Zero Problem Philanthropy

Christian Seelos reframes our concept of philanthropy with the idea of Zero-Problem Philanthropy, a shift from focusing on finding solutions for problems to creating healthy social contexts that inherently reduce the creation of problems to begin with. Our current "solution-focused" philanthropic methods often result in a never-ending cycle of problems and solutions. "What would it take to shift from a reactive, past-oriented solution perspective to a proactive philanthropy oriented towards a healthy future that does not create so many problems?" he proposes. Akin to "Zero Disease" visions of medicine that focuses on sustaining good health through preventative practices upstream (as opposed to treating diseases downstream), Zero-Problem Philanthropy could similarly engage transformation at the contextual or systemic level. With existing case studies ranging from the transportation sector to homelessness initiatives, potential implementations of this proactive philanthropy show promise. "All organizations are perfectly designed to get the results they get," Seelos notes; thus, to change the results, we must change the design.

Be The Change:

Think of something that's going well in your life or work. Reflect on what conditions make this possible, and express gratitude for that today.