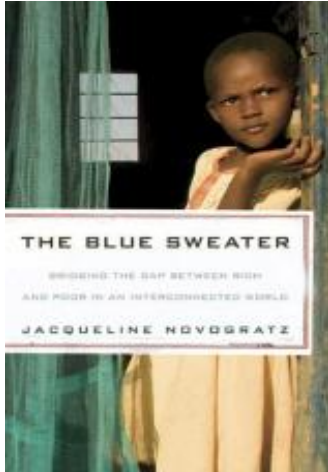

The Blue Sweater: Bridging the Gap Between Rich and Poor in an Interconnected World

by Jacqueline Novogratz



About the Book

Jacqueline Novogratz left a career in international banking to spend her life on a quest to understand global poverty and find powerful new ways of tackling it. From her first stumbling efforts as a young idealist venturing forth in Africa to the creation of the trailblazing organization she runs today, Novogratz tells gripping stories with unforgettable characters. She shows, in ways both hilarious and heartbreaking, how traditional charity often fails, but how a new form of philanthropic investing called *patient capital* can help make people self-sufficient and can change millions of lives. More than just an autobiography or a how-to guide to addressing poverty, **The Blue Sweater** is a call to action that challenges us to grant dignity to the poor and to rethink our engagement with the world.

Discussion Guide

1. Do you have any experiences like Jacqueline's blue sweater story that explore the same types of themes in your life?
2. One theme is the importance and power of listening to others. What are some examples from the book of either failure to listen or success in listening? Can you think of some instances from your own life where listening more or less might have changed an outcome?
3. Jacqueline sees moral imagination as the ability to put yourself in someone else's shoes and see the world from their perspective. When is moral imagination most necessary? How is it related to the concept of dignity? Is it a skill that can be taught?

4. What caused the women's initial distrust of Jacqueline when she first arrived in Kenya? How does one build trust? How can trust be rebuilt after great tragedies like the Rwandan genocide or in countries where corruption might be the norm?
5. Why do you think Jacqueline wanted to return to Rwanda after the genocide? What did she learn from her conversations with Honorata, Liliane, Agnes, and Prudence during her return trips? How did these stories of change Jacqueline's understanding of human nature or your understanding of human nature?
6. A close friend tells Jacqueline, "Just start. Don't wait for perfection. Just start and let the work teach you" (Chapter 13). Discuss this idea of overcoming mental barriers fearlessly. What other qualities or traits might you need to start something new?
7. Jacqueline encounters failure many times throughout her life. Think about how her failures shaped future decisions. What is the relationship between failure and success?
8. What is the difference between seeing the poor as customers and seeing them as receivers of charity as with WaterHealth International in Chapter 15? Should poor people have to pay for basic services like water and housing?
9. Discuss the philosophy behind the instrument of patient capital, which Jacqueline describes in Chapter 13. Does this seem like a viable solution to solving the problems of poverty? What other instruments exist for poverty alleviation?
10. Do you agree with how Jacqueline went about changing the bakery in Nyamirambo and the lives of the women who worked there? What effects did it have? How were Jacqueline's efforts with the bakery different from the patient capital approaches she later espouses?
11. Despite her focus on building businesses to solve poverty, Jacqueline gives money directly to the poor at various points in the book. Why does she give the money away? Has this book changed how you might donate your money in the future?

Author Bio

Jacqueline Novogratz is founder and CEO of Acumen Fund, a nonprofit venture capital firm for the poor that invests in sustainable enterprises. [Click here to visit her web site.](#)

Critical Praise

"A visionary book devoted to providing opportunity to poor people in all countries in an interconnected world."

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