

Psychology of Donation and Meditation on Path of Dhamma

Sumedh Thero ^{1*}, Aditya Suman ², Pransuta Verma ²

Chief Priest & Founder Sumedh Bhoomi Buddha Vihar, Dr Ambedkar Park, Jhansipura, Lalitpur -284403, India

***Correspondence Author:** Sumedh Thero, Retired Director Grade Scientist, CCMB, Hyderabad.

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Abstract

There are three types of giving: material giving, the giving of fearlessness and the giving of dharma. Material giving involves giving food to the hungry, shelter to the homeless, money to the poor and so forth. Giving of fearlessness means saving beings' lives, like insects or animals from drowning, flies caught in spiders' webs, lobsters about to be boiled or people in prison. Certain personality traits, such as humility and agreeableness, are associated with increased generosity, and a person's tendency to engage in prosocial behavior may be considered a personality trait in itself. Prosocial behavior is defined as 'voluntary behavior intended to benefit another'. Attitudes toward suffering may vary widely, in the sufferer or other people, according to how much it is regarded as avoidable or unavoidable, useful or useless, deserved or undeserved. Suffering occurs in the lives of sentient beings in numerous manners, often dramatically. As a result, many fields of human activity are concerned with some aspects of suffering. Trying to identify whom to target in a large database, face-to-face elicitation, and the design of donation appeals. Some factors will be relevant in more than one setting. For example, the use of eye images (discussed under "Donation Appeals") could also be relevant for face-to-face elicitation. Similarly, approaching the right demographic (discussed for "Databases") can also be a factor in face-to-face interactions when deciding whom to approach in the street.

Key words: suffering; donation; hungry; shelter to homeless; money

Introduction

The practice of Buddhism can be summed up in the short phrase, if you can't help others at least don't harm them. The ideal is to help others, but if that is beyond us at least we should not hurt them. The goal of Buddhist practice is enlightenment, the fully purified and perfected state attained by the Buddha, for oneself and all other sentient beings. This is possible because all beings' minds have as their essence a clear light nature that is only temporarily obscured by delusions such as ignorance, attachment and aversion. Buddhist practice gradually removes these obscurations until the mind's pure nature is revealed and the practitioner becomes a Buddha. Buddhist practice is vast and profound, but one of the key practices, especially at the beginning of the path, is that of giving, or generosity. This is the antidote to miserliness and one of the methods of removing the stains of attachment. There are three types of giving: material giving, the giving of fearlessness and the giving of *dharma*. Material giving involves giving food to the hungry, shelter to the homeless, money to the poor and so forth. Giving of fearlessness means saving beings' lives, like insects or animals from drowning, flies caught in spiders' webs, lobsters about to be boiled or people in prison. *Dharma* is what Buddhists call the teachings of the Buddha: the giving of *dharma* means making the teachings available by creating and running Buddhist centres, giving lectures and publishing books. The definition of the target behaviour was intentionally broad to encapsulate a range of giving behaviours but may have resulted in comparing forms of giving that may be quite disparate, especially in their level of commitment and degree of planning required (e.g., monetary donation to a mental health association vs. volunteering with elderly people in their homes). Relatedly, the stage of a donor's 'career' is more relevant to some of the donation behaviours (e.g.,

blood donation, volunteering time) than others but was not assessed as a moderator especially given the limited number of studies assessing latter points of a donor's trajectory (such as retention).

Methods -Definition of the target behaviour

Charitable donations were, for the purpose of this study, defined as the voluntary donation of one's personal resources (time, services, or assets/goods) to charity that provides benefits to others without expectation of benefits in return. Charities are not-for-profit/charitable organisations for public benefit. Potential subjects were required to be adult or elderly caregivers of patients with dementia being evaluated by the geriatric psychiatry and memory clinics. In addition, the subjects were identified by the patient or clinical staff as the primary source of assistance and/or support, and were in contact with the dementia patient at least three days per week.

Discussion

Anybody can engage in these three types of giving every day. We can carry around small change or dollar bills to give to people begging in the street. We can be on the lookout for insects, animals or people in need of help. If we can't teach or publish books, we can at least contribute to these activities or to the support of our teachers or a Dharma center. The purpose of all this is, of course, to counter the attachment that tends to rule our life (Nicholas Ribush, 1986). Feelings of empathy, compassion, and other emotions can motivate us to help others. Certain personality traits, such as humility and agreeableness, are associated with increased generosity, and a person's tendency to engage in prosocial behavior may be considered a personality

trait in itself. Prosocial behavior is defined as 'voluntary behavior intended to benefit another' (Eisenberg et al., 2006). It is characterized by acts of

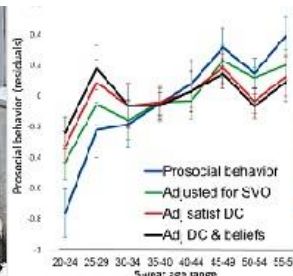
kindness, compassion, and helping behaviors, which many consider to be one of the finest qualities of human nature.



Giving can stimulate your brain's mesolimbic pathway, or reward center, while releasing endorphins. That can lead to a "helper's high" that boosts self-esteem, elevates happiness and combats feelings of depression. Donor psychology refers to the study of the motivations and behaviors of individuals who make charitable donations. This field of research aims to understand why people choose to give, what factors influence their decision-making, and how charities can better appeal to potential donors. We call this donor behavior – it is the how, when, and what motivates people to support a fundraising campaign. This support can be through money (by making donations), time (attending events or promoting the campaign), or efforts (volunteering). In a nutshell, giving to charity makes us happier; especially when we freely choose to give. Whether we have a little or lot of money,

how we choose to spend it matters most to our happiness. The same is true with our time. Volunteering at a charity will do wonders for your emotional well-being.

A study by the National Institute of Health finds that when people give to charities, it activates regions of the brain associated with pleasure, social connection, trust, and creates a "warm glow" effect. Donating seems to stimulate the brain's "reward regions" and results in a "warm glow" that lasts longer than the satisfaction we feel when we buy material items. Donating to charity is a major mood-booster. The knowledge that you're helping others is hugely empowering and, in turn, can make you feel happier and more fulfilled.

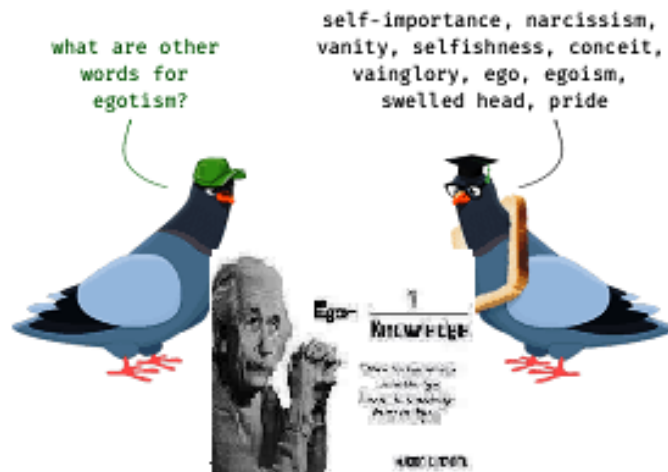


Dāna as a formal religious act is directed specifically to a monastic or spiritually-developed person. In Buddhist thought, it has the effect of purifying and transforming the mind of the giver (Stewart, 2001). Generosity developed through giving leads to experience of material wealth and possibly being reborn in happy states. In the Pāli Canon's *Dighajānu Sutta*, generosity (denoted there by the Pāli word *cāga*, which can be synonymous with *dāna*) is identified as one of the four traits conditioning happiness and wealth in the

next life. Conversely, lack of giving leads to unhappy states and poverty. Dāna leads to one of the pāramitās or "perfections", the *dānapāramitā*. This can be characterized by unattached and unconditional generosity, giving and letting go. Buddhists believe that giving without seeking anything in return leads to greater spiritual wealth. Moreover, it reduces the acquisitive impulses that ultimately lead to continued suffering (Tsong-kha-pa 2002) from egotism.

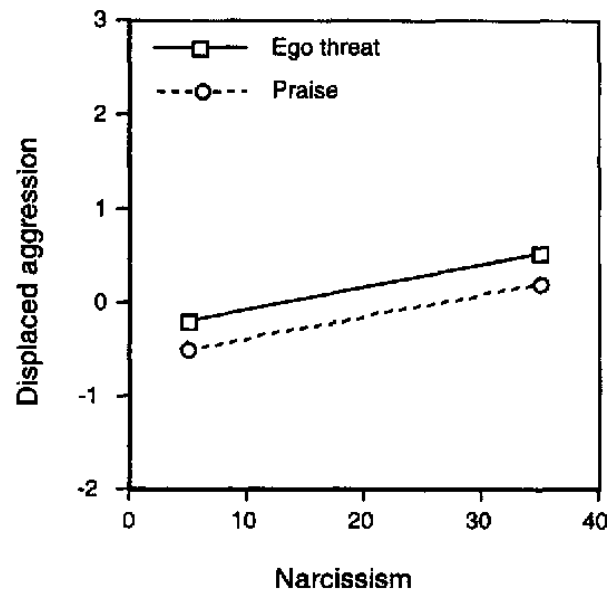
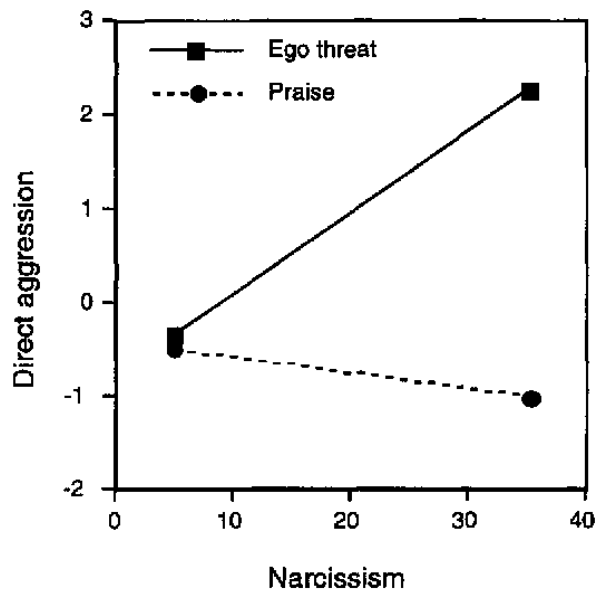


Tragic mask on the façade of the Royal Dramatic Theatre in Stockholm, Sweden



Egotism is closely related to an egocentric love for one's imagined self or narcissism – indeed some would say "by egotism we may envisage a kind of socialized narcissism" (Eggerman and Mark, 2010). Egotists have a strong tendency to talk about themselves in a self-promoting fashion, and they may well be arrogant and boastful with a grandiose sense of their own importance. Their inability to recognise the accomplishments of others (Holiday, 2016) leaves them profoundly self-promoting; while sensitivity to criticism may lead, on the egotist's part, to narcissistic rage at a sense of insult. Suffering, or pain in a broad sense (Spelman, 1995), may be an experience of unpleasantness or aversion, possibly associated with the perception of harm or threat of harm in an individual. Suffering is the basic element that makes up the negative valence of affective phenomena. The

opposite of suffering is pleasure or happiness. Suffering is often categorized as physical or mental. It may come in all degrees of intensity, from mild to intolerable. Factors of duration and frequency of occurrence usually compound that of intensity. Attitudes toward suffering may vary widely, in the sufferer or other people, according to how much it is regarded as avoidable or unavoidable, useful or useless, deserved or undeserved. Suffering occurs in the lives of sentient beings in numerous manners, often dramatically. As a result, many fields of human activity are concerned with some aspects of suffering. These aspects may include the nature of suffering, its processes, its origin and causes, its meaning and significance, its related personal, social, and cultural behaviors, (Ronald, 2014) its remedies, management, and uses



Threatened egotism, narcissism, self-esteem, and direct and displaced aggression: does self-love or self-hate lead to violence?

Dāna, or generosity, can be given in both material or immaterial ways. Spiritual giving-- or the gift of noble teachings, known as dhamma-dāna, is said by the Buddha to surpass all other gifts. This type of generosity includes those who elucidate the Buddha's teachings such as monks who preach sermons or recite from the Tripiṭaka, teachers of meditation, unqualified persons who encourage others to keep precepts or helping support teachers of meditation. The most common form of giving is in material gifts such as food, money, robes, and medicine (Dana, 2020).

It is important to contemplate the four reliances:

1. Rely on the doctrine and not on the person teaching it
2. Rely on the meaning and not on the words
3. Rely on sutras of definitive meaning and not on those of interpretable meaning
4. Rely on the exalted wisdom directly perceiving reality and not on ordinary consciousness

The discourses of the Buddha abound with praise for dāna as a fundamental practice and quality of the awakened heart. One beautiful story describes the Buddha knowing that far away a devoted laywoman, Velukaṇṭakī, was making a large donation to a community of monastics led by his senior students, Sāriputta and Mogallāna. He praises her generosity and gives a teaching on the six qualities of a powerful donation: What three factors apply to the donor? It's when a donor is in a good mood before giving, while giving they feel confident, and after giving they're uplifted. These three factors apply to the donor. What three factors apply to the recipients? It's when the recipients are free of greed, hate, and delusion, or practicing to be free of them. These three factors apply to the recipients. (AN 6.37). This teaching emphasizes that giving dāna shouldn't feel like an obligation or as something to feel worry or doubt about. Giving can be joyful and satisfying, and so our practice can be to look for those positive feelings as we practice giving. Giving strengthens relationships and communities, and opens us to the insight into interdependence. Bhikkhu Bodhi writes that "giving serves to break down the egocentric frame of mind on the basis of which we habitually interact with others." It is fundamentally relational. The other side of this teaching is also important. The appropriate recipients, the Buddha tells us, are people who are free from the great poisons *or who are working to be free from them*. The joy of giving comes when we know those we are supporting are practicing sincerely and wholeheartedly toward liberation.

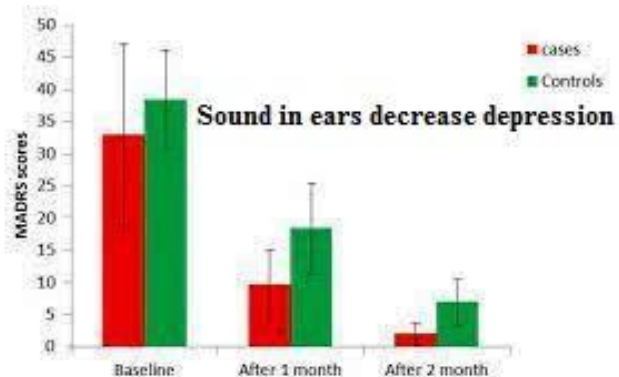
Image concerns of the donors. Because people are eager to conform to social norms, it should be communicated that there is a prodonation norm. Emphasizing that "others have donated generously," or setting a default donation that gently nudges donors upward, might be helpful. Because it has been shown that donors are concerned about their reputation and want to appear as "good citizens," conspicuous donations are useful. For example, donors could be offered small tokens publicizing their contribution (e.g., red noses, poppies, wrist bands, support pins). Moreover, the use of eye images has been showing to heighten concerns about reputation, and subtly including an image of a pair of eyes, for example, on a website, might help nudge donors upward. It can be assumed that the five broad factors of Exposure, Marketing strategies, Perceptions of the recipients, Effectiveness concerns, and Image concerns, will interact in their effect on donor



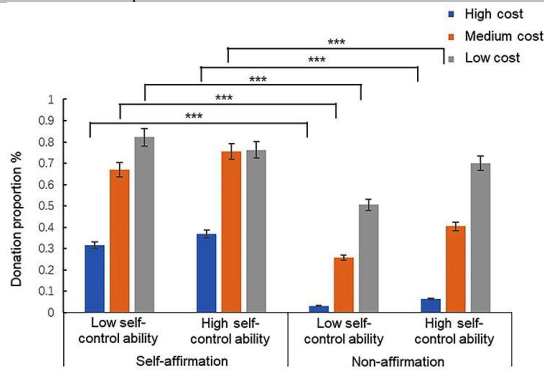
It provides a total brain workout. Research has shown that listening to music can reduce anxiety, blood pressure, and pain as well as improve sleep quality, mood, mental alertness, and memory. Music improves brain health and function in many ways. It makes you smarter, happier, and more productive at any age. Listening is good, playing is better. Music has played an important part in every human culture, both past and present. People around

responsiveness. In other words, excellent marketing strategies will not favorably affect donations unless donors are convinced of the effectiveness of their contribution. Similarly, favorable perceptions of the recipients will not in themselves enhance donations unless donors also feel that social norms are in favor of giving. It then becomes clear why eliciting donations can be an uphill struggle: More than one aspect needs to be optimized in order to elicit generosity, while suboptimal design on just one dimension might automatically jeopardize clever design on another dimension. To sum up, we have identified factors that are most pertinent for three different issues: Trying to identify whom to target in a large database, face-to-face elicitation, and the design of donation appeals. Some factors will be relevant in more than one setting. For example, the use of eye images (discussed under "Donation Appeals") could also be relevant for face-to-face elicitation. Similarly, approaching the right demographic (discussed for "Databases") can also be a factor in face-to-face interactions when deciding whom to approach in the street. We have merely highlighted the factors that seem most relevant to each topic, but they should not be understood as an exhaustive list.

Music-dependent memory is an effect of mood-dependent memory. There have been many studies conducted that have suggested that the music one listens to may affect their mood. In Balch and Lewis' article, they studied how the participants' moods were affected by the change in tempo of a musical piece. The participants were each given a list of words to read while music played in the background, with varying tempos distributed randomly. The participants were then asked to recall all the words they had read previously. Balch and Lewis found that the participants were able to remember more words when the tempo did not change. This same experiment was composed in different ways: with a change in timbre, a different song playing, or silence with no music at all. However, none of these experiments returned results suggesting that changing the different aspects of music affected the memory of participants, indicating that change in tempo seemed to be the only thing that influenced the participants' memories. There is still much research being done concerning music-dependent memory.



the world respond to music in a universal way. And now, advances in neuroscience enable researchers to measure just how music affects the brain. The interest in the effects of music on the brain has produced a new field of research called neuromusicology which explores how the nervous system reacts to music.



differences in individuals' donation proportion between the low and high self-control ability groups and the self-affirmation and nonaffirmation groups under low-, medium-, and high-cost conditions. Error bars indicate standard errors. *** $p < 0.001$.



Conclusion

Every day, leaders in the nonprofit sector invest valuable time, energy, and money into educating and spreading awareness of their mission in the hopes that this will increase support for their nonprofit. They assume that if only more people *knew* about a school's budget cuts, for example, or about the rapidly accelerating environmental catastrophe, then they would surely donate! So, they bombard potential supporters with grim statistics or complex arguments. However, that's not how the human mind works. People give money to nonprofits for a variety of reasons, from personal to political, but tapping into the psychological motivations of your constituency sheds light on how your donors think. The donor psychology here is that generally, giving makes you happy. Humans are hard wired when it comes to pleasure and lots of people feel good when they give. This rush of inner warmth and contentment is known by psychologists as 'Egoism'. Globally, charitable giving satisfies important needs for individuals in the society including the provision of resources such as blood, organs, time, and money. Overall, this systematic review and meta-analysis provided support for the theory of

planned behaviour as a parsimonious model reflecting the psychological determinants of people's charitable donations across a range of donation behaviours. This support is particularly pronounced for predicting people's charitable intentions, rather than donation behaviour. Control perceptions relating to donating, as well as a sense of moral obligation, emerged as the stronger influences of intentions, with intentions the strongest predictor of people's donation behaviours.

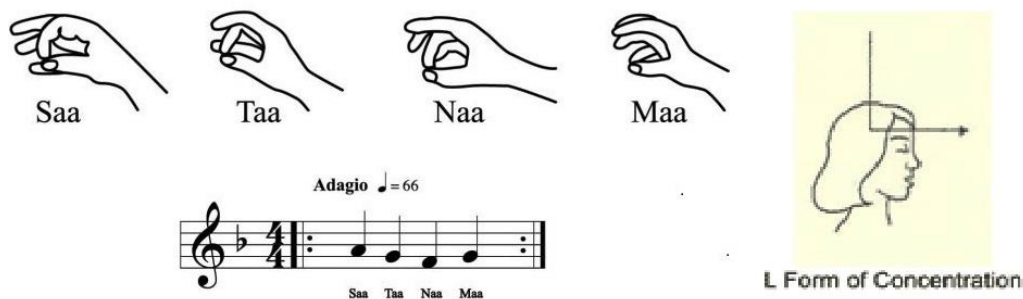
Kirtan Kriya exercise utilizes the primal sounds – and is meant to be practiced for greater attention, concentration, focus, improved short term memory, and better mood. The primal sounds consist of:

Saa Taa Naa Maa

The sounds are chanted repeatedly and in order (i.e., Saa Taa Naa Maa). They come from the mantra 'Sat Nam', which means 'my true essence'.

Kirtan Kriya Yoga Singing Exercise Instructions

If you would like to practice the Kirtan Kriya singing exercise, here are the basic steps:



Repeat the *Saa Taa Naa Maa* sounds (or mantra) while sitting with your spine straight.

If possible, your focus of concentration is the L form (see illustration at right), while your eyes are closed. With each syllable, imagine the sound flowing in through the top of your head and out the middle of your forehead (your third eye point).

For two minutes, sing in your normal voice.

For the next two minutes, sing in a whisper.

For the next four minutes, say the sound silently to yourself.

Then reverse the order, whispering for two minutes, and then out loud for two minutes, for a total of twelve minutes.

To come out of the exercise, inhale very deeply, stretch your hands above your head, and then bring them down slowly in a sweeping motion as you exhale.

The finger positions, are very important in this kriya (see illustration below).

On *Saa*, touch the index fingers of each hand to your thumbs.

On *Taa*, touch your middle fingers to your thumbs.

On *Naa*, touch your ring fingers to your thumbs.

On *Maa*, touch your little fingers to your thumbs.

Our studies at the Alzheimer's Research and Prevention Foundation reveal that you can impact positively your telomeres, as well as claim many other health benefits, in only 12 minutes a day. Our simple yoga meditation technique is called Kirtan Kriya (KK) and doesn't require a huge time commitment or expense (Lavretsky, et al 2013). They further found that the meditation group showed significantly lower levels of depressive symptoms and greater improvement in mental health and cognitive functioning compared to the relaxation group. In the meditation group, 65.2% showed 50% improvement on the Hamilton Depression Rating scale and 52% of the participants showed 50% improvement on the Mental Health Composite Summary score (MCS) of the SF-36 scale; compared to 31.2% and 19% respectively in the relaxation group ($p < 0.05$). The meditation group showed 43% improvement in telomerase activity compared to 3.7% in the relaxation

group ($p=0.05$).

Studies suggest ego depletion increases selfishness – harming charity donations. We show that appealing to this selfishness can promote time donation intent and actual monetary donations, mitigating or reversing the effects of ego depletion. Thus, self-affirmation could promote the donation behavior of individuals with low self-control ability and those with self-control resource exhaustion, whether donation's cost was high or low. Self-affirmation plays a crucial role for boosting individuals' donation behavior.

Conflict of Interest—No conflict of interest

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