

## Self-Serving Altruism: The Key to A Brighter Future

Too often, the world lacks empathy. Human society is the most well-developed it has ever been, but one concept has yet to break through properly: empathy. People are focused too much on themselves to think of the feelings of others. They justify this lack of care through the logical argument that one's well-being is always prioritized over that of others. While there is truth to this, a wide variety of people are unable to recognize that caring for other people does not necessarily mean neglecting oneself and one's own wants and needs. Those who have less, tend to recognize this more than those who have more, as people with access to more than the basic requirements for life tend to be unaware of their luck. Those who do not have much share what they do have with those around them, to ensure everyone can get what they need. This is because the individual will reap the rewards of a society where more people are successful. Those who share have a desire to minimize human suffering. Self-serving altruism is a useful and viable option to increase empathy and convince people to aid others in need.

Commiseration, or small-scale empathy is common. People find it easy to bond over shared experiences and feelings. Large-scale empathy is different-it asks people to show concern for others with the shared experience of being human, often with little else connecting them. Many Europeans and North Americans have not faced the hardships that the populations of other, less-developed continents have, and therefore find it difficult to relate to the plight of others as its simply unimaginable. A striking problem-but self-serving altruism poses a solution. While the term may seem to be an oxymoron, doing things to benefit others while also improving one's own circumstances in the process is quite simple. While altruism traditionally focuses on caring for others with a selfless attitude, a bit of selfishness may prove useful in having more people want to help their fellow humans. If people are convinced that helping other people will benefit them in the long run, they will be more likely to allow themselves to act upon the emotional side of the issue. This is the side which calls for them to help fellow human beings in need. This has also led to more scientific breakthroughs and economic developments. If more people have access to basic necessities like food and shelter, they have extra money to spend on things like education or luxuries. Due to the markets for such things becoming bigger, more money can be earned. The advancements in science are due to more people being educated enough to assist in research-with a larger number of people working towards a common goal, the goal can be reached much faster than before.

Take, for instance, the Syrian refugee crisis. The response to this crisis has differed by country, and from the government to the general population. In many European nations the populace feels as though it is too much to ask to let these people seek shelter in their countries-as though they are all a burden too great to bear. As though people will all be ordered to host refugees in their own homes and give up their lives as they know them. People do not recognize that helping others will not necessarily hurt themselves, and this has contributed to backlash

when these countries attempt to take in refugees. The long-term benefits of assisting others go unrecognized, with a large amount of Europeans only thinking of the initial strain put on their countries resources.

This “me and mine first” phenomenon has been seen more in European countries as opposed to Canada. European countries tend to be fairly racially homogenous, while Canada is a multicultural, multifaceted country that has historically benefited from diversity. This diversity has allowed Canada to become a safe and welcoming country for people from all walks of life. Due to not being as established as European countries, with their centuries-old art and architecture, Canada has had to find different ways to catch up. Diversity has changed Canada for the better because it has helped to bring up the social and economic standing of many people. As more Canadians have money to spend on things other than necessities, markets expand due to higher demand. Canada is also a world leader in medical research, having access to increased funding from people with increased wealth. This is proof that empathy with others and helping them to have a better standing, works.

Altruism, egoistic or not, is not a perfect solution to a dearth of empathy. There will always be people too self-obsessed to spend even a moment of their time in consideration of people they do not know, despite the promise of gains to their own wellbeing. Even those who possess empathy do not always utilize it. However, the promotion of this “selfish charity” has the potential to greatly increase both governmental and individual response to the issue of the Syrian refugee crisis, as well as to any related ones which may arise. If other methods cannot get through to the populace, that of self-serving altruism presents a worthy alternative.