MedTech Wealth Advisor Podcast

Episode 27: The Basics of Charitable Giving: Cash, Stock, IRAs

[00:00:00] -: Welcome to the MedTech Wealth Advisor Podcast, a show dedicated to teaching professionals and entrepreneurs in the MedTech field how to save more money, pay less taxes, and become financially independent. Join certified financial planner professional Matthew Nelson as he draws from years of experience and speaks with guest experts to solve the biggest challenge, aligning your money with your values while thriving in the mission-driven world of MedTech.

[00:00:28] **Matt Nelson:** And welcome back everyone. Today on the show we're gonna run through some common questions we get about charitable giving. By the time this airs, there should still be some time to squeeze in a little bit of tax planning by the end of the year, but are you doing it optimally? Stay tuned. So welcome back to the MedTech Wealth Advisor Show.

[00:00:49] **Matt Nelson:** Um, remember, this is the show dedicated to helping professionals in the MedTech industry make smarter decisions with their money. We discuss a wide range of personal finance topics like retirement planning, equity comp. I. Investments and all with the goal to help you save more money, pay less in taxes, and align your capital with your values.

[00:01:10] **Matt Nelson:** I'm your host, Matt Nelson, senior Advisor here at Perspective Six Group at Focus Financial. If you wanna learn more about our firm, check out our website at perspectivesix group.com and today. As always, I've got our resident financial planner, Jacob LaRue with me to discuss this topic. Welcome back Jacob.

[00:01:31] **Jacob LaRue:** Oh yeah, this is gonna be a good one.

[00:01:32] **Jacob LaRue:** Thanks for having me again.

[00:01:33] **Matt Nelson:** Yes. What's new from the LaRue household?

[00:01:38] **Jacob LaRue:** Yeah, we got, got a busy week ahead of us. I think we got our little girl's first birthday coming up this weekend, so we're gonna have a bunch of people over here and have to entertain them. Hopefully everything runs smoothly and uh, yeah, I can't believe it's been a year, but it has, so

[00:01:55] **Matt Nelson:** time flies, you know, as a, as someone without kids, all that sounds like to me is.

[00:02:00] **Matt Nelson:** Another way that your kids are costing you money. So like you gotta, you gotta host a party, you gotta, yeah. Bring everybody over. Exactly.

[00:02:09] **Jacob LaRue:** We're on the plate for food and everything, so Yeah. That'll be fun. That'd be fantastic. Just add it to the bill that goes on for 18, 20 years, whatever it is.

[00:02:18] **Matt Nelson:** Yes, I can live vicariously.

[00:02:21] **Jacob LaRue:** Yeah. What about you? What do you got going on?

[00:02:23] **Matt Nelson:** You know, um, it's not, it's not this, uh, coming weekend actually, the, the, as we're airing this in two weeks, um, I've got a race coming up, uh, called the Schwa Magan Fat Tire. By the time this airs, this'll be over. So, we'll, we'll, we can hear about the results at that point, but that's what I'm preparing for today.

[00:02:42] **Matt Nelson:** It's a mountain bike race. If you're, if you're in the Midwest, you know about it. It's kind of the big deal. End of year, uh, mountain bike endurance race. It'll take about, I don't know, somewhere like two and a half hours. If I can come in 2 45, I'll be happy. Something like that. So we'll see. I'm getting older, getting slower.

[00:03:02] Matt Nelson: I just gotta keep up with the, uh, the young guys is

[00:03:04] **Jacob LaRue:** all, how many years have you been doing that one? Oh man. You know,

[00:03:08] **Matt Nelson:** 20 years, something like that. Nice. A lot that ages me. It's, it's fun though. It may, maybe it actually keeps me young. I don't know. Well, yes. So we'll check in on what happened with, uh, the birthday later.

[00:03:22] **Matt Nelson:** But, um, today, let's, let's get to our topic. You know, it charitable giving. So again, this should air before the end of the year, sometime in November, I think. And you'll have a little bit of time to, to do some giving and, and people bring this up all the time, you know? Um, and they wanna know what's the best way to do some tax saving.

[00:03:44] **Matt Nelson:** Um. Is there anything I can do to lower my tax bill? And so, you know, when we talk about charitable giving, um, there's a lot to it. Today I think we're just gonna talk about, um, really, let's just say three big points. So, um, I. Think about why you're giving in the first place. We'll talk about that. Then the actual tax considerations and then some of the initial methods that you could use more.

[00:04:12] **Matt Nelson:** More of the baseline methods we'll call it. Um, I think maybe in a future show we'll talk about a little bit more advanced giving strategies, but I always start this conversation out with, it's not about the taxes first. You know, it's, this is giving the causes you care about should be the number one priority.

[00:04:33] **Matt Nelson:** Um, it's great. It's great to wanna save on taxes, but it makes no sense to give a dollar to charity just so you can save 40 pennies if that was the only thing you wanted.

[00:04:46] **Jacob LaRue:** Exactly. Yeah. I can't believe how many times we have to kind of reiterate that. Um, with clients, it's just, you gotta make sure your, your values are lining up with what you wanna do with your money first.

[00:04:57] **Jacob LaRue:** So it's not about the tax savings, even though that's what's on most people's mind. You gotta really care about, um, the cause that you're gonna be contributing to.

[00:05:06] **Matt Nelson:** Yeah, I mean, that said, there's. There are plenty of ways to combine the two, the two goals of giving and, and some tax savings and, and doing it in the proper order in the proper year.

[00:05:18] **Matt Nelson:** And all of that can make it the most beneficial. But, uh, just prioritize the desire over to give over saving. And that's the, that's the first baseline item. Now, actual tax considerations. So there's a, there's a handful of things to consider here. You've got. Deductions and how those work on the tax return.

[00:05:42] **Matt Nelson:** So we have to understand how that works first to actually make charitable giving even work for you. Um, it, it got a little, little bit trickier in the last few years once the standard deduction and the itemized deductions changed. So let's talk about that first because, um, I guess the, the thing I picture is when a client will come in with a.

[00:06:07] **Matt Nelson:** A box of receipts or they'll tell me that they've been saving their receipts all year and they give them their to their accountant and they figure their accountant's taking care of it. And then we look at their tax return and they've taken the standard deduction. So why don't you explain what happens there, Jacob?

[00:06:22] **Jacob LaRue:** Yeah, that's a perfect place to start comes to my mind as somebody who tells us, Hey, I gave 10,000 to charity last year and I got a deduction for that. I'm gonna keep doing it. Well, you might think you get a deduction, but like Matt said, you know, four or five years ago now we're already in 2024, so this is getting, getting old quick.

[00:06:45] **Jacob LaRue:** But standard deduction pretty much doubled compared to what it was prior. So remember how that works. Your standard deduction is something you get no matter what charitable outcome or giving you do. So everybody gets a standard deduction and for 2024, it's almost 29,000 for a married couple. Um, so that's a big number.

[00:07:07] **Jacob LaRue:** Um, so you get that right off the bat.

[00:07:10] **Matt Nelson:** When did I and that, that actually shocks me. I, I can't quite keep up with them. That's why I was, have to rely on you to remind me 29,000, that's just how much was it last year?

[00:07:21] **Jacob LaRue:** It was about 27, 28. Yeah. And it just keeps going up. 'cause you know, they adjusted for inflation and things like that.

[00:07:27] **Jacob LaRue:** But you know, if we go back five, six years, that number was in half. It was only about 12,000 back then. So this is why charitable giving is really hard to narrow down what you're getting a benefit for. Because if you gave 10,000. You may not even itemize because that's not gonna necessarily put you over that 29,000 when you combine it with everything else.

[00:07:52] **Jacob LaRue:** So just know that you already are getting a pretty big deduction, um, whether you're given to charity or not. Um, so now there's, there's gotta be some things that we gotta be aware of when we're, we're thinking about charity,

[00:08:06] **Matt Nelson:** right? Yeah. So not, so basically what you're saying is if we don't do. Bunching, you know, or, you know, grouping or giving, maybe giving ahead, um, might not even give that big of a benefit.

[00:08:21] **Matt Nelson:** But that brings us to the other consideration, which is some limitations because now, um, now with that standard up at almost 30,000, you have to do such a significant gift again, to get any benefit. We gotta start being there. Being aware of the limitations. So explain how that works. Um, you know, the function of the maximum giving you can do and, and what's, what's going on there?

[00:08:51] **Jacob LaRue:** Yeah, exactly. So charitable giving, um, when we're talking about deduction purposes, uh. The caps that are tied, they're all tied back to your income, and specifically that's your adjusted gross income or a GI as some people might refer to it. So a really easy example for most people out there, if you

had a hundred thousand as your a GI on your tax return, your cash gifts could be about 50% of that.

[00:09:17] **Jacob LaRue:** So you could give 50,000 of cash and actually get a benefit on your tax return that year. If you give 55,000 or 51,000, anything over that number of 50 that doesn't get counted for that tax year, it, it does get carried forward to the next tax year. Just know there is caps tied to your income on an annual basis.

[00:09:43] **Jacob LaRue:** So there's that cash cap that I just talked about. And then another big one for, um, clients, especially in the equity comp space might be, you know, capital gain assets like stocks or bonds, et cetera. Um, this cap is only 30% of your a GI, so you might give a hundred thousand of stock that's appreciated. If your a GI is only a hundred thousand, you're actually only gonna get a benefit for that 30,000.

[00:10:10] **Jacob LaRue:** So you just gotta be aware of these caps and make sure you're doing careful tax planning on a year to year basis.

[00:10:15] **Matt Nelson:** Right? Yeah, absolutely. You know, with, when we have some of the advanced strategies with, with maybe pairing a really big equity comp here, bunch of RSUs come due, bunch of income, um. Is in that year and we're trying to reduce the income.

[00:10:32] **Matt Nelson:** Well now we already have a huge income year, so it's a lot easier to sort of like marry these two together. But I think of, uh, maybe our retired clients who we're trying to purposely keep their income, their taxable income really low, and then they go and do a, a gift. And it might, we just have to be careful what, what's happening there.

[00:10:50] **Jacob LaRue:** Exactly. Yep, yep. There's, there's moving parts anytime you're dealing with charity or stocks in general. So, yeah, just gotta look at it year to year basis.

[00:10:59] **Matt Nelson:** Okay. Well let, let's cover some of the, some of the basic methods or the, the, maybe the well-known methods, um, first and then a little more unique. One that only matters for certain ages.

[00:11:11] **Matt Nelson:** So, you know, you've got your, your typical giving personal stuff. We'll start with the easiest one. That's the, that's the classic donating to. You know, um, in our town we give to Arc or you have, uh, salvation Army or any, any number of, um, places you can, you can give a bunch of old clothes or, you know, furniture or whatever it is.

[00:11:32] **Matt Nelson:** So that's, that works great. Um, just make sure you get your, your, uh, proof of receipt. Think about the limitations. Um. That's the first method. Okay. Not a lot of restriction there. Not a lot that that matters to our audience in this one, but, but then giving cash. So we talked about the limitations with giving cash and, um, certainly just giving, you know, the classic write, write a check, um, send it directly to the charity.

[00:12:00] **Matt Nelson:** That's all. Great. Gotta keep the receipt. Um, there's probably better methods to, to gift the cash than just writing a check and we'll, we'll talk about that a little later. Um. But then the more complex would be giving a low basis stock. So you alluded to that in the limitations above, but walk us through an example of how you might give some stocks you own and why that might be better than just giving straight cash.

[00:12:28] **Jacob LaRue:** Right, exactly. So think about this. Let's say you bought Apple in 2000 and you had a hundred, a hundred shares of Apple and you held it all the way to now those a hundred shares are gonna be worth. A lot of money and you might not wanna pay the tax on those. So you can actually gift those to a charity.

[00:12:46] **Jacob LaRue:** And some charities have a, a way that you can just transfer the stock directly to them, which is awesome. So now you're, you're removing that capital asset off your balance sheet. And what's really nice there is you get potentially a tax deduction and you're avoiding the capital gains on that stock. So if Apple was a dollar when you bought in and it grew to a hundred.

- [00:13:10] **Jacob LaRue:** You're gonna avoid 90 di \$99 of capital gains, um, times how many shares. So that's a really good strategy,
- [00:13:16] **Matt Nelson:** super good method. Yeah. And in fact, I'll, I'll jump in there with, uh, plenty of times we want to continue to hold Apple. You, you might have, you might not wanna actually sell your Apple, but you've got this choice of, Hey, I, I actually do wanna give this, let's just say it's a larger gift.
- [00:13:34] **Matt Nelson:** Let's say I wanna give this 50,000 to, you know, your organizations. Um. Capital campaign. Okay? So it's a larger gift, uh, all in one year, and you could do it outta cash. Maybe you got some money sitting in a money market or savings account or, or whatever. Um, or you could give some Apple stock. Well, if you don't wanna sell the Apple stock, think of it as just an exchange.
- [00:13:58] **Matt Nelson:** So if you do it correctly, you actually give them the stock. Avoid all of the capital gains on it. Get the same deduction, plus that bonus of not having to pay the capital gains and then take your cash and just rebuy Apple stock. And it's completely fine. There's no, it's not a loophole, it's just a strategy.
- [00:14:16] **Matt Nelson:** Uh, you don't, you don't have a wash sale or anything complicated that happens.
- [00:14:21] **Jacob LaRue:** Yeah, it's a perfect example. Um. It's like the ideal scenario where you get to keep the stock because you're buying it with your own cash and you're given to hopefully a charity that you cause about so, or care about. So really good strategy.
- [00:14:36] **Jacob LaRue:** Um, you know, there's, there's other things that we'll talk about here too. Um, donor Advise Fund is very popular. We'll hit that in the next show, but it's a, it's a really good strategy. You can think of that as like a charitable account that's in your name. So just keep that in mind when we, we go forward here.
- [00:14:54] **Matt Nelson:** It's really like supercharging the strategy with, uh, giving your stock. Yeah. That's why we, we need to spend some time on that.

[00:15:02] **Jacob LaRue:** Exactly.

[00:15:03] **Matt Nelson:** But, but before we move on o off of the low basis stock, let's just quick touch on, you know, a lot of listeners have equity comp 'cause that's, you know, that's kind of the, the market we serve.

[00:15:13] **Matt Nelson:** And so we're running into people that have restricted stock. That have, um, restricted stock units and, and awards, they're getting stock options. Let's talk real briefly about if that's something that can be given to charity and it doesn't work.

[00:15:31] **Jacob LaRue:** Right? Yeah. So biggest thing there is the vesting schedules.

[00:15:36] **Jacob LaRue:** So more often than not, if the stock's not vested, they're not gonna just let you transfer it to a charity, but as soon as it's vested and now you hold it. You have some choices to make, whether it's, you know, use it for your cash flow, holding it long enough so there is actual a charitable benefit. Um, those are all things to consider, but just remember the vesting on any type of equity comp there is gonna be the, the most important trigger when we decide what to do with it.

[00:16:04] **Matt Nelson:** Right? And it, it's, although there can be some strategies that are maybe more complex and, and get and, and get some additional benefits. With giving your, you know, your equity awards or we'll just say your equity compensation. Um, a lot of times it's, it's kind of more simple, you know, if, if you're getting RSUs and you can't give them till they're vested anyway, well then what's really happening, they've vested, you're receiving, you're, you're claiming that as income.

[00:16:36] **Matt Nelson:** Um, and now you have shares. And now if you give the shares. If there's no appreciation, that really wasn't any benefit at all. It just was kind of like giving cash. If, if it was a set of RSUs that you received paid the income, and you've been holding that same stock now for 2, 3, 4, 5 years, and there's a bunch of appreciation, great.

[00:16:55] **Matt Nelson:** You can get those shares. At that point though, it's not any different than just had you bought stock on your own and held it for a while. So don't complicate it too much in your mind that certain kinds of equity compensation, I. Practically become similar at to just owning regular stock and giving it.

[00:17:15] **Jacob LaRue:** Yeah. I think a good way to maybe say it is, uh, don't hold onto your RSUs just to give 'em later.

[00:17:23] Matt Nelson: That's a yes. It's a great,

[00:17:25] **Jacob LaRue:** don't, don't overcomplicate it like you said. So.

[00:17:28] **Matt Nelson:** Perfect piece of advice. Exactly. Um, yeah. Later we could talk, uh, about, you know, some specifics if, let's say your early stage maybe private company, you actually had some true.

[00:17:39] **Matt Nelson:** Restricted stock. I'm not talking about RSUs, I'm talking about, uh, stock that is has some legends on it. It's got some restrictions from you being allowed to sell. Um, if you, if you have it, you know you have it 'cause it's subject to a rule 4 1 44. But sometimes gifting those shares 'cause they're extremely low basis, can be really advantageous.

[00:18:04] **Matt Nelson:** Um, especially if you pair it. Maybe the company's gone public and you've got a bunch of RSUs that have come due and you have a huge income year. So there are times when, when we could pair charitable giving with tax strategy and equity comp and it makes a lot of sense.

[00:18:25] **Jacob LaRue:** Yeah. It's a cash flow timing that we've talked about several times now, but it's, you gotta line things up, really do with charitable giving just like we do with cash flow.

[00:18:33] **Jacob LaRue:** So.

[00:18:34] **Matt Nelson:** Well, with the time we have left, I want to touch on this, this, uh, significant method, um, which we use all the time, um, called QCD or

Qualified charitable Donation. Okay. Um, this is probably one of the, it's potentially one of the most underutilized methods, um, although it's gaining popularity now, it's been around a few years.

[00:18:59] **Matt Nelson:** When we first started using it, almost no one had heard of it. Accountants thought we were crazy, um, that I was asked what was going on. Now, of course, more and more people know about it, but just to go through it, um, where the, where what we've talked about so far was giving, giving things that you, let's say you personally own or cash or low basis stock.

[00:19:18] **Matt Nelson:** This is giving from an IRA, so it's a whole different method. Um, the key though is you have to be old enough to make this work. Um, so. Talk about how we use this in our strategies.

[00:19:34] **Jacob LaRue:** Yeah. This is a big deal for, for anyone really that's taking required minimum distributions. RMDs, I'm sure a lot of our listeners, um, that are retired are, are like, oh, I have RMDs.

[00:19:48] **Jacob LaRue:** Well, you know, RMDs fully taxable. So if you had 10,000 of an RMD, uh, this year and you distributed it to your bank account. Then you gave it to charity, you're still paying tax on \$10,000. Um, the QCD is great because what you can do is take that 10,000 from your IRA, send it directly to a charity, and it's pretty much like it never shows up on your tax return.

[00:20:16] **Jacob LaRue:** You don't claim it as income. It doesn't get taxed. You don't have to itemize your deductions to get a benefit for the charitable de uh, gift. It's all just dollar for dollar reduction. It's perfect. Perfect for anyone with RMDs.

[00:20:33] **Matt Nelson:** Yes. That's the big key. And then why we touched on the limitations with the standard diversity itemized first is that this is the key if you, especially for smaller, smaller gifts.

[00:20:47] **Matt Nelson:** So if you're, you're over 70 and a half, you have an IRA. Let's just do a classic example of, Hey, you know, I give, uh, I give \$5,000 a year to

my church. Or maybe it's, maybe it's more, maybe it's even, well nowadays, maybe it's 15 or 20, but you're just doing that outta cash. Just like we talked about earlier.

[00:21:06] **Matt Nelson:** You literally get no benefit from that, I mean, other than you gave to your church. So that's a huge benefit, right? Remember, you're giving first 'cause you want to, but you get no tax benefit by doing that. And if you, so, if you have an IRA now we can give it, like you said. Essentially almost behind the scenes and you, you lowered your RMD for the year, so you lowered your income.

[00:21:27] **Jacob LaRue:** Yep. I think what we like to tell people is like, like you said, give 'cause you cause or care about the cause, but also gotta gift wisely and smart. You don't want to just waste dollars necessarily. So give 'cause you care and then let us help you with the, the wise part of it.

[00:21:44] **Matt Nelson:** Yeah. A couple things I'll, uh, touch on though before we wrap up is, um, there is a.

[00:21:50] **Matt Nelson:** A mentality shift you have to go through when it comes to giving this way. Um, so if, if you've been going along and used to, let's just say the, the really old school method of, you know, you write a check every time you, you go to church, just 'cause let's say that's a weekly thing you do, um, and you put it in the offering plate, um, you won't get to do it that way anymore with, with A QCD.

[00:22:12] **Matt Nelson:** Um, or, you know, maybe it's you show up to your, your. Favorite charities annual drive and you like to write a check and give it to 'em right there. Same situation to to do A QCD properly, the money has to come directly from the custodian. So let's just say you have your IRA at Schwab. Okay? Schwab has to be the one to send the check from your IRA direct to the charity.

[00:22:38] **Matt Nelson:** Can't come to you first. Has to be made to payable to the charity. And this is, it's easier than it sounds, but you just have to do it in the proper order, kind of a method to it. The other thing to realize though, is it doesn't happen overnight. So there's a little bit of timing to consider, um, with, let's just use that church example.

[00:23:03] **Matt Nelson:** Uh, again, if you know it's a weekly situation, well, if you're gonna start giving from your IRA. You may just wanna have a conversation with your, um, church's treasurer and say, Hey, you know, I, I know I used to do it this way before, but now what's gonna happen is maybe on January 1st or in December, just one big check for the year is gonna come for my IRA.

[00:23:27] **Matt Nelson:** Just give 'em a heads up so they can still plan their budget correctly. Um, frankly, they don't care the timing. They just need to know when that's the biggest one. And then. Of course you'll need to work with your financial advisor, work with us to get the check over.

[00:23:44] **Jacob LaRue:** Yeah, that's a great point. And I'll, I'll also add to that, you know, some people, if they're given to a church or another organization, there might be special campaigns.

[00:23:52] **Jacob LaRue:** Like you said, Schwab's really good about. Um, writing in memo line items. So, hey, this might be for the capital campaign or the building fund. You can add those things to the check from the IRA, so then it gets, uh, directed to the right project that you want it to. So it's a really good, good source.

[00:24:11] Matt Nelson: Yes. Um, and the last point is be careful.

[00:24:18] **Matt Nelson:** We're not gonna make this determination for you, so be careful that you aren't. Directing, uh, a contribution this way to let's just, let's just say your, your annual charity's dinner event, and actually the dinner is valued at a hundred dollars a piece and you brought guests and then you got a gift and maybe they provided something else.

[00:24:43] **Matt Nelson:** Maybe it was like a, uh. An event on a boat. Okay? So you gotta be careful that the money is actually going only to charity if it's really paying for goods and services that you got a lot of use out of, all of a sudden that's not a charitable thing. And, and it, it, it's not something you wanna find out later in a, in an audit.

[00:25:08] **Matt Nelson:** So that's all I'll say about that.

[00:25:10] **Jacob LaRue:** Yep. Yep. Audits are, uh, no good.

[00:25:13] **Matt Nelson:** Yeah, that's right. That's right. So that's pretty good for, for right there. We could put a pin in it. I think, you know, again, we love to, to work with clients that are doing charitable giving. Just wanna do it the right way. Prioritize, um, giving first, make sure we're getting the right deductions and think about standard versus itemized.

[00:25:32] **Matt Nelson:** Maybe having to group and give more in one year or not. Um, and if you're old enough, maybe you're using a charitable. Donation to QCD. If you have low basis stock, that's one of the best methods as well. If, if you're not old enough and have an IRA. Um, so I think that's it. Is there anything else you wanted to add before we wrap up?

[00:25:54] **Jacob LaRue:** No, I don't think so. I think this was a really good episode and hopefully, uh, people had some ideas pop in their head and. We, we love to talk about, uh, charitable giving and the proper way to do it.

[00:26:06] **Matt Nelson:** Love it. Yeah, I think we'll talk about donor-advised funds next. So stay tuned if you wanna listen to that.

[00:26:10] **Matt Nelson:** Uh, wait for next week's download and get that. So that's all we have time for today. Um, look, if you need guidance on this, just let us know. You can contact us, um, at, at our phone number (952) 225-0333. Check out our website. Perspective six group.com. Um, if you know someone who might find this helpful, just send it to 'em directly that click the share button, uh, let them know and, uh, give us a review too.

[00:26:42] **Matt Nelson:** I, I've been seeing some reviews. It's helpful to see what people like and don't like, and if you have suggestions, I'd love to have those. We want to talk about what's important to you. This is really for, um, you know, clients and, and. And really everybody that wants to learn more about financial planning, about, uh, investment topics, about equity compensation.

[00:27:05] **Matt Nelson:** We work with mostly MedTech, uh, professionals, but also a lot of retired clients who've never been in MedTech. So broad range of topics. Let us know what you want to hear. So until next time, remember, financial freedom takes more than money. So find your purpose and make a plan to live your life well.

[00:27:24] **Matt Nelson:** You need guidance. We're here to help. Take care of each other out there.

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