Be Careful When Helping Others:
The Long-Term Effects on Recipients of Sustained Aid and Assistance

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Helping others is viewed positively and is rarely questioned. Nevertheless, attempts to aid others frequently come with actual (but often hidden, long-term) results that worsen the situations we intended to alleviate. When individuals receive benefits not based upon performance or effort and work, damaging effects often occur. As a result, some argue that people who get something for nothing become "good for nothing" and generates feelings of entitlement, laziness, and dependency. In this paper, the authors cite examples where this seems to be happening and offer recommendations for a more thoughtful approach to giving and assisting others.

Keywords: helping others, aid, assistance, entitlement, toxic charity

INTRODUCTION

> "If you give someone something for nothing, you make them good for nothing."
> —Daniels (2001, p. 77)

Helping others is common in most cultures (Nadler, 2019), and many have called for and written in support of charitable acts, compassion, mercy, and acts of kindness (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2013). A fundamental assumption in the helping literature is that such behaviors are beneficial—for beneficiaries of aid *and* those who perform the help (Fisher, DePaulo, & Nadler, 1981).

The desire to help others is commendable, but sometimes the outcome, especially in the long-term, can be costly to those who *receive aid* and can undermine their well-being (Cogan, 2017). The intent is praiseworthy and assisting others may initially be beneficial. Still, the long-term impact can be damaging if the aid recipient is not significantly involved (i.e., agentic) in influencing outcomes (Von Bergen, Bressler, & Boatmun, 2018). Although helping others is positively valued, dependency on assistance is more often viewed unfavorably in Western societies, which places high value on individual achievement and self-reliance (Karabenick, 1998). When addressing needs with individuals or communities, approaches that do not engage the recipient's physical, cognitive, and emotional energy frequently lead to false-starts, resentment, atrophy, and dependence (Lupton, 2011). To be engaged is to be agentic. To be an agent is to influence intentionally one's functioning and life circumstances; that is, to earn by virtue of actions, such as work and effort.

When people receive positive outcomes through *personal* engagement in prerequisite behavior, the consequences are considered contingent (Daniels, 2012) and often communicated in "if…then" wording as in "If you work here, then we will pay you a weekly salary" illustrates a reward contingency. On the other hand, a noncontingent reward might be illustrated as "If you work here or do not work here, we will pay you a weekly salary." In such a noncontingent relationship, an individual will receive a salary, whether they work or not. In noncontingent reinforcement, individuals obtain positive outcomes (e.g., money) independent of behavior or performance (Daniels, 1994). In other words, in noncontingent situations, individuals receive free outcomes, not earned, or merited, and essentially get something for nothing.

If individuals do not have to do much to obtain a positive consequence, then the downside of helping behavior increases significantly. Such noncontingent, undeserved rewards decrease motivation to engage in appropriate behavior because individuals get rewards (e.g., money) regardless of whether they have done anything to earn it. This has led Daniels (2001) to declare that "if you give someone something for nothing, you will make him/her 'good for nothing'" (p. 77).

There is a large body of research that shows that noncontingent reinforcement can lead to numerous costs including increased dependency and apathy, decreased motivation and self-reliance, and degraded performance (Ecott, & Critchfield, 2004; Oakes & Curtis, 1982; Tennen, Gillen, & Drum, 1982; Vollmer, Ringdahl, Roane, & Marcus, 1997). In the field of leadership, Podsakoff and Todor (1985) determined that leader noncontingent reward behavior to be negatively related to group drive and productivity. Moreover, noncontingent rewards result in a perception that events are not controllable and's feelings of helplessness marked by learning impairment and passivity (Martinko & Gardner, 1982).

In analyzing how noncontingent rewards can be problematic, we first discuss the power of free products, services, or money. We then provide numerous examples of the deleterious effects of receiving noncontingent, unearned free things, which frequently results in unintended long-term costs to the beneficiary. We then conclude with a summary suggesting that getting something for nothing may not facilitate the well-being of those helped and that there is no such thing as an unmitigated good. Donors must consider benefits as well as unintended costs when aiding others.

DISCUSSION

Free Stuff: Getting Something for Nothing

Getting something for nothing, i.e., free, very appealing, and there appears to be a "… the human propensity to want to get something for nothing" (Polgar & Goldstein, 2014, p. 17). However, attempts to help others by giving them something free frequently comes with actual (but often hidden, long-term) costs that can worsen the very realities that were meant to be alleviated. Nobel prize-winning economist Milton Friedman (1975) warned of such harms when he said that "there is no such thing as a free lunch" (p. 1). His comment intended to convey the sentiment that nothing is free because every action has an opportunity cost and that individuals frequently end up paying in some way for something free, although the cost may not be obvious. The first reference to this idea originated in 19th century U.S. saloons, whereby free lunches were offered to customers who purchased at least one drink. The saloonkeeper relied on the idea that most customers would buy more than one drink because the free foods were high in salt. As such, the "free lunch" carried a hidden cost to the recipients of the meal, namely the price paid for each extra unit of drink, which effectively ended up paying for lunch.

In an interesting study, Shampanier, Mazar, and Ariely (2007) offered individuals a choice between one Lindt truffle (a high-quality candy) and one Hershey Kiss (a moderate quality candy). The truffle sold for $0.15 each, half of the bulk retail price, and the Kiss sold for $0.01 each. Due to their superior quality, 73% choose Lindt, and 27% chose the Hershey. Shampanier et al. (2007) then lowered the price of each candy by $0.01, the truffle was now $0.14, and the Hershey Kiss was free. This time, 69% of participants chose the Hershey Kiss and 31% the Lindt truffle, same price difference, same expected benefit, or enjoyment from eating the chocolate, but apparently, there was an additional benefit. It appears that zero cost (i.e., "free") is not just another price "but an emotional hot button and a source of irrational excitement" (Ariely, 2010, p. 55). Such a zero-price effect has an extra pulling power, as a reduction in price from $1 to zero is more attractive than a reduction from $2 to $1. This is particularly true for hedonic products—things that give people pleasure or enjoyment (e.g., Hossain & Saini, 2015). The thought of getting something free is what makes people line up to avoid spending a few dollars, like when Krispy Kreme Doughnuts launched in Cardiff, Wales, and had more than a thousand shoppers lining up for over two hours to get a free sample (Daily Mail Reporter, 2011). But this is not only a European phenomenon since hundreds of New Yorkers also wait for hours in the cold to eat free pancakes at the International House of Pancakes each year.

Even *thinking* about free matters can be problematic. Fitzsimons and Finkel (2011) noted, for instance, that pondering the support a significant other can offer in pursuing goals can undermine the motivation to work toward those goals—and can increase procrastination before getting down to work. The researchers randomly assigned American women who cared a great deal about their health and fitness to think about how their spouse was helpful, either with their health and fitness goals or for their career goals (control group). Women who thought about how their spouse was helpful with their health and fitness goals became *less* motivated to work hard to pursue those goals. Relative to the control group, these women planned to spend one-third less time in the coming week pursuing their health and fitness goals. This research illustrated what Fitzsimons and Finkel (2011) referred to as "self-regulatory outsourcing" (p. 369), in which considering how other people can be helpful for a given goal undermines motivation to expend effort on that goal. It seems that when individuals think about how someone (e.g., a partner) can help with an ongoing goal, they unconsciously "outsource" effort to that other person, relying on them for future goal progress, and, consequently, exert less effort themselves.

Giving people free resources and gifting and aiding them for who they are, unrelated to what they do or achieve, often results in adverse effects for those individuals. Dependency is created when incentives to work are removed, yet benefits are still received. More formally, if persons are rewarded or reinforced for their characteristics, qualities, membership status, or state of being as opposed to behavior or performance, then they may become in the long-term lazy, entitled, dependent, and colloquially speaking, "good for nothing."

Caveats

Several qualifications require clarification. We recognize that some individuals need unreciprocated long-term care and assistance because they may not be able to care for themselves (children, elderly, disabled, and other vulnerable populations). Additionally, care without any expected return of favors as in an exchange can be defensible in cases of emergencies (e.g., earthquakes, floods, accidents). Once the "emergency" is passed, however, actions that are provided in cases of "short-term help" can be damaging—and can even do more harm than good in the long-term. In emergencies, the impulse to help usually reaches its target despite the rather chaotic circumstances. Long-term help is more problematic. Continuous, sustained resource flows tend to increase corruption and create an unsound dependence on the donors and those giving assistance.

Following are several instances when receiving long-term benefits not conditional upon accomplishing required behaviors could become costly.

Entitlement

Twenge (2010) has noted the deleterious effects of entitlement and has defined entitlement as "expecting something for nothing" (p. 206). A strong sense of entitlement is one of the most striking characteristics of the millennial generation. Younger (versus earlier) generations possess an inflated sense of entitlement (Twenge, 2010; Twenge & Campbell, 2010). For example, a recent study indicated that current American college students hold favorable self-perceptions and feelings of deservingness that are 30 percent higher than those of college students in the 1979-1985 time period (Twenge, Konrath, Foster, Campbell, & Bushman, 2008).

Results of growing up in a culture that believes in "trophies for everyone," regardless of performance, has created an avid thirst for praise and entitlement (Alsop, 2008). Huseman, Hatfield, and Miles (1987) suggested that pampered children grow to become entitled adults who are more predisposed toward dissatisfaction except when receiving what objectively might be unearned rewards. Such an "everybody gets a trophy" mentality says that a person will be rewarded just for showing up. Such an outlook does not build true self-esteem; instead, it builds an empty sense of 'I'm just fantastic, not because I did anything but just because I'm here'" (Knight, 2015).

Trophies-for-everyone, an idea of misplaced kindness, might be harmless enough applied only to tee-ball and putt-putt. Still, it has consequences when children grow up with no appreciation of competitive success. Why work hard when everyone gets the same reward? James Harrison, a professional football player, felt the same way and smashed the participation trophies his son received and said, "everything in life should be earned, and I'm not about to raise my boys to be men by making them believe that they are entitled to something just because they tried their best… cause sometimes your best is not enough, and that should drive you to want to do better… not cry and whine until somebody gives you something to shut u up and keep you happy" (Frye, 2015).

Twenge and Campbell (2010) determined that entitlement also results in an additional harmful personality variable—narcissism—typically accompanied by increased depression, anxiety, disappointment, excessive self-admiration, lack of interest in emotional closeness, absence of empathy, increased incivility, and aggression when insulted. The entitlement mentality is the fuel by which so many millions rationalize that they should have something for nothing. Entitlement is the means some individuals feel believe they deserve the material or intellectual/ mental values to which they are not entitled to have.

Samaritan's Dilemma and Toxic Charity

The Samaritan's dilemma calls attention to the finding that any effort to help the needy often induces recipients to take advantage of that assistance. The term, coined by Nobel Laureate economist James Buchanan (1975), derives from the parable of the Good Samaritan in the Biblical story. In traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho, the Samaritan came across and assisted a man who had been robbed and beaten by thieves and "left half dead." Under the circumstances of this event, the Samaritan is properly lauded for his exemplary conduct. Buchanan reasoned that if the Samaritan decides to assist more unlucky travelers, travelers will take less care to avoid thieves and other hazards. Essentially, helping people can induce them to take less care of themselves because of the anticipation of assistance (Pasour, 1991). The Samaritan's dilemma calls attention to the certainty that providing too little assistance will result in unnecessary suffering in the short-term but providing too much assistance often results in toxic effects in the long-term (Gibson, Andersson, Ostrom, & Shivakumar, 2005). While an altruist may simply focus on transferring help, an individual aware of the Samaritan's dilemma instead may tend to emphasize what could make the help provided more fruitful in the long run.

In a broad sense, a Samaritan can be considered as anyone trying to help people in need. Moreover, this dilemma arises in personal choice situations in many different contexts when individuals try to extend assistance to others. For example, should an individual permit a neighbor readily to borrow groceries or tools if this is likely to encourage the neighbor to be in chronic need of assistance in the future (Wagner, 1989)? Does giving money to a panhandler on the street create a dependency or meet an urgent need, paying for a hot meal or cheap rum? Does extending an unemployment benefit create an incentive not to work, or is it the humane thing to do in a harsh job market?

The Samaritan's dilemma is a predicament in the act of assistance and involves what Lupton (2011) calls *toxic charity*—charitable giving that harms the people it is targeted to help. According to Lupton (2011), the dark side of charity evolves as follows: "give once, and you elicit appreciation; give twice, and you create anticipation; give three times, and you create expectation; give four times, and it becomes entitlement; give five times, and you establish dependency" (p. 130). Lupton (2011) laments that often "our free food and clothing distribution encourages ever-growing handout lines, diminishing the dignity of the poor while increasing their dependency" (p. 4). Well-meaning people converge on inner-city neighborhoods to plant flowers and pick up trash, battering the pride of residents who have the capacity (and responsibility) to beautify their environment. Americans fly off on mission trips to poverty-stricken villages, hearts full of pity and suitcases bulging with giveaways—trips that one Nicaraguan leader describes as effective only in "turning my people into beggars" (Lupton, 2011, p. 21). Over time getting without doing can become the accepted method of seeking a livelihood. But compassion has a serious shortcoming. Humans respond with immediacy to desperate circumstances but often are unable to shift from crisis relief to the more complex work of long-term development. Consequently, aid agencies tend to prolong the "emergency" status of a crisis when a rebuilding strategy should be well underway.

Personal responsibility is essential for social, emotional, and spiritual well-being. To do for others what they have the capacity to do for themselves is to disempower them. The struggle for self-sufficiency is an essential strength-building process that should not be short-circuited by a compassionate intervention. The effective helper can be an encourager, a coach, a partner, but never a caretaker.

Pathological Altruism, Codependency, and Enabling

A pathological altruist can be defined as “a person who sincerely engages in what he or she intends to be altruistic acts, but who harms the very person or group he or she is trying to help, often in unanticipated fashion; or harms others; or irrationally becomes a victim of his or her own altruistic actions” (Oakley, Knafo, & McGrath, 2012, p. 4). Put more simply, it “involves well-meaning efforts that worsen the very situation they mean to help” (Oakley et al., 2012, p. 6). For example, consider a physician who insists on trying to save the life of a terminal patient despite the patient’s requests to do otherwise. Help may be designed to accomplish a verbally framed outcome of helping others (it is a values-based action), but if the doctor fails to view the helping behavior from the point of view of the person being “helped,” it can cause more harm than good.

There are indications that modern altruistic attempts to help can backfire, leading to increases in addiction, increased criminal behavior, and lowered personal expectations (McCord, 1978). Some lines of research have revealed that indiscriminate attempts to boost self-esteem over the past several decades may have contributed to increased levels of narcissism (Twenge et al., 2008). This is not to say that all helping is terrible, but to point out that sometimes seemingly beneficial actions can have unanticipated negative consequences.

Many negative outcomes have arisen as a result of pathologies of altruism, including battered women's tolerance for physical abuse, codependent-like support of addictive behavior, fiscal irresponsibility that results in massive debt and loss of confidence in governmental entities, the genocide of an out-group as a form of helping ones' in-group, as well as the wholesale slaughter of tens of millions under the purportedly well-intentioned dictates of communism (Oakley, Knafo, Madhavan, & Wilson, 2012).

Also, consider the toxic effects of codependency. The "codependency" concept became part of the toolkit for social workers, addiction counselors, and marriage/family counselors in the U.S. during the 1980s. One popular book about the negative consequences of empathic codependency, *Codependent No More* (Beattie, 1986), has sold over five million copies. Although not without considerable controversy (e.g., Gomberg 1989), the central idea is that offering help often perpetuates rather than solves a problem. Enabling not only does not help, but it may actively cause harm and make the situation worse. By stepping in to “solve” the addict’s problems, the enabler takes away any motivation for the addict to take responsibility for their actions. Without that motivation, there is little reason for the addict to change. Enablers help addicts dig themselves deeper into trouble.

Enablers might deny the severity of the addiction, making excuses for the addicts, and justifying or rationalizing their irresponsible behavior (McGrath, & Oakley, 2012). Enablers may help pay the addicts' bills or bail them out of jail. They may hide the damage that addicts do and avoid talking about the addiction as a problem, pretending instead that it is normal behavior. In these ways, enablers help addicts avoid doing the one thing that has the best chance of ending the harmful acts—confronting their underlying cause, the addiction itself (Moore & Moore, 2013). The ongoing well-meaning assistance is destructive to the addicts who, shielded by enablers from the negative consequences of their acts, continue in a dangerous downward spiral. When individuals are enabling, they believe that because they can help, they should support and that anything else is unkind. Enablers hold themselves responsible for fixing a problem that they (usually) cannot heal. They convince themselves that the enabled will self-destruct if they stop intervening and without compassion if they let that happen, even responsible for it happening.

In yet another enabling area, many parents make the mistake of providing damaging financial assistance to their children. Their motives are generally positive. They want to help their children by paying for their college and helping them get started in life or assist their children when a financial need rises in adulthood. Unfortunately, the result is often opposite to the one desired. Instead of helping the children become self-sufficient, they become financially dependent and never learn to be financially responsible. According to Klontz and Canale (2016), financial dependence is "the reliance on others for non-work income that creates fear or anxiety of being cut off, feelings of anger or resentment related to non-work income, and stifling of one's motivation, passion, creativity, and/or drive to succeed" (p. 27). It is the inability to say "no" when someone, such as a family member, continues to ask for money. Instead of sparking initiative and discipline, the children become idle and indulgent. Instead of being achievement-oriented, they become entitlement oriented. Instead of becoming grateful, they become demanding: “Children who always get what they want will want as long as they live” (Gosman, 1992, p. 32).

Research has shown that "in general, the more dollars adult children receive [from their parents], the fewer they accumulate, while those who are given fewer dollars accumulate more" (Stanley & Danko, 1996, pp. 142-143). When adult children know they do not have to do anything to get money, it is destructive to their sense of self. They do not learn to take care of themselves and develop feelings of helplessness that often lead to low-grade depression (Crouch, 2011). Dependent young adults experience higher rates of loneliness and peer rejection, which increases the likelihood that they will suffer from depression and substance abuse (Pritchard & Yalch, 2009). This is consistent with Hamilton's (2013) research, which found that the more money parents spend on their child's college education, the worse grades the child earns.

In another parenting study Schiffrin et al. (2014) found that the more parents are involved in schoolwork and selection of college majors—that is, the more helicopter parenting they do—the *less* satisfied college students feel with their lives. The researchers found that parental over-involvement help may lead to adverse outcomes in children, including higher levels of depression and anxiety, lower perceived autonomy, competence, relatedness, and decreased satisfaction with life. Such helicopter parenting behaviors often involve parents taking too much responsibility for their children’s behavior and not permitting them to undergo life’s consequences and to prevent their offspring from experiencing unhappiness, struggle, hard work, no guaranteed results—all of which can be excellent teachers for children and not life-threatening even though at times it may feel that way. The research by Schiffrin et al. (2014) suggests that intense involvement is considered by some parents to be supportive and helpful, whereas it may be undermining their children.

When someone gets money for doing nothing and doing nothing is a problem, the cash reinforces the problem behavior. In this circumstance, giving money to a chronically financially dependent individual is akin to providing a drink to an alcoholic to relieve them of the shakes. Although the symptom may improve in the short term, the "helper" is just sustaining it. Ultimately, it is challenging, perhaps impossible, to help someone recover from financial dependence until the financial enabling stops (Klontz & Canale, 2016). Giving money is almost always done with a helpful intention, but it can be quite damaging because the dependent person never learns to be fiscally accountable. Klontz, Britt, Archuleta, and Klontz (2012) indicated that at its worst, financial enabling could feed a gambling disorder, drug habit, or life of indolence while destroying the financial plans of the economic enabler.

Windfalls

A windfall denotes a “value which is received by a person [or country] unexpectedly as a result of good fortune rather than as a result of effort, intelligence, or the venturing of capital” (Taxation of Found Property, 1953, p. 748, brackets added). This definition distinguishes gains due to luck or others’ generosity that is essentially unearned from those due to labor, effort, or enterprise. Examples of income that would *not* be considered a windfall include the proceeds from the sale of real estate or the advance from the sale of a book. Instances of income that would be regarded as windfalls include foreign aid for a recipient country, gambling and lottery proceeds, and inheritances. We discuss these below.

Foreign Aid

Foreign aid has a long track record. The most significant upside appears to be the injection of large sums of money into developing countries, otherwise gripped by poverty, war, and conflict. In theory, that money should, in theory, improve lives and raise people out of poverty, leading to sustainable growth and development. The unfortunate truth, however, is that foreign aid has often presented more challenges than opportunities to aid recipients (Kennedy, 2004), leaving policymakers, aid practitioners, and scholars calling into question foreign aid's ability to increase economic growth, alleviate poverty, or promote social development. Using the U.S. as one example, Bovard (1986) indicated that "[F]oreign aid has routinely failed to benefit the foreign poor…the U.S. Agency for International Development [USAID] has dotted the countryside with 'white elephants'…the biggest…of them all—a growing phalanx of corrupt, meddling, and overpaid bureaucrats" (p. 1).

Foreign aid supplies large amounts of unearned capital to governments in a windfall-type manner (Nager, 2013), which often creates a situation where the recipient government is discouraged from expending any efforts towards inducing development because it anticipates that foreign assistance is on the way. It might be that when vulnerable groups are exposed to the international relief system, the result may be wholesale destruction of cultures. African economist, a native of Zambia, and former World Bank and Goldman Sachs employee, Dambisa Moyo (2009a), argues that the assistance which intended to promote health and prosperity in Africa has become "the disease of which it pretends to be the cure" (p. X). Moyo (2009b) further noted that the:

> evidence overwhelmingly demonstrates that aid to Africa has made the poor poorer, and the growth slower [Our] insidious aid culture has left African countries are more debt-laden, more inflation-prone, more vulnerable to the vagaries of the currency markets, and it's increased the risk of civil conflict and unrest ... Aid is an unmitigated political, economic, and humanitarian disaster (p. X).

The idea that foreign aid often hurts poor people in underdeveloped countries was also noted by Deaton (2013), who observed that to have the funding to run a country, a government needs to collect taxes from its people. Since the people ultimately hold the purse strings, they have a certain amount of control over their government. If leaders do not deliver the essential services they promise, they can remove them. Foreign aid (especially to countries where they get an enormous amount of support relative to everything else in that country) can weaken this connection and change the relationship between a government and its people, leaving a government less accountable to its people, the Congress, or parliament. Governments that get much of their money from aid do not have to be answerable to their constituents and consequently make them more despotic. It can also increase the risk of civil war since there are less power-sharing and a lucrative prize worth fighting for. All this leads to corrosive effects and general economic decline, as Deaton observed in countries like Zaire, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Biafra. [To be fair, Deaton believes that certain types of health aid—offering vaccinations, or developing inexpensive and effective drugs to treat malaria, for example—have been hugely beneficial to developing countries.] Consistent with this analysis, Rajan and Subramanian (2005) detected that much foreign aid flowing into a country tended to be correlated with lower economic growth and that countries that receive less assistance tend to have higher growth, while those that receive more help have lower growth.

Similarly, Bettencourt et al. (2006) indicated that high-profile disaster relief aid to Southwestern Pacific nations appears to create an irrational incentive to do nothing to reduce the risk for such countries. Foreign aid reduces the recipient countries' incentives to invest in protection against potential natural disasters since aid receiving policymakers are likely to rely on bailouts from the international community in a massive natural disaster. Relief aid rewards inaction and, in the process, ensures that future disasters will be more brutal because those nations receiving aid have done nothing to take preventive actions to prepare for future adversities.

It seems that reductions in foreign aid, while initially tricky, may, in the long run, be beneficial. For example, the gradual end of U.S. aid—which had been generous in the 1950s—is often credited for the

Korean and Taiwanese economic turnarounds of the 1960s (Rodrik, 1996). Foreign aid, it seems, has primarily encouraged Third World governments and their populations to rely on handouts instead of on themselves for development, thus again demonstrating the corrosive effects of help.

Inheritances and Intergenerational Transfers

That sudden, unearned wealth can have harmful effects is well known. Nearly every culture has some version of the axiom "from shirtsleeves to shirtsleeves in three generations," dating back to China over 2000 years ago. The proverb describes how the first generation works hard to create a fortune; the second generation enjoys its spoils, substituting hard work with entertainment, and the third generation—with no role model to follow—squanders what remains of the fortune, relegating their children to starting the process over again. Sullivan (2013) found that 70% of an affluent family's wealth is typically gone by the end of the second generation, and 90% is destroyed by the end of the third. Psychologists specializing in "sudden wealth syndrome" (Schorsch, 2012) acknowledge that heirs, like lottery winners, tend to squander their sudden fortune.

Having been born into money, they may also expect that their financial support will continue. The sense of cause and effect between the management of their assets and returns is not inherited; it must be developed. Thus, each new family owner must create a sense of fiduciary responsibility, comprehension of his or her role, a realistic expectation of return, an understanding of risk, and be willing to be part of relevant decisions. A strong sense of entitlement usually leads to unrealistic expectations and conflict with reality. Additionally, there is frequently a lack of personally and socially beneficial purposes guiding inherited wealth. O'Neill (1996) documented how money transferred to heirs without a meaningful purpose leads to negative character qualities, such as the inability to delay gratification, unwillingness to tolerate frustration, feelings of failure, and a false sense of entitlement.

Members of wealthy families are often concerned that their family wealth not "spoil" their heirs (Dashew, 2002) and that their children and grandchildren will "end up lazy, good-for-nothings" (Baron & Lachenauer, 2014) who do not contribute to society. Yet their children, growing up with such privilege, find it challenging to develop a work ethic to expand their portfolios or even a sense that such a task is worth doing.

Cornelius Vanderbilt, a multi-billionaire and one of the wealthiest Americans of the 19th century, for instance, did not allow his children to have access to their inheritance. When he died, he was one of the richest men in the world. As a trustee, his oldest son decided it was "their money" and gave all the heirs direct access to their inheritances. He, too, was one of the richest men in the world at his death. Some 30 years later, there was no millionaire in the group (Vanderbilt II, 1989). It appeared that family members might have been raised to expect a lifestyle that quickly depleted the family's wealth-producing assets.

Gambling and Lottery Winners

Government agencies routinely distribute large sums of money in a windfall manner to those who purchase lottery tickets. In effect, lotteries constitute large-scale noncontingent (i.e., independent of performance) processes that provide unearned largesse (Doherty, Gerber, & Green, 2006). Individuals who obtain big winnings in lotteries often suffer a fateful set of circumstances because they often struggle to manage the complicated side effects of newfound wealth.

Those who win big time usually lose big time, too, as the web of their social relationships is ripped apart by greed. Money is a form of power, and any time one's ability exceeds one's understanding, the result is chaos and destruction. Persons who have wealth because they have earned it are not as likely to be harmed by it because they could exercise the discipline and restraint needed to accumulate capital in the first place. It is when a large sum of money falls into one's lap (i.e., noncontingent) that real problems are most likely to occur.

Many lottery winners end up bankrupt or broke within a short time. Hankins, Hoekstra, and Skiba (2011) found that more than 1,900 Florida lottery winners went bankrupt within five years, suggesting that lottery players were twice as likely to file for bankruptcy as the general population. The study also found that large lottery winners were less likely than small lottery winners to go bankrupt within the first two years, but the odds of bankruptcy were equal after five. It was as if the additional funds just postponed the inevitable. The Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards says nearly one-third of lottery winners eventually declare bankruptcy, and lottery winners are more likely to declare bankruptcy within three to five years than the average American (Hankins et al., 2011).

Gambling is a way of circumventing the principle that rewards should be achieved through work, and it has, at times, been looked upon as a threat to the work ethic (Binde, 2007; Cosgrave & Klassen, 2001). Insofar as healthy behavioral norms exist in society, we need to emphasize the virtues of earning one's living through employment instead of living idly, Large lottery winnings might also be viewed as representing a negative potential in that they encounter opportunities for withdrawal from the labor market. Many gamblers always hope that, somehow, somewhere, their "ships will come in" without much effort on their part.

Welfare: Individual and Corporate

Welfare is another area where getting something for nothing may be problematic. There are often detrimental long-term effects on American families because of many well-intentioned welfare programs (Voegeli, 2010). According to Daniel Patrick Moynihan, a lifelong New Deal liberal, former New York Senator, and accomplished social scientist, welfare has a hidden cost: “the issue of welfare is not what it costs those who provide it but what it costs those who *receive* it” (as cited in Pivin & Cloward, 1979, p. 340; italics added). The point was that welfare often exacts a high price because it robs its recipients of self-worth and self-reliance, essential American, even human, values, and makes them entitled and dependent. Receiving benefits and advantages independent of behavior, performance, or accomplishment often leads to individuals becoming dependent and entitled, a pernicious and unfounded belief that one “possesses a legitimate right to receive special privileges, mode of treatment, and/or designation when, in fact, one does not” (Kerr, 1985, p. 8).

This is a long-lasting concern and is endemic in government programs to assist the poor. Hazlitt (1971), for example, describes two lessons that can be drawn from the effects of welfare in ancient Rome: "The first . . . is that once the dole or similar relief programs are introduced, they seem almost inevitable . . . to get out of hand. The second lesson is that once this happens, the poor become more numerous and worse off than they were before, not only because they have lost self-reliance, but because the sources of wealth and production on which they depended for either dole or jobs are diminished or destroyed" (p. 219). In short, in collectively assisting those less fortunate through government assistance, the number of poor increased because work incentives were adversely affected.

In 1996, Congress initiated cuts in welfare amid predictions that it would result in substantial increases in destitution, hunger, and other social ills. However, in a six-year evaluation of this welfare reform law, Rector and Fagan (2003) noted that overall poverty, child poverty, poverty of single mothers, and child hunger declined substantially. Employment of single mothers increased dramatically, and welfare rolls plummeted. The share of children living in single-mother families fell, and the percentage of children living in married-couple families grew, especially among black families. Pardue (2003) observed that black child poverty declined from 41.5% to 30% during these six-years—the most significant decline in recorded history. They were cutting welfare payments, led to decreased levels of poverty, suggesting that the federal government had induced otherwise able-bodied people to become dependent on welfare.

Interestingly, the 1996 welfare reform law also cut eligibility to Medicaid for noncitizen immigrants. Borjas (2003) found that again, contrary to expectations, health insurance coverage among noncitizen immigrants *increased* after their eligibility for Medicaid was reduced—an effect that could not be explained by the robust economy of the 1990s. Borjas argued that affected immigrants increased their work effort and found jobs with health benefits.

Such findings supported U.S. founding father, Benjamin Franklin’s view over 250 years ago when he said, "I am for doing good to the poor, but I differ in opinion of the means. I think the best way of doing good to the poor is not making them easy *in* poverty, but leading or driving them *out* of it. In my youth, I traveled much, and I observed in different countries that the more public provisions were made for the poor, the less they provided for themselves, and of course, became poorer. And, on the contrary, the less was done for them, the more they did for themselves, and became richer" (Franklin, 1766).

Indeed, increasing welfare payments may increase poverty levels. A study by Guedel (2014) of two dozen Native American gaming tribes located in the states of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Alaska between 2000 and 2010 suggested that growing tribal gaming revenues makes poverty *worse*. During that time, casinos owned by those tribes doubled their total annual take in real terms to $2.7 billion. From an economic perspective, it would seem reasonable to expect the infusion of new capital provided by tribal gaming to be a catalyst for poverty reduction, and likewise expect to see the individual and collective poverty percentages for tribes decrease. On a collective basis, the actual results for these northwestern tribes demonstrated the opposite: an inverse correlation between per capita payments (in which tribes distribute casino profits directly to tribal members) and poverty reduction. Of the 17 tribes in the study that dispersed cash from casinos to members, ten (58.8 percent) saw their poverty rates rise. Of the seven tribes that did not provide per capita payments to members, only two saw a poverty increase (28.8 percent). In tribes with high unemployment and poverty, per capita payments are often viewed as a means of collective support by and for tribal members, with each member eligible for an equal share of tribal wealth.

It seems that per capita payments for poverty reduction in Native American communities—which some have likened to a welfare-type system—provided a disincentive for work and dissipated tribal economic resources that could be better used to finance strategic initiatives such as scholarships for higher education (McGee, 2013). Moreover, Native American Ron Whitener, law professor, tribal judge, and a member of the Squaxin Island Tribe indicated: ”These [per capita] payments can be destructive because the more generous they become, the more people fall into the trap of not working” (Payne, 2015). Once again, the costs of noncontingent rewards can lead to long-term costs of continued unemployment.

With respect to corporate welfare, some hold the idea that individual businesses are so crucial to the nation that it would be disastrous if they failed. This “too big to fail” notion asserts that certain corporations, particularly financial institutions, are so huge and so interconnected that their failure would be catastrophic to the greater economic system, and they, therefore, must be supported by the government when they face potential failure (Lin, 2010). By declaring a company too big to fail means that the government might be tempted to step in if this company gets into trouble and attempt to save it.

If the public and the management of a corporation believe that a company will receive a financial bailout from the government, then management may take more risks in the pursuit of profits. As former Federal Reserve Bank chairperson, Ben Bernanke (2010), indicated, “If creditors believe that an institution will not be allowed to fail, they will not demand as much compensation for risks as they otherwise would, thus weakening market discipline; nor will they invest as many resources in monitoring the firm’s risk-taking. As a result, too-big-to-fail firms will tend to take more risk than desirable, in the expectation that they will receive assistance if their bets go bad.”

While government bailouts or interventions might help the company survive, some opponents think that this is counterproductive by merely assisting a company that perhaps should be allowed to fail. They believe that one of the problems that arise is a company that benefits from these protective policies will seek to profit by it, deliberately taking positions that are high-risk, high-return as they leverage these risks based on the policy preference they receive. Some opponents, such as former Federal Reserve chair, Alan Greenspan, believe that such large organizations should be deliberately broken up: “If they’re too big to fail, they’re too big” (McKee & Lanman, 2009). It appears that when people *and* organizations fail to associate behavior with consequences, unpleasant things often happen.

Other Instances of the Costs of Assistance on Aid Recipients

Several other examples of how helping others can hurt them attests to the ubiquity of this phenomenon. For example, Langer and Rodin (1976) in an experiment told one group of elderly patients in a nursing home that they could arrange their rooms as they wished, choose spare-time activities, and decide when to watch television, listen to the radio, etc. They were also offered plants to care for. A comparison group of residents was told that the staff would help them by taking care of all their needs. They were also given plants but were told that the staff would assist them by caring for their plants. Because patients were randomly assigned, neither group should have had healthier individuals; however, those residents who were told they were to oversee their activities and plants became more alert and active than those in the comparison group told that all their needs would be cared for by the staff. Importantly, Rodin and Langer (1977) found that eighteen months later, 15% of the patients who were told to take control of their activities had died, compared with 30% in the other group who were told that the staff would help them with everything—a statistically significant finding.

In another instance, well-meaning governmental policies to enact the American Dream of homeownership in the 1990s and early 2000s allowed less-than-qualified individuals to receive housing loans and encouraged more-qualified buyers to overextend themselves. Typical risk-reward considerations were disregarded because of implicit government support (Acharya, Richardson, van Nieuwerburgh, & White, 2011). As a result, homeownership for such historically "underserved" borrowers increased significantly. Yet, when economic conditions deteriorated, many lost their homes or found themselves with properties worth far less than they originally had paid, and taxpayers were left with trillion-dollar costs and a prolonged economic crisis. Essentially, with the best of intentions, a permissive lending environment was created in which the wrong people were given too much money to buy houses they could not afford, causing catastrophic damages. In attempting to help these underserved families—those who were supposed to benefit from HUD's actions—the unintended outcome was a default rate at least three times that of other borrowers resulting in catastrophic damages. There might have been significant advantages for all U.S. citizens if some had been told "no."

In another area, the problematic effects of noncontingent reinforcement are also illustrated in the "everyone gets a trophy" mentality in which all a person must do is to show up to get an award. These individuals who received "participation trophies" (frequently children) have learned that no matter how much effort or lack thereof they put in, they will receive a reward. However, as Roy Baumeister, noted self-esteem scholar, has indicated, "Indiscriminate praise is poisoning today's youth. We are sending the wrong message. The message is that rewards are meaningless; that somehow, young people are entitled to be treated well regardless of what they do. That's not a good message to learn, and it's not adaptive to life. … I see nothing wrong with praising a child (or adult) for outstanding or brilliant performance. I see plenty wrong with praising everyone even when the actual achievements are mediocre" (in Stephenson, 2004, p. 30). This has contributed to many people believing they are owed a reward, even if they have done nothing to earn it.

Another illustration of help as a good idea going bad involves assisting the disabled. Reductions in the eligibility requirements and generosity of disability benefits have been introduced in the U.S., and Congress has dramatically expanded the definition of who gets called "disabled" and has inadvertently created a "disability-industrial complex" (Roy, 2013) designed to provide money to those who now considered disabled. As a result, many able-bodied Americans have been granted government paychecks for life, crowding out the government's ability to direct needed resources to the genuinely infirm. Regrettably, some parents keep their children out of school in hopes that they can "pull a disability check" and contribute to the family income. This change has led to chronic unemployment associated with depression, anger, stress, lack of self-confidence, and permanent loss of future employment (Joffe-Walt, 2013). Similarly, aid intended to help the unemployed tends to reduce unemployed workers' job search efforts leading workers to become less driven and unhappier as their dependence on the state increases and easing the pressure of finding employment leading to longer unemployment (Canon & Liu, 2014).

The current opioid epidemic in the USA is another instance where help can often hurt. To reduce people's pain and discomfort, physicians are increasingly prescribing opioids. Nevertheless, opioid use has the potential for serious harm as risks become more prominent over time (about three months). For example, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2016) reported that since 1999, overdose deaths involving opioids quadrupled. From 2000 to 2015, more than half a million people died from drug overdoses, and that 91 Americans die every day from an opioid overdose. Deaths from prescription opioids—drugs like oxycodone, hydrocodone, and methadone—have more than quadrupled since 1999. It appears that the patient's subjective experience of pain now takes precedence over other, potentially competing, considerations. In contemporary medical culture, self-reports of pain are above question, and the treatment of pain is held up as the holy grail of compassionate medical care (Lembke, 2012).

Finally, aid intended to help make things easier for others may result in a loss of "grit"—a fundamental psychological construct (Tough, 2012). Several theoretical perspectives suggest that facing difficulties and limiting helpful behavior towards others may have long-term benefits for them. This has been referred to, for example, as stress inoculation (Meichenbaum, 1993) steeling (Rutter, 2006). Dienstbier's (1989) theory of toughness holds that limited exposure to stressors—with opportunities for recovery in between can "toughen" individuals. Toughness results in psychological and physiological changes that make people more likely to perceive stressful situations in general as manageable (rather than overwhelming) and to cope effectively with them. Resilient people cope with threats, maintaining, recovering, or even improving mental and physical health in doing so (Ryff & Singer, 2003). Sheltering individuals from all stressors and adverse events by providing help may fail to develop such toughness. Facing (moderate) difficulties and struggles together with a history of some adversity is associated with better mental health and well-being and less distress and disruption in challenges. Experiencing hardship may also promote advantages in the form of a greater propensity for resilience when dealing with subsequent stressful situations (Seery, 2011). Making things more comfortable for people may, over time, come with adverse effects.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The following two fables provide insight into the assertions that something for nothing can be problematic and helping sometimes creates unintended costs for those who receive aid. First, a famous Chinese allegory illustrates the problem with noncontingent rewards: 守株待兔 (Stand By, 2012). In this anecdote, a farmer was working in the fields when he saw a rabbit run and bump into a tree stump accidentally. The rabbit broke its neck and was paralyzed, and so the farmer took the rabbit indoors and ate the meat for dinner and sold its fur at the market. The farmer thought to himself, "If I could get a rabbit-like that every day, I'd never have to work again." The next day, the farmer went right back to the tree and waited for another rabbit to come. He saw a few rabbits, but none of them ran into the tree. "Oh well," he thought cheerfully, "There's always tomorrow," and he stopped farming. We use this idiom to describe someone who waits in vain for luck or opportunity to befall them, rather than making an earnest effort to pursue opportunities, taking the initiative, and working diligently.

The second is an American tale that shows how helping can be hurtful (Bliss & Burgess, 2012). A young boy spent hours watching a caterpillar struggling to emerge from its cocoon. It managed to make a small hole, but its body was too large to get through. After a long struggle, it appeared to be exhausted and remained still. The boy decided to help the caterpillar, and with a pair of scissors, he cut open the cocoon, thus releasing it. The caterpillar fell to the ground, but its body was small and wrinkled, and its wings were all crumpled, and it spent the rest of its very brief life dragging around its shrunken body and shriveled wings, incapable of flight. Wondering what happened, the boy's mother took her son to a local university and learned that the caterpillar was *supposed* to struggle as a way of acquiring its wings and achieving its destiny to become a butterfly. They were told the caterpillar's struggle to push its way through the tiny opening of the cocoon drives the fluid out of its body and into its wings. Without this struggle, the caterpillar would never fly because squeezing out of that small hole was Nature's way of preparing its wings for flight. Despite the boy's eagerness to help, his good intentions irreparably damaged the caterpillar, and the boy innocently killed that which he was trying to help.

Like the caterpillar's strength-building process in emerging from its cocoon, sometimes work, effort, and struggle are exactly what is needed for the next series of trials to be faced and should not be short-circuited or undermined by a kindly intervention. Those who refuse to exert effort like the Chinese farmer above or receive the wrong sort of help given by the young boy are often left unprepared to fight the next battle or overcome challenges. Sometimes in the context of helping, there are unplanned negative consequences for behavior motivated by good intentions. Long-term and short-term effects must both be considered in determining virtuous behavior. This is important because helping others is often appraised by intentions rather than results.

In many ways, these fables provide an awareness of what happens to people who get something for nothing (i.e., free) because of the generosity and help others provide them, including governments. Nevertheless, scholars have overwhelmingly documented the well-being benefits of charity and helping on *beneficiaries* of aid (e.g., Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, & Schkade, 2005). However, in determining whether the aid of any given type is beneficial, one must consider whether it is likely to significantly increase the number and worsen the condition of beneficiaries of aid. All too often, heartfelt efforts to help are merely salving people's own consciences without fully examining the consequences for those they seek to help. As discussed here, assistance often promotes the very conditions that evoke such aid. In a culture that places a high value on kindness, empathy, charity, and altruism, and for those who treat these concepts as sacred such views may cognitively blind them to its harms (Haidt, 2012). Due diligence is the cornerstone of wise helping.

Helpers must weigh the utility for the recipient in both the short and long run and not just assume that assistance, aid, and help are a universal good. As shown here, helping others by providing free stuff can produce damaging effects. We must remember the cautionary words of Ariely (2010): "We often pay too much when we pay nothing" (p. 55). While he was speaking in the context of marketing, these words can likewise be applied to additional areas such as giving help and assistance to others in which active involvement on the part of the aid recipient is lacking. Helpers sometimes create impairment for those receiving aid when assistance is long-term, and when the participation of aid recipients in their development is limited.

We are not trying to discount the importance of aiding others but rather to address those who have reified its value without realistic consideration about when such actions contain the potential for significant harm. The major implication of this review is not a call for a reduction of aid, help, and care but rather an appeal for rethinking strategies for assisting others. Sometimes help is genuinely helping, and occasionally, particularly in the long run, contributes to inadvertent harm mostly due to the detrimental effects of entitlement and dependency.

We believe that earning is preferable to entitlement and support that adage, "Give a man [sic] a fish, and you feed him for a day; show him how to catch fish, and you feed him for a lifetime." This axiom suggests that the ability to work is a more significant benefit than a one-off handout and that it is more beneficial to teach someone a specific skill so they can earn a living and can permanently fill a need they have. We create dependency when removing incentives to work, yet benefits are still received. Whether positive outcomes come from the government, one's parents, a rich uncle, or the lottery, the effect is the same; people will make no effort to become self-sufficient. Those who are dependent have few choices; they must accept whatever is "given" to them.

Without approaching this virtue of kindness interpreted as helping others with a healthy dose of mindfulness (e.g., Davis & Hayes, 2011), individuals often become blind to the ways such a virtue sometimes hurts people. Political and moral reasons compel individuals to channel some of their affluence to the underprivileged and those in need. But fundamental rules of fairness are overturned when gifts are granted without reciprocity and where the positive impact of earning is discounted. This has led to the maxim that "If you give people something for nothing, you make them good for nothing."

Nevertheless, some individuals find it disturbing to question the value of compassion, altruism, charitable giving, and empathy and seem to suggest that these virtues be revered without question (Oakley, 2013). If there are adverse effects of helping, some say, then indeed, it is an aberration. But a growing body of research indicates that virtues across a vast number of domains can wreak havoc in the long-run and that at high levels, strengths and integrity can have antithetical consequences on well-being and/or performance (Breeden, 2013). In many areas, Grant and Schwartz (2011) suggest that there are no virtues for which costs do not emerge at high levels, i.e., there is no unmitigated good, and there can indeed be too much of a good thing. To say that kindness is an unmitigated good simply paints with a broad brush and that attempts to help others sometimes comes with real costs and can have tradeoffs that worsen the concerns that were meant to be eased. Questioning the value of helping and aiding is the modern-day equivalent of Galileo, suggesting that the sun does not revolve around the earth. Galileo used data to show that the earth circles the sun, and the data presented here indicate that at times and at certain levels, help can be harmful to the well-being of aid recipients. People of goodwill want to see their benevolence having a positive impact but helping in the short run may often have counterproductive effects in the long run that must be considered.

Future research could explore connections and distinctions of similar concepts derived from other behavioral approaches. The belief that people who get something for nothing become good for nothing as described here is derived from reinforcement theory. However, this idea may have applicability to what social psychologists call *social loafing* (Latane, Williams, & Harkins, 1979), and economists call the *free-rider effect* (Tuomela, 2000). Both terms refer to situations where people receive benefits without expending effort or paying anything towards it or acquire again beyond that to which one ought to be entitled based on one's contribution. Such free riders and loafers benefit from the efforts of others without having to undergo the costs of contributing their effort. In such situations, individuals receive something for nothing, often making them good for nothing in increased dependency, laziness, entitlement, shirking of responsibility, and other parasitic behavior.

The idea that getting something for nothing has long-term costs may also have applicability to other works of literature. Concerning economic systems such as socialism, the community's goods and services are distributed equally among the members without regard to individual contributions to the society; that is, distributions are made noncontingently. Because some people are freeloaders (i.e., free riders and social loafers) who do not contribute their fair share of goods and services to the community, many such societies fail despite their initial almost utopian appeal (Abernathy, 2009). In such settings where people share resources, some will overexploit them, leading to what Hardin (1968, 1998) called the "Tragedy of the Commons," a situation where individual users, acting independently according to their self-interest, behave contrary to the common good of all users by depleting or spoiling the shared resource.

The business parallel to socialist communities is a profit-sharing program where each worker gets an equal share of excess annual profits from a firm (Binder, 1990). Profit-sharing as a group incentive effort may result in some workers gaining from the effort of others with no more significant action on their part. This free-rider problem is amplified because employees frequently cannot see strong links between their work effort and their organization's profits, encouraging shirking.

Other areas where people seemingly may get something for nothing include universal basic income (UBI), reparations for slavery, and social promotion in education. The idea of UBI, also called basic living stipend, is a program in which citizens of a country receive a guaranteed income, a regular sum of money from the government, has gained some traction, and continues to move from fringe to mainstream. It was part of 2020 Democratic presidential candidate Andrew Yang's platform, which he called the Freedom Dividend (Yang, 2018), which would have put $1,000 in the pockets of every U.S. citizen over the age of 18 every single month. He suggested this proposal as a foundation on which a stable, prosperous, and just society can be built and to stabilize the U.S. economy amid rapid technological change and automation. Such a program involving a non-contingent reward could be examined using the information here.

This paper may also have implications for the demand for reparations for slavery that has been advanced (e.g., Coats, 2014). Reparations are restitution for slavery—an apology and repayment to black citizens today whose ancestors were forced into the slave trade and to acknowledge the fundamental injustice, cruelty, brutality, and inhumanity of slavery in the United States and the 13 American colonies between 1619 and 1865. Money or free services (e.g., healthcare or education) could be granted to those today who did not personally experience slavery, but to their progeny can be perceived as a gift and not conditioned upon any behavior they did. In some ways, such a situation could be conceived as individuals receiving something for nothing in the sense that they did not "earn" the compensation directly because they were never themselves slaves. Hence reparations could be viewed as windfalls that could create dependency and, in the long-term, worsen the well-being of recipients.

In the education literature, social promotion refers to the practice where students who fail due to a lack of comprehension of grade-level material are nevertheless advanced to the next grade along with their classmates who passed. Such a practice can be viewed as giving students something (advancement to higher level class) for nothing and finding that there are often long term difficulties where students who are socially advanced are more likely to drop out of high school, less likely to graduate on time, or at all, and get the idea that hard work and achievement do not count for much (e.g., McMahon, 2018). Students who are not proficient in certain subjects, but progressed anyway, may feel like they have mastered a core subject when they have not. Teachers feel powerless and resentful for the lack of success previous grades have provided. Students feel frustrated because they feel betrayed by the school system. Employers get frustrated because they cannot find qualified workers.

What is needed is reflection akin to Nobel laureate Daniel Kahneman's (2011) "System 2" thinking characterized as deliberative, logical, conscious, and slow, with an emphasis on rational and analytical modes of thinking in contrast to "System 1" thinking described as intuitive, automatic, unconscious, and fast cognitive processing that guides and steers "System 2" to a very large extent (Haidt, 2001). This is important since aid requests often adopt strategies to exploit "System 1" processing by utilizing media with visual appeal, compelling stories, dramatizations, and sound bites, which are created to stimulate an acute need to help. Such heartfelt, emotional appeals can mislead people about what is beneficial for others.

Therefore, benevolent intentions must receive a rational (System 2) analysis that includes an examination of their effects. All too often, the best long-term action to help others is not immediately or intuitively obvious; not what temporarily makes people feel good; or not what is being promoted by others with their own potentially self-serving agendas.

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