

Soup Kitchen Psychology: Nourishment For Impoverished Thinking

September 13, 2013

The Huffington Post:

Poverty is emotionally crushing, and stigma only adds to that burden. The poor are often disparaged as lazy and incompetent — unable or unwilling to improve their own lot. Why don't they go to school, eat more sensibly, and spend their money more wisely? In short, why don't they make better decisions for themselves?

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A team of psychological scientists may offer some hope. Crystal Hall of the University of Washington, and her colleagues Jiaying Zhao of the University of British Columbia and Eldar Shafir of Princeton, have been exploring ways to lessen the mental toll of poverty, and their work suggests that self-affirmation may be a useful tool. The theory is that everyone is motivated to maintain a sense of value and integrity, and that affirming one's worth in some way — any way — makes people less defensive in the face of threat. Is it possible that helping the poor to remember their personal value — that this simple intervention might free up their mental power for better judgments and decisions?

Read the whole story: [*The Huffington Post*](#)

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