

An excerpt on the "Medical case for Generosity":

First of all, giving is good for you. Really good for you. Intentional and regular practices of generosity have been associated with the release of a slew of good chemicals, including oxytocin, dopamine, and various endorphins. These chemicals are the same ones released after a hard workout or after a particularly pleasurable experience. In fact, generosity is strongly and clearly associated with a sense of purpose in life, personal happiness, and overall personal health. Giving, it turns out, lifts up human health as much as aspirin protects the heart. Finally, giving even activates the same portion of the brain that lights up when winning the lottery or getting a raise. You may not be able to control when you get a raise, but you can feel just as good simply by engaging in regular, consistent generosity. If Singer, Kant, Aquinas, and Carnegie are going to make us do it, we might as well be able to enjoy it! Conversely, a lack of giving is bad for you. Those who do not regularly give have been found to harbor higher levels of the stress hormone cortisol, which has a linkage to everything from headaches, to stroke, to depression. What other areas suffer when we live ungenerously? How about pain management, body temperature regulation, blood pressure, and the control of fear?^{88,89} Living self-indulged and self-absorbed lives is literally killing us in the affluent West. As the authors put it:

Americans who do not give away 10 percent of their income run the significant risk of ending up less happy than they might have otherwise been. In fact, as a group they are less happy. So, whatever Americans lose by giving away 10 percent of their income is offset by the greater likelihood of being happier in life. . . . Rather than leaving generous people on the short end of an unequal bargain, practices of generosity are actually likely instead to provide generous givers with essential goods in life—happiness, health, and purpose—which money and time simply cannot buy. That is an empirical fact well worth knowing.⁹⁰

Cortines, John; Baumer, Gregory. *God and Money: How We Discovered True Riches at Harvard Business School* (pp. 83-84). (Function). Kindle Edition.

88 - R. Bodnar and G. Klein, "Endogenous Opiates and Behavior: 2003," *Peptides* 25, no.12 (2004): 2205-2256

89 - Margues and Sternberg, "The Biology of Positive Emotions and Health," 164.

90 Christian Smith and Hilary Davidson, "The Paradox of Generosity," Oxford University Press, 2014.