

Is Generosity Contagious?

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Pacific Standard:

As we have seen again over the past week, tragedy can sometimes bring out the best in people, inspiring them to donate their time and money. But why do certain occasions become catalysts for compassion, while others fail to move us in any meaningful way?

The severity of the disaster plays a major role, of course. But new research finds another factor is also crucial: whether a humane, benevolent reaction is seen as the social norm.

A research team led by psychologists Jamil Zaki of Stanford University and Erik Nook of Harvard University reports compassion isn't simply an individual response to a perceived need. Rather, it's greatly influenced by established standards of behavior.

Read the whole story: [*Pacific Standard*](#)