

Just Care for Each Other, and the Rest Will Follow

by Tom Blodget

The problems of the world can be solved in a few years. That is the good news.

The bad news is that we may choose not to solve them. It is all a question of our intelligence, and our will to act.

The world's most urgent problems; hunger, preventable diseases, personal security, community safety, universal access to potable water, adequate housing and infrastructure, literacy, meaningful work, universal access to medical care and even the threat of economic collapse, and world war *can readily be solved in the next few years*, if a simple idea were to be embraced by merely a minority of people of goodwill, in this country and the world.

What is this idea?

Create a culture of sharing.

Sharing needs to become a moral imperative, a newly adopted cultural habit, and something that everyone does automatically. What we need is a minimal number of people of goodwill to take up philanthropy and volunteerism as their favorite hobby, and by peer pressure, get their family, friends and acquaintances to do the same.

Were we to take care of each other as an automatic habit, the world would be transformed. Fear, mistrust, uncertainty and physical misery would disappear, and in its place would appear a living community of folks.

We have the time, the technical tools, the talent and the financial resources to remake the world so that all people will be happier. See the article by Peter Singer for the actual financial breakdown of how little is required:

"On Giving" by Peter Singer, an article in the New York Times magazine

Thesis: If either (1) the rich by themselves, or merely (2) the "rest of us" on our own, were to donate a fraction of our earnings and assets, the world could be transformed literally overnight.

The ultimate strength of this idea is that this shift from a moral code of selfishness to *selflessness* is completely *voluntary*.

The fact that the only way the world can save itself is by a voluntary group epiphany, is ultimately its *weakness*, because grasping a vision and spreading the "meme" and having the minimum number of people and groups embrace the vision, is a matter of experiment; it may or may not "catch". And yet it is the overcoming of this weakness, by our collective choice, that will guarantee our happy survival.

What we need is a group *epiphany*, where we recognize the factual possibility, and act on it. The result will be a beautiful transformation of earthly and human relations that will make us wonder why we ever clung to selfish behaviors that historically have harmed the selves we previously thought we were protecting.

Sharing is the currency of love, and when love flows freely, potential for goodness knows

no bounds.

What's so new about this idea?

Philanthropy and volunteerism are not new. What is new is the idea that such activity should be a cultural norm, something you do automatically, because it is right.

Today only a *minority* of people, rich, middle class and poor volunteer their money, talent or time to meet urgent human needs. This is not enough. What is needed is for nearly everyone to be doing it, until there are no more urgent human needs.

Many readers may shake their heads, muttering "How naïve!" And yet, if there is to be a solution, what does history show us? Our lack of voluntary selflessness, of caring for each other, has given us slavery, imperial wars and a "win-lose" dynamic of oppressors and oppressed. In reaction to this miserable situation, we have had revolutions, almost always violent, and with mixed results; and reform usually democratic and non-violent, but painfully slow, and also with mixed results. Neither revolution nor reform will save us, as they will be resisted by the powers that be. Force has never worked. Our best and only hope is to appeal to the good angel in all of us.

So if we realize that Yes, we do have the ability to solve all of the urgent problems fairly rapidly, how do we get to there, from here? How do we create this culture, if we don't already have one? The short answer is education, communication, and persistence; recognizing the validity of this message, and sharing it first with those acquaintances of yours who might be receptive. When that ball rolls, it might gain a formidable momentum. But the only way to get the ball rolling, is to summon the *will*.

The will has been lacking.

We know right from wrong, and that we should always do right. What prevents us from doing it is the lack of will. Acquiescence, passivity and laziness have too often been our default positions.

For example today, it is perfectly legal to be a multimillionaire and live in a city where people die on the street for lack of housing and the human touch of care. Those who are wealthy have no obligation in the society that we have so far evolved, neither a legal, moral, or peer-pressure obligation to help. In the new culture of sharing, the millionaire will voluntarily dedicate free time to deciding where the extra money and resources should go, to improving life in the community or in other parts of the world.

Once we realize we are free to do good things, and then *do* them, the world will be transformed. Imagine what the world would look like and feel like, if at first a small minority of people of goodwill were to practice "random acts of kindness" on a large scale. Would good works become contagious? The rich and or ordinary folks alone, could save us.

What to do:

According to the financial facts in Singer's article, every single one of us common folk actually have the resources "*without* the help of the rich" to make this transformation: from the physician who makes \$289,000 a year to the secretary or clerk who makes \$26,000, and even to the person on public assistance who makes \$8,000. *Everyone* has either 10% of their time or money, to commit to helping others, without affecting their material

quality of life in any significant way. Ten percent of one's time is 4 hours a week. It is doable.

The rich could contribute an *inverse* percentage of what the common folk do, and not notice any change in the quality of life. Someone with \$50 million in assets, for example, could dedicate to giving away 90% of their wealth over time, and still keep 10% or \$5 million, which is enough to live very, very well. No lifestyle change, except only to be part of making the world a happier, safer and sustainable place.

Of course, many a reader may laugh out loud at this suggestion; surely the rich won't give up 90% of their assets. Or would they? What if people everywhere started a conversation about the meaning of life? After all, you can't take it with you. Wouldn't the rich person become a *happier* person by changing course, by abandoning the game and dedicating his or her life to studying the problems of the world and devoting the majority of their assets to solving those problems? Don't we already have examples of this in the billionaires Bill Gates, Warren Buffet, George Soros, Richard Branson and Ted Turner, all of whom are giving away most of their money? What if this idea became Topic A among the rich? We shouldn't underestimate the power of peer pressure, or an idea whose time has come.

And the ordinary folks who make \$40,000 a year? Do they really have \$4,000 annually to spare? Yes, they do. In any case, they certainly have four hours a week to spare.

A better world is possible

The whole point of this article is to demonstrate a guaranteed way to make the world a much better place. Revolution and reform will not work, because any sustainable and peaceful society will not have violence or force as its heritage; such a marvelous and deserving society can only come about by voluntary sacrifice. If we choose not to voluntarily save ourselves, then we are probably doomed.

What is being asked here is for the people to recognize that the solution is at hand, and all that is lacking is the *will* to do it; the realization that it is *do-able*; and the *spreading of the "meme" of this idea*, leading to a collective epiphany where we see our problems as readily solvable and decide to *act*.

A more complete version of this idea may be found at CareForEachOther.org.

Please comment on the blog found therein.



**Don't Call Me
I'll Call You**