homeless (my particular cause), but also knitting with children (teach some math skills!), with the elderly (even dementia patients will remember knitting stitches), and prisoners (they can become leaders in their own smaller communities by teaching knitting, and also contribute to knitting for various groups with needs like pet shelters or the homeless).

This section goes into more detail about the history of charitable knitting and some of the benefits. Most of these are pretty obvious, but very powerful and also reaffirms why we should help our community in this way.

Part III goes a little beyond personal knitting and addresses supporting local and handmade ... even when we choose where to purchase our coffee. There are many places in the world where women are abused and exploited, and the book mentions supporting groups that help women work rather than becoming victims of abuse. She closes with advice on how to take your knitting and be an activist with it, no matter your cause.

Each part contains first-person anecdotes from various artists, mostly crafters. These are film makers, cross-stitchers, clothiers, paper crafters, knitting therapists, beaders, disability experts, and more. They're very interesting and quite inspirational, and provide much food for thought.

Also included throughout the book are simple, relevant patterns. These are a striped hat for the homeless, a baby blanket, a pet bed for a pet shelter, socks, a vest, and more. I'm actually trying out the basketweave baby blanket later today for a friend's new baby.

I really enjoyed the style of writing as well. Fun, witty, punchy, and very real. Many knitting books are relatively dry and lack humor, or perhaps are not quite realistic. Not so with this read. Definitely recommended, even if you're not a charitable knitter. It might just inspire you to take that extra step with your knitting!

Tom Franklin says

Greer starts her book by describing her own path to knitting and how it helped her see herself as part of a continuing series of women in her family line. Knitting was once a necessary skill, practiced by generations of women to help clothe their families, and reclaiming that craft *by choice* made a great difference in her life.

She then goes on to describe and suggest ways in which knitting can create community. The act of crafting can bring like-minded people together and offer ways to give of your time and talents to those in need. Greer offers suggestions for volunteering, either individually or as part of a crafting circle, and is very encouraging in her writing.

Greer is also the author of a book titled "Craftivism" and heads the website of the same name. The word is a combination of Craft and Activism. While she slightly distances herself from someone she quotes as stating that 'all actions are political acts' the gist of her writing at least suggests that she believes all crafting is a activism, especially knitting.

The last 1/3 of the book, being somewhat more militant in its approach, was less engaging.

Laura says

more of a discussion about how to use knitting for activism rather than a book of patterns for activism which I had hoped for but still interesting.

Ellen says

I first read Betsy Greer's work in the anthology she compiled called Craftivism. This earlier work shows the origins of her later one. This book is her personal story of coming to knitting and discovering the connections which can be made with it, connections to many people, including a previously difficult to speak with relative, connections to strangers who see her knitting in public, and connections to activism, or craftivism. This personal story shapes the narrative, but does not overwhelm it. The author has been very proactive in using her knitting to connect to others, and made me think that I should make a few changes around how publicly I knit.

Interspersed within this work are the stories of others, told in their own words about how crafting has connected them more deeply to their community either nearby or to be able to help strangers who they may not meet. There are also knitting patterns which can be used for different works of craftivism/charity knitting. When reading this, I kept thinking about the many knitting groups in public libraries across Australia who knit for Wrap with love and other charities, and the powerful act of craftivism these many people are continuing to do. It was great that this was brought to mind by reading this work.

Apryl Anderson says

This was a nice read; I don't have anything to say against it, yet I don't see it changing my world. Greer gives excellent suggestions and enthusiastic support for how we might use our handwork for positive change. Maybe it's just the extreme difference between American volunteerism versus the French complaint that you're taking work away from someone who's paid for it. So please! Pay me to knit all day!! I suppose that 'knitting for the good' in my world would be a happy marriage of social capitalism? I can do far better work than pink pussy caps. Can I please knit for the good by getting my amazing work out there for my own financial support? Just thinking out loud...

Kelly H. (Maybedog) says

I like the concept, and I agree with pretty much everything the author says, I'm just not sure it needed a whole book. Or maybe just that the execution wasn't the greatest. Plus, this was really about Crafting for good not Knitting: most of the examples varied greatly in the different types of craft they were talking about. I think they were latching onto the knitting fad with the title.

The basic premise of the book is that you can engender social change in just about everything you do. Just buy locally and not supporting businesses that employ slave labor. Buying and selling crafts is more

environmental and socially conscious. You can also spread goodwill just by communicating through knitting by someone seeing you knit and being interested even if you don't speak the same language. But that's true of just about anything you could be doing that's remotely creative. If you were sitting on a bus making a sculpture I bet you'd get a couple interested eyes.

I liked the fact that these things were being discussed about a mainstream hobby but I suspect that her identification with Riot Grrrl when she was younger probably would turn a few people off. Plus the book is text text text text text. The patterns are tiny line drawings so it's hard to even discern what they're supposed to be. But don't bother, they're almost all exceedingly boring and/or terrible. (There's this scary lion that looks like it's mouth exploded!) I wish they'd included the pattern for the cool knitted globe on the cover but alas, no.

There are other books out there which talk about knitting for charity (although the very slim chapter in here has some good ideas for knitting *with* people like prisoners, children, and the elderly) but if you're looking for specific how tos as a knitter, this won't be much help.

I laud the author for her efforts and her research but I think this could have been handled much better.

Marlyn says

I received this ARC through LibraryThing's Early Reviewer program. The subtitle says it all, really. The book begins with an introduction to knitting (and by inference, other needle and fibre crafts) and it's re-emergence as a popular craft. The concept of knitting (etc.) as a link to one's ancestors is an important concept here.

Personally, I believe that knitting as an activity is inherently good: one is making warm garments or even toys to provide love and warmth to oneself or someone else. And then there is the psychological benefit to the knitter. Knitting is a proven stress reliever (my screams and curses when attempting to follow a difficult pattern notwithstanding).

Greer deals with this to some extent in the first section of the book, also citing the satisfaction of creating a tangible item, and the possibilities of earning a living through this creation.

In subsequent chapters, the focus is on knitting as a communal activity, which is evidenced by the number of recently formed knitting groups all over the world. The idea of knitting as a feminist craft rather than as old-fashioned "women's work" is dominant here.

The last section of the book focusses on knitting as an instrument of good on a global basis: knitting for charities outside one's immediate circle, such as those that send knitted toys to children in third-world countries.

Knitting is, without exaggeration, a respite from grief, war, and cold, as Greer makes clear in this book. There are patterns included that are suitable for giving or sending to charities, as well as a list of knitting groups and knitting charities.

As this is an Advanced Reader's Copy, I'm hoping that the publisher chose not to print the personal narratives that appear throughout the book in white letters on gray background. It's just too difficult to read!

I didn't sit down with this book and become absorbed in it to the exclusion of everything around me, but that doesn't mean it's not valuable. It's chock-full of ideas and inspirations; perfect for dipping into when you're feeling purposeless or unmotivated.

Sayraphim Lothian says

Love love LOVE this book, when i read it about 10 years ago, it made me want to use my craft for change and set me on my craftivism course... Thanks so much Betsy!
