The Feel-Good School of Philanthropy

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The New York Times:

THIS year, "Giving Tuesday," Black Friday's philanthropic cousin, kicked off our nation's most generous calendar month. Americans punch up their charitable donations in December, to over an estimated $1 billion a day.

Why do we give? Many motives drive kind actions. We might donate to impress our friends or curry favor. To at least some extent, we also give to help make the world a better place.

A movement known as effective altruism (E.A.) seeks to make us better do-gooders. Often called "generosity for nerds," effective altruism uses data science to calculate how people can ensure that each dollar they give has the greatest impact on the lives of those in need.

In doing so, effective altruism often directs our good will in counterintuitive ways. For example, someone might donate to the Susan G. Komen Foundation in memory of a relative lost to breast cancer, but E.A. givers reject such personal concerns. Instead, they consult think tanks like GiveWell to find the most efficient ways to reduce suffering — for instance, by combating the spread of parasitic infection in sub-Saharan Africa.

Read the whole story: [The New York Times](#)