

**"If I were really all about self-interest I would only do what helps me now and not worry about the future" - a bizarre argument**

An act can be self-interested without being about future pleasure. When you see a child, who is a stranger to you, in the middle of a busy road that is in danger of being killed within minutes and you run out to the child to save the child making it very likely that you will be the one that will end up dead you are not thinking of how much pleasure you will get by saving the child. You are not thinking of how bad you will feel if you stand there and let the child die. You desire to save the child and that is where the delight is: in doing the act or in fulfilling the desire. You crave the goodness inherent in the act. You are satisfying a need in yourself. To satisfy a need for alcohol is seen as selfish and to satisfy a need to save the child is seen as unselfish. It makes no sense for its just satisfying a need. A need is just a need. You are not thinking of the need when you save the child but its there and you are responding to it.

Egoism may be defined as seeking something for myself in the present but not the future. I am seeking something for myself right now - preparing for the future. Preparing for the future means I want good in the future. But there is the present act of doing myself a favour right now by preparing for my future. So being for the future fits the definition in that sense.

They seem to be taken with the idea that working for some long term benefit is working for what may never happen. They come to the conclusion that you cannot be an egoist after all for you are sacrificing for the sake of the future. The answer is that the benefit being out of reach does not mean you are sacrificing for it. Your intention is to take. Your brain is set to get you to do future-orientated things like that. Doing something that you may not get does not make you selfless or even mean you could be. Egoism and selfish are compatible with not being sure of getting the benefit. You are so keen for the benefit for yourself that you labour for it though it is not certain.

All forms of egoism would agree that the most important thing for me is to look after what I want to do now. The present aim theory of egoism is the one that stresses that. It does not say I must ignore the future but only says I should look after my desire to prepare for it now. The theory is hailed as the best and wisest version of egoism even by non-egoists.

What if you do good for the feeling of having done good and you feel no different? You are not altruistic because your motive was to get the feeling. You are still an egoist for your motive is about you. It is not your fault you didn't get what you aimed for.