

Faking Altruism: The True Nature of Giving

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Faking Altruism: The True Nature of Giving

Introduction:

The world can be viewed through many different lenses and it is either through luck or hard work that some people are better off than others. Through geography, family, connections, motivation, skill level, or fate people live enormously diverse lives and people combat this unfair range in lifestyles by the simple saying, “life is not always fair.” And it is true. From youth, people get told this everyday and it is humanity’s way of describing how the world runs. But what happens to the less fortunate, the individuals predisposed to hard times? Satisfaction will not come with a simple saying when their whole life is built around it or destroyed by it. Charities or non-profit organizations have historically been there for people like this, people who have nowhere else to turn to and simply need help. But do people truly desire to be charitable and give back to others, or are charities only a way for society to fulfill a moral obligation? Altruism is the goal for any charity, but the fact that charities exist does not mean that altruism exists within them. The Merriam-Webster dictionary has two definitions for altruism: the unselfish regard for or devotion to the welfare of others and the behavior by an animal that is not beneficial to or may be harmful to itself but that benefits others of its species. I will use altruism to more closely mirror the second definition, in that although an act in no way benefits an individual, they still do it because it benefits someone else.

The thought of the world working in peace has long been dismissed, but the sheer presence of non-profit organizations means that not all people work towards

self-interest. Ralph Waldo Emerson debates this by saying; "One of the most beautiful compensations in life is that no person can help another without helping themselves ("Charity Quotes"). Emerson is clearly cynical towards the idea of altruism but it is a valid argument. Can one person truly help another person? Is altruism real or just a word made up to make people feel better about themselves? I will look into this argument by basing my senior project off the ability for people to donate to charity, what appeals to people, and why.

Importance

The current world is one full of disaster. In a 2010 MSNBC article written as a summary of the past year in terms of deadly disasters, the opening says it all:

Earthquakes, heat waves, floods, volcanoes, super typhoons, blizzards, landslides and droughts killed at least a quarter million people in 2010 — the deadliest year in more than a generation. More people were killed worldwide by natural disasters this year than have been killed in terrorism attacks in the past 40 years combined. (Bell and Borenstein)

In 2010, 260,000 people were killed by natural disasters in the form of earthquakes, heat waves, and flooding which were the hugest killers (Bell and Borenstein).

Along with a huge death toll, natural disasters in 2010 cost the world \$222 billion in damages (Bell and Borenstein). The possible cause for an increased amount of environmental disasters is the changing climate. Jay Lawrimore, the chief climate analyst at the National Climatic Data Center in North Carolina, states, "The climate is changing. Extreme events are occurring with greater frequency, and in many cases with greater intensity" (Gillis).

The latest natural disaster to hit the world is the tsunami and earthquake disaster in Japan, and the cause that I have based my senior project on. On March 11, 2011, a 9.0-magnitude earthquake struck off the coast of northern Japan, the strongest ever recorded earthquake for the country ("Japan"). The earthquake caused a tsunami to hit the northern coastal cities of Japan and waves as high as 30 feet crashed onto the shores ("Japan"). Entire cities were washed away and hundreds of thousands of people were left without food, water, or electricity. To add to the bitter cold, the country was faced with a nuclear emergency. The Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station faced problems with three of its nuclear reactors ("Japan"). Radioactive steam and chemicals went into the atmosphere and water supply as the country faced problems with overheating, meltdowns, and leaks within the large nuclear plant. As of April 7, 2011, 12,600 people have been declared dead and over 14,700 missing. Experts estimate that the damage might take the lives of close to 20,000 people ("Japan"). In regards to the nuclear crisis, the warning level is at an all time high of 7, which makes the disaster only comparable to the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear crisis, one where a nuclear reactor actually blew up ("Japan"). In the Japanese Prime minister's own words, Naoto Kan stated, "I think that the earthquake, tsunami and the situation at our nuclear reactors makes up the worst crisis in the 65 years since the war ("Japan")." Hundreds of thousands of people are in desperate need for supplies, food, water, and shelter, and they are looking for help.

Currently, the crisis resides in Japan, but with a growing world population and changing climate, more natural disasters will rock the world. Because of the

desperate need for help, seeing how people donate and conditions which persuade people to donate is becoming increasingly important (White and Pelozo). The fact is, more people are looking for donations and government help, and charities play a huge factor in providing services that include health care, housing, and disaster relief. Non-profit organizations are responding to the increase in demand and taking on qualities that were once reserved for for-profit organizations. This includes relationship marketing, branding, and marketing return on investment (White and Pelozo). It is obvious that with the more disasters that hit the world, the more donations will become essential. And charities will have to find better and more effective ways to communicate their cause to possible donors and find what gets people to donate (White and Pelozo).

Literature Review:

Much research has focused on one simple question: is a cause worth people's time? Studies often focus on if a problem is worthy and seeing how they can show consumers that the cause is admirable (Das, Kerkhof, and Kuiper). But research into the effectiveness of fundraising messages is limited. It is without question that evidence certainly does increase donations and the persuasive qualities of a message. This is because it makes consumers more knowledgeable about a cause or charity (Das, Kerkhof, and Kuiper). But there are other things that go into if and when people will donate. First, the value of the cause affects the contributor. For example, does an individual even care about what is happening currently in Japan? Second, the effectiveness of the donation aimed at solving the problem is vital. Will an individual's money or time even help the situation? If someone

believes that a charity is effective, they will be more likely to donate (Das, Kerkhof, and Kuiper). But if people believe that a cause is worthy, but that nobody else will donate, an individual is less inclined to donate. This can go too far though and if a person believes that everyone is already donating to a cause, then their donation is not necessary, and they will be less inclined to donate (Das, Kerkhof, and Kuiper). People want to feel that their donation added to goal attainment and so advertising that a charity's goal is most likely going to be reached because of their specific donation is extremely effective (Das, Kerkhof, and Kuiper).

Another big factor that goes into why people donate is other people. In conditional cooperation, people give to charities when they believe that others have done the same (Das, Kerkhof, and Kuiper). I define conditional cooperation in the sense that people are cooperating with the charity by giving money, but only to meet the conditions of society. Since it is socially acceptable to donate, they will do it. People also donate more money when they believe that people who are similar to them donate. In a study done around radio call-in donations, people increased their donations when they were told that a person with a similar background (gender and age) had just made a big donation right before them (Shang, Reed, and Croson). It is a simple fact, people have the need and desire to be respected and liked by others (Bennett). This can be used to the advantage of a charity, because people will often get into donation giving because it will earn them the respect of society (Bennett).

One way to enhance the need for social recognition is to offer an incentive. An incentive is an offer, gift, coupon, or an event that a company gives to individuals in response to a donation. Incentives maximize social recognition

because they allow the donator to display the fact that they have donated (Bennett). It acts as a banner and shows the world, “look, I am a charitable and good person.” Gifts and items that are associated with donating have a “signaling” nature and allow consumers concerned with image the ability to show off their moral qualities (White and Pelozo). Although incentives do not seem like an appropriate item for a non-profit organization, many charities have gone towards giving out gifts (Bennett). By the year 2000, non-profit organizations within the United States were the 3rd selling venue of incentive items, only after healthcare and financial industries (Bennett). Incentives are so effective in regards to stimulating donations because they offer two positive benefits for the price of one. The consumer gets a product (i.e. sunglasses, keychain, sticker) out of the exchange as well as a good feeling from donating their money to a cause (Strahilevitz and Myers). Strahilevitz and Myers discovered through their study in 1998 that people buy and donate more when they experience either pleasure or guilt. They saw that purchasing a frivolous item might initially bring someone pleasure but it might make them also feel guilty afterwards. This guilt can be lessened if the person is donating money to a charity by purchasing the item. So people will be happy with their product choice, even though it is a frivolous item, because they know that part of their money went to something beneficial (Strahilevitz and Myers).

Incentives are also effective in donation giving for several other reasons. They represent a reward for the buyer, stimulate impulsive buying habits, and draw attention to the consumer (Bennett). People have a basic need to feel important and gifts show the possible donator that the organization cares about them. It can also

increase donations by making the donor feel that they are now included within the “people who donate group” which might seem elite and respectable (Bennett). One huge benefit to gift incentives is that they act as a billboard for the company and cause and can stimulate even more charitable donations (Bennett).

Outside of people who are high in the need for social desirability, there is another group that gift incentives affect, people who are high in “helpers high.” Helpers high in this sense will mean the rush of good and pleasurable emotion that someone gets from donating (Bennett). Strahilevitz and Myers defined this term as “the monetary purchase of moral satisfaction.” Incentives work on people who are high in helpers high because although they get a positive rush of emotions from donating initially, the tangible gift incentive is a visible reminder that they are altruistic and have high moral values (Bennett). Incentives tend to work the best when bringing a small donation slightly higher. They do not work as well on already high donations (Bennett). They also do not work on people who are already heavily involved in donating because this goes against the basic foundation of altruism and charities (Bennett). People also argue that incentives allow for the “cooler” gift to win out and not the cause. Another downside could be that the company with the most money to spare can bring in more donations, and not the company that is most ethical or effective (Bennett). These arguments have helped shaped my senior project and focused my aim. I want to see how and why people donate. Do people donate because the cause is ethical and it is the moral thing to do or do they donate because they want to feel good about themselves and get a gift in return? The ultimate goal of any non-profit organization is to raise money and I

want to see what way is more effective at reaching this goal.

The study I was most intrigued about was one that looked into this idea but only carried it out in theory, not in practice. White and Peloza believe that there are two ways to view donating. Either helping oneself, in which the major benefactor is the donator or helping others, where the major benefactor is someone or something else (White and Peloza). Both tactics are used by charities and in a pilot study, they found that out of 25 companies, 13 companies used persuasion highlighting helping others, 7 companies used tactics aimed at showing the benefits to the donator and 5 companies used a combination (White and Peloza). Non-profit organizations use both persuasion techniques and through several experiments of hypothetical situations the researchers looked into which style works during different situations. They found that when individuals were in public (either with other people, being watched via a camera, or having their answers connected to their names) then they were more likely to say they would donate solely to help others. But when the subjects were in private or believed that they were in private, they were more likely to commit to donations that gave them a benefit (White and Peloza). The results show that serving others is seen as more appropriate or normal, so when in public or when public image is on the line, people will say they donate to help others. But when in private, people feel that benefiting makes the transaction more like an exchange. It gives the individual a reason to why they are donating and so then they do not have to feel tied to every charity or the same charity in the future (White and Peloza). They were donating out of self-interest and so this helps reduce internal conflict of getting emotionally attached to the cause of the charity (White and

Peloza). White and Peloza argue that charities should mold the persuasion appeal to fit the setting. Although White and Peloza looked into self-benefit versus other-benefit appeals, they did not actually collect donations, they only asked, “What would you do in this situation?” The shortcomings of this study have added to what I want to center my research around and bring the question of what do people focus on when they donate to a non-profit organization, the incentive or the cause?

Procedure:

The first step within my project is deciding where to donate the money that I raise. I decided to donate to the American Red Cross.

American Red Cross

The American Red Cross was founded in 1881 and not only has been around for over a century, but also is a household name. They aid in disaster relief, which I have built my project around (American Red Cross). They have a separate fund that goes into helping aid the Japanese disaster and it will be the most direct way the funds I raise go to help the country. Each year, victims of around 70,000 disasters look towards the American Red Cross. They have more than 500,000 volunteers, 35,000 employees and 700 local chapters (American Red Cross). 91 cents of every \$1 raised with any donation goes directly to charitable programs and services (American Red Cross). For these reasons, I decided to donate to the American Red Cross. Their name carries an ethical label and people will not have to worry that the money they donate is spent in vain.

After setting on which charity to go through, I approached the local American Red Cross. They are located within San Luis Obispo and I was able to

stop by their building and talk with a representative. Julie Santoyo, a Community Services Coordinator, was able to talk with me and she offered extensive guidance and help. For the specific fundraiser, she let me borrow and use an official American Red Cross banner, which had their name, trademark red “aid” symbol, and the slogan “Together, we can save a life” covering it. Along with the sign, I was given a donation jar that Julie told me I could cover using their name. Finally, they gave me an American Red Cross shirt to tie myself even further with the company. Since I was not selling anything with their name on it, I was able to use and promote their name without a representative being there with me. But I did have to sign a third party agreement, which outlines that I will not use their name for personal financial profit and I will donate every penny I do in fact raise. Having official American Red Cross paraphernalia and their support would allow my fundraiser to have more legitimacy and show possible donators that their money was truthfully going to the American Red Cross. After I collect the donations, I will go into my local American Red Cross and present them with a check for the exact amount of the profits earned during my fundraiser. One final and huge benefit of going through the American Red Cross is that if you tell them that you want your donation to go to disaster relief for Japan, they will not touch a penny of it. 100% of my donation will go to aid Japan and not be used towards the company I go through.

Appealing to Self-benefit

From my research, I have found that gift incentives offer an additional reason as to why people donate. They make the donator feel important, morally just,

and offer a constant reminder to the individual that they donated (Bennett). Because incentives are so effective, I have chosen to incorporate them into my fundraiser. For self-benefit, I have ordered and bought 100 pairs of sunglasses. The sunglasses are made out of rubber and only cost \$1.40 each. Sigma Kappa, the sorority in which I am a member of, fronted the initial money for the sunglasses. I will be giving the money back to Sigma Kappa once I have sold the sunglasses and only donating the profit made from selling the item. I will be selling the sunglasses for \$5, meaning that I will be donating \$3.60 to the American Red Cross with every pair of sunglasses sold. The sunglasses themselves have red bands and white writing. I choose these colors because they are the colors of the American Red Cross and the Japanese National Flag. On the right band, the slogan, "Brighter Days Ahead" is written on the sunglasses. This slogan represents hope and re-growth, which donations can bring to a crisis. It seconds by referring to the sunglasses themselves, since people use sunglasses on bright days. I will use the sunglasses to represent the self-benefit part of my senior project. They fall under my research of what an incentive is and since they are inexpensive and only asking for an add-on donation of \$3.60, they fall under what I found works as an effective gift incentive. Gift incentives such as the sunglasses I will be using have become widely popular because they offer a "signaling" to others that they individual wearing them has donated. Wristbands, such as the "Livestrong" bracelets benefiting cancer research have jumpstarted this gift incentive craze and prompt the question, why are gift incentives bought? (White and Pelozza). People could possibly buy the gift to raise public image about the cause, be a uniting symbol that allows others to become

more educated about the cause. Or people could buy the gift because they want others to see how ethical and good-natured they are for donating to a cause (White and Pelozo). I want to offer and incorporate the gift incentive into my fundraiser because it is effective either way at getting people to donate, but I want to examine more closely what exactly persuaded them to act.

Method

I plan to target college students, from ages 18-22, since they are both knowledgeable in current matters and abundant in the area. Since I am a college student as well, I will appeal to other college students because people like people that are like themselves (Adler and Proctor II). Since I am in the same age category as the people I will be approaching, go to college myself, and live in San Luis Obispo, I already share qualities with the potential donors. This will help me reach a level of commonality with the subjects and seem more likeable (Adler and Proctor II). I plan to target around 150 individuals on campus. Some people will refuse to donate, and so by reaching 150 people, it gives me a greater chance of selling all 100 pairs of sunglasses. It is my plan to stand at a high traffic area on Cal Poly's campus. Dexter Lawn has foot traffic coming from the Business Building, the library, and the bookstore and it will be the perfect location to talk to a large amount of college students. I will have various signs describing the disaster, aid relief, and about the American Red Cross to reassure people that my project is ethical. In addition, I will also present the opportunity to donate at one of my sorority meetings. Roughly 100 girls ranging from 18-22 go to weekly Sigma Kappa meetings and this will offer me a chance to raise more money. I will

approach the individuals at the meeting in the same way as I do on Dexter Lawn. But I will be able to stand up and speak about the cause to an audience that is fully listening and not walking through campus. The girls at the meeting also know me through the sorority and might feel a stronger connection to the project since someone they know is supporting it.

I will only be using one appeal, self-benefit, with the help of an incentive, to persuade people to donate. Although only one appeal will be used, I will be focusing on what the donators highlight once they choose to donate. Donors can focus on two things, the sunglasses or the cause. One is geared towards benefiting oneself, the sunglasses, and the other is geared towards benefiting others, the cause. I will also offer people the chance to donate, even if they do not want a pair of sunglasses, reassuring them that all profits go to the same organization. By focusing on what the students say once they choose to participate in the fundraiser, I can see what persuaded them to act. Did they choose to donate because they want to help raise money for Japan or did they donate because they wanted a pair of sunglasses? By using one appeal formed around self-benefit but narrowing in on what they say to me as they donate I can separate the donators into two groups; one group motivated by self-benefit and the sunglasses and one group motivated by other-benefit and wanting to help aid Japan.

Prompt

I will approach all subjects, and give the following appeal:

“Are you interested in buying sunglasses to raise money for the disaster in Japan? The sunglasses are only \$5, very inexpensive, just in time for spring. They

come in bright red, and all profits go to the American Red Cross Foundation. They are perfect to wear to the beach and say the slogan “Brighter Days Ahead” on the band. This is for my senior project and your donation will directly help us reach our goal of raising \$500.”

This appeal is directed at benefiting the donator as well as the cause. The gift is being highlighted but the appeal also says that the profits will go to help the disaster in Japan. I will appeal to the target audience by showing how inexpensive and useful the gift is and showcase what they can get out of the exchange. Along with the sunglasses I will be mentioning the specific cause and the organization I will be donating to, allowing people to hear a mix of both appeals. The final sentence goes along with the literature review in that people are more likely to donate if they feel they are directly helping reach a goal or help solve the problem. I will also be wearing a pair of the sunglasses that I purchased to prove even further that other college students are buying the sunglasses. Once people choose to donate, I will listen to what they say. Are they excited about getting a new pair of sunglasses or are they excited that they are helping support tsunami relief?

Hypothesis: I predict that the majority of people willing to donate will highlight receiving a pair of sunglasses in their response.

Fundraiser:

Sigma Kappa Meeting

On May 8th, 2011, I brought the sunglasses to a Sigma Kappa informal meeting. The meeting involved a weekly update for events involving the sorority and was casual in nature. Towards the end of the meeting, the president of the

sorority asked if there were anymore announcements and I stood up to speak. I gave my full prompt and asked girls if they had any questions. Many girls raised their hands and asked to see them, what colors they came in, and if they could get a philanthropy point for participating. My sorority runs on a point system, and by participating in philanthropic events, individuals earn points. Points allow someone to have more opportunities and privileges in the house. I had already talked to the Philanthropy Chair, and she allowed each girl who bought a pair of sunglasses to receive one philanthropy point. This helped with interest towards the cause and many girls came up to me after the meeting and donated. In total, 34 girls bought sunglasses and they raised \$170, \$122.40 of which was pure profit.

Response of Sigma Kappa Fundraiser

Sigma Kappa takes part in philanthropy with dozens of yearly events. This year, they put on three major events for various causes but also participated in philanthropies for other sorority and fraternity houses on campus. Girls within Sigma Kappa are knowledgeable about causes and world tragedies because philanthropy is heavily pushed within the house. Standing up for a specific cause or charity is not unusual during meetings. This played a huge part in the success of selling the sunglasses. It is the house norm to want to donate time or money and within the group culture, it is not socially acceptable to be indifferent towards charities. So when I spoke at the meeting it was to an audience that was already passionate about helping others and it was not hard to persuade them to donate.

Another huge part of selling the sunglasses to my sorority was the fact that they got another incentive out of the purchase, the philanthropy point. Philanthropy

points are often hard to get or take a lot of effort to attain. And so when someone can get a point simply by spending \$5, it is a bargain. Once girls knew that they would receive this additional incentive, interest rose. It was two incentives, the sunglasses and the point, for a small amount and dozens of girls decided to donate.

The majority of the girls just gave me money without commenting on the sunglasses or the cause. There was such a rush that it was hard to have individual conversations with every donator. Girls that did talk carried on running conversations or asked specifics about my senior project. Questions about what my senior project was exactly, advice on what to do for their own project, and what work I had to do for it specifically. Nobody talked to me about the specific disaster and mostly they talked to me on a personal level. Most donators have known me for several years and although they were participating in my fundraiser, they felt more comfortable talking to me about everyday topics. It was hard to steer them towards either talking about the cause or the sunglasses because since they know me personally, they have other possible discussion topics. Working with my sorority was a success and I was able to raise \$122.40 of pure profits within a short amount of time. But it was hard to know exactly why girls donated because I was unable to hear their specific comments towards the project. So I turned to my fundraiser on Dexter Lawn to find more answers as to why people would donate.

Dexter Lawn fundraiser

After setting out my exact plan and submitting forms through California Polytechnic State University, I was able to set a date for my fundraiser on campus. On Tuesday May 24, 2011, I set up a booth made up of a table and an overhang on

the corner of Dexter Lawn. My booth was a decent size and could be seen from the library parking lot. I decorated my fundraising area in red and white. Not only are these colors bright and stand out to people walking by, but also they are the colors of my sunglasses, the American Red Cross and the Japanese flag.

My main sign within the booth stated my purpose for being on Dexter Lawn. It read "Brighter Days Ahead Sunglasses... \$5. All profits go directly to the American Red Cross and their disaster relief efforts in Japan." I also had two pictures on the sign, each one that says the word Japan. I covered my donation jar with the American Red Cross logo and put the American Red Cross banner facing the back end of my booth. This allowed people walking up from behind to be aware that the booth had something to do with philanthropy. I had music playing to provide a welcoming upbeat mood to my area and bought four large bags of candy made up of Starbursts, lollipops, and Airheads for anybody who either donated money or bought sunglasses. My friend helped me put together the fundraising area and I was completely set up on Dexter Lawn by 10 am. I stayed for four hours and took everything down by 2pm. These four hours of time offer constant sunlight and a massive amount of foot traffic from people passing through campus. This time of a high volume of people provided me ample opportunity to approach 150 people.

Altogether, I sold sixteen pairs of sunglasses during my fundraiser on Dexter Lawn. This adds up to \$57.60 of straight profit from the sunglasses I sold on campus. Together with the money I raised at Sigma Kappa, I raised \$250. I had to pay back my sorority \$200, so I was able to donate \$50 to the American Red Cross.

Along with the money, I also gave the unsold sunglasses to the charity and allowed them to use the sunglasses for their own purposes.

From the massive positive response I received at Sigma Kappa, I thought I would be able to sell more sunglasses at my booth. I sold twelve pairs in the first two hours and thought I would be able to keep up this pattern but only sold four more during the second half. It is hard to know how many people heard my prompt because I spoke mainly during passing periods when multiple people could have heard the same prompt, but I approached roughly 150 people.

*Response of Dexter Lawn Fundraiser
Non-donators*

Although I wanted to approach people with a long prompt about the fundraiser being about my senior project and donating to the American Red Cross and tsunami relief, I quickly realized I had to adapt to my audience. People saw my booth and put their heads down, while picking up their walking pace. It was hard to make eye contact with students and say everything included in my initial prompt. I found myself talking to people's backs as they sped away to their next location. I saw this and shortened my opening line to "Do you want to donate to help Tsunami relief for Japan through the American Red Cross?" If a possible donator stopped when they heard this opening line, I would then proceed with my original prompt. The top three responses I heard from the majority of people I approached were: "No thank you", "Maybe another time", and "I would. But I have no money on me." I even heard responses such as, "Wait. You aren't giving them out for free." It was very difficult to get people to stop and hear about what I was selling and where the donations were going. People would look up to say no and then quickly look back

down or continue their conversation with the other people they were walking with. I was able to prompt 150 people, disregarding people who heard my prompt indirectly, and 134 rejected the offer to donate. This is such a large majority and needs to be looked at more closely. In my research, I found that two factors are vital in order for people to donate: whether they care about the cause, and if they feel they will make a difference (Das, Kerkhof, and Kuiper). From the 134 people that decided not to donate, they must have felt that either donating to the disaster in Japan is not a priority or that they feel their donation will not help. If they believed that the disaster was not a high concern of theirs, I would have had to persuade them with facts and evidence showing them why they should care. If they did not feel they were making a difference, my sign helped by stating that all profits will go directly to help aid Japan. Although the non-donators had reservations, it was hard to persuade them to donate because they often quickly walked away. But their individual answers as to why they did not donate speak for themselves.

When people responded by saying “No thank you” it showed a certain amount of respect and politeness for the cause and fundraiser. Although they were rejecting to donate, they still were nice and reserved about it. It was easy to say no thank you because other people around them were not donating. When people are unsure about a decision, they look to what others are doing for guidance (Shang, Reed, and Croson). During passing period, when dozens of people were walking by, most people were walking straight past my booth. So when I targeted one individual to give my prompt to, they did not feel guilty by saying no. Others were walking past, so they could do the same and still feel like a moral person. Since these non-

donators share a social identity of being a young college student with other students passing by, they are affected by what they see others doing (Shang, Reed, and Croson). And since there was no rush from others to donate, the targeted individuals do not feel the social obligation to donate.

For the people who said a version of “Maybe another time” they allowed themselves to believe that although they are not donating at this specific point in time, they would be happy to donate another time. Other responses that fell under this category were “Maybe later. I’m late for class” or “I don’t have time right now.” All three responses share the same thing, although they are not going to donate, they are blaming it on time, class or the fact that I am asking right then. People want to be well liked and respected by others (Bennett). By saying that they will donate at another time or simply cannot donate right then because they are busy, they are trying to prove to themselves and others that it is because of something external. But in the future, they will do the morally right thing and give a donation. They want to show whoever is listening that they have the capability to act, but not at that specific moment. People present themselves in a positive light and are motivated by how others view them (White and Pelozo). Even when they are denying doing the moral thing, they put a spin on it to show others they had no choice but will pick the moral option later.

The third group of people responded with lines paralleling “I would. But I have no money on me.” These non-donators could have genuinely not had money but truly wanted to donate or they could have used the line as a false excuse. Either way, I said to each person with this response, “I will be here till 2pm if you are able

to get money by then.” Most people laughed and said ok, but not one person ever returned to buy a pair of sunglasses. Like the time excuse, not having money allows people to feel that they would have donated if they had money. In an effort to convince others and oneself that the positive traits people show the world are genuine, people judge themselves in very generous terms (Adler and Proctor II). This is called a self-serving bias and what it does is try to convince oneself that they socially negative actions one makes are because of external factors. In regards to both the money and time excuse, people did not want to believe that they were not donating because they did not care or did not want to use their money on others. They want to believe that they did this because it was out of their hands, external from themselves. This helps them keep up the notion that their negative actions are not a reflection of their character (Adler and Proctor II). Regardless of what excuse people gave for why they did not donate, they still maintained social norms. They either thanked me or put the blame onto an external reason. Not one person said, “I do not think this disaster affects me” or “I would rather spend the money on myself.” The non-donators did not give money to the fundraiser, but they did show that appearance is important. If one is to pick the self-serving path, they just have to make sure that no one realizes what they are really doing.

Donators

I was able to sell sixteen pairs of sunglasses during four hours. This broke down into three people that I knew personally, four members of a family, and nine people walking by themselves. Out of the sixteen people that bought sunglasses, four wished me good luck with the fundraiser and mentioned the validity of the

cause. The twelve others either talked about how they needed sunglasses or how excited they were to get cheap sunglasses that they would be fine with breaking or losing. The four people who were genuinely interested in the cause asked several questions about when I was donating to American Red Cross, what organization I was representing, and showed a true interest in wanting to help. They did not have to fake their concern and I was able to talk to them in depth about the cause and disaster in Japan. One girl in particular did not even want the sunglasses but wanted to give \$5 regardless. A teacher took my contact information so that I could talk to a philanthropy group that she runs on campus. Although her club sponsors support for the Sudan area, she said that people are people, and a lot of them need help.

Responses like these ones were uplifting to hear because they truthfully cared about the cause. The twelve other responses were mixed. Most people were excited about the sunglasses and said that it was a great idea to sell something both useful and popular. Although I appreciated their donation it was an interesting contrast from the response I received from the people interested in the cause. Every donation is going to the same place and equally valued, but the majority of the donations seemed to be motivated by self-interest. My hypothesis was proven right in that the majority of people who donated talked about the incentive rather than the cause.

Conclusion:

The world is not fair. But whatever the situation, there is always someone out there less fortunate. People often forget this fact and get wrapped up in their own problems. People tend to dwell on their specific problems and miss that they have a lot to be positive about. I started this project because I am extremely

passionate about non-profit organizations and wanted to see what it took to persuade others to donate. I realized that it is hard to change people's minds when you only have one second to get their attention. When you have people looking at you, fully listening, it is easy to persuade people to become passionate about a charity or cause. During my sorority meeting, people responded in a huge way but it is unsure what got the girls to donate. They were able to fully hear the prompt and could have donated because of the cause. But they also could have donated because of the incentives offered. Since I knew them so well and was unable to talk to them one on one it is hard to know what exactly motivated them to act. On Dexter Lawn, people only heard a snapshot of my prompt and were not fully focusing on my booth. For the people who I could have been able to persuade but did not, I was unable to talk to them long enough for them to see the benefits of donating. Persuading someone to do something that they do not want to do is difficult. I offered people the option of coming back later, saying that I would be on Dexter Lawn till 2pm. I offered candy and let people try on the sunglasses I was wearing to show how they fit. I highlighted the benefits of the incentive and told them everything they wanted to know about why I was doing the fundraiser and the cause itself. But with everything that I offered and said, I discovered that people are going to do what they want to do. It does not matter if it is for a good cause or even to help people in suffering; to them, their suffering seems more important and I would need more than a second of eye contact to prove that.

People are self-motivated. Saving money for oneself is logical and although the disaster in Japan is on the news, it is slowly fading away from people's

mindsets. Another disaster or world issue will soon take center stage and although the majority of people will pretend to care about it for a month or two it will only be out of some need to feel moral and good. Most people throughout my fundraiser were often too self-interested to even make eye contact with me, unwilling to donate money or hear about the cause. People listened to my cause when I spoke at my sorority meeting, but I spoke to girls that I have known for years. It was easy to persuade and talk to girls that I am similar to, know on a personal level, and are fully focused on what I was saying. The Dexter Lawn fundraiser was unsuccessful people do not want to feel bad or be the one person that turned down a charity. But if they listen, their guilt will often force them to act or they will become interested in the incentive. It comes down to the fact that altruism is not possible. People will always be looking for how to get something out of anything. Although there are the rare exceptions that give in order to help others, they still get something out of it. It could be a conformation that they are ethical, a pair of sunglasses, or candy. But people will work every angle to make sure that they not only profit from every decision but also appear in the most positive light. People will always be motivated to help themselves because donating to others just slows a person down. The world is not fair and people do not bend for those in need. In order to get people to donate to a cause, incentives alone do not work. You need to get people to listen and convince them that the social norm is to donate. Sugar-code the ethical choice, because in a selfish world, helping others is a hard to sell.

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