A Surprising Reason Why You Should Attend Live Theater

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Could attending live theater make you a more empathetic person?

Researchers recently found that after one live performance, theatergoers were more empathetic toward the issues and people portrayed in a play. And that empathy made them more likely to donate to charity.

"Attending theater could be a vital way to build psychological skills, especially empathy," says Steve Rathje, a Ph.D. student in psychology at Cambridge University and co-author of the study, published in the Journal of Experimental Social Psychology in July. He says the research suggests that a play can help audience members understand the characters' point of view even if those characters are very different from the audience members.

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