

## MY INTENTION TO ACT IS EITHER SELFLESS OR IT ISN'T - NO MIXTURE

Are you either altruistic, for others, or egoistic, for myself in a healthy way? Can I have both motives when I do something?

The mixture of motives idea isn't true. Also, we can only have one motive at a time. We cannot think of more than one thing at a time.

We might have an altruistic motive for doing something. Then we might have an egoistic one and then finally we will have an egotistic one. The latter means being selfish in a way that destroys others.

That is three motives but we don't have them at the one time. All motives are different manifestations of one motive, the motive to satisfy myself by doing what I want. The ascetic who inflicts pain on himself wants to satisfy his desire to inflict the pain so he is still pleasing himself. He is pleasing himself as much as a rich man who sits down to a feast of lamb and ale. It is just the manner of the pleasing that is different.

Suppose I feed my dying father.

I feed him for his sake. Altruism.

And I feed him because I like feeding him. Egoism.

And I feed him because I don't want people to talk about me if I don't. Egotism.

I can feed him for any one of these motives. I don't need a mixture. I cannot feed him for his sake and not for his sake at the one time. I cannot have a mixture.

Suppose I could have a mixture. If I refuse to turn off the other motives and feed him for the sake of altruism alone then is my altruism really altruism? Is it really love to give a child a smarty instead of a bar of chocolate when you can? Is it really altruism?

If we have a mixture, then how do you know which motive is the strongest one? Is it the altruistic, egoistic or egotistic one? If it is the egoistic one then practically speaking and for psychologists, it doesn't matter if we believe that we are primarily psychological egoists or fully psychological egoists. It is alarmingly easy to deceive oneself.

Suppose it is egoistic (it is actually egotistic) to look after the sick for money or some benefit. Suppose a woman attends a counsellor for she is guilty that she only tended her dying father to please her family and not as much for his sake. Is it any help to remind her that she didn't do it all for her own sake but partly for him? Of course not. We might as well believe then that psychological egoism is true.

We cannot seriously think that we don't matter while other people do. So it follows that altruism is impossible. Altruists claim to be getting nothing from their serving others but they are. They are fulfilling their desire to act. This desire is stronger than any other desire they may have. It can make a person choose to wreck their life by marrying an evil person.

An old person can reason, "I can't do much good now so I will be as demanding of others as I can be. It will be spiritually good for them. It will make them more altruistic". Is this a case of being altruistic while behaving egoistically or even egotistically?

What if God appeared to you and told you that you had to be totally selfish for it would set things in motion so that his purpose which is best for others would be fulfilled? So you have to be selfish for others. And yet you are being altruistic according to some. But which are you? You are not both for you cannot be selfless and totally selfish at the one time. You cannot see only blue and see pink as well at the one time. You are selfish.

It is easy to be egoistic or egotistic and believe you are not being like that. The old person and yourself are being egotistic or egotistic. There is no mixture possible here so there is never any mixture possible. Altruism and egoism or egotism cannot be intermingled or mixed.

The doctor is only nice to the patients not because he really values them as persons but only because he values them as a means of keeping himself in a job. He is not altruistic in any sense.

How could it be altruistic to say to somebody, "Don't lie to your mother about going to visit your father instead of going to the meeting. You will only feel bad." Altruists say that it is altruistic but it is not.

Let's look at two statements.

"I like to help John to see him happy". This is supposed to be altruism. The statement looks like a mixture of altruism, "Help John", and egoism, "I like". You like doing this which is egoism so it is not altruism after all. John is helped as a result of your egoism.

"I like to help John to see him happy for I am better off if I help people". This statement has no altruism in it because the reason you are helping John is not for John but for you.

But translate the second statement. Its two points are,

1 "I like to help John" for

2 "I like to get good things from helping him".

Focus on the "I like". I like is about pleasing me. "I like to help John," is as much egoism as, "I like to get good things from helping him". One is as much I like as the other. No matter what the intention is for my, "I like", I only have the intention because I like the intention.

Altruists would say that you shouldn't do anything because you feel it is best for you and you should do everything for everybody else, not yourself.

Which is best then for John? "I like to help John" or "I like to help John to see him happy for I am better off if I help people". It is the first. The first helps John and takes enjoyment in helping him. The second thinks of the future and could be disappointed for John could die and people might not appreciate you.

Which is best for yourself? The first for the second is risking your goal. The first is reaching for an easy and guaranteed goal - grabbing what you like instead of projecting for it.

Helping John helps me and that is why so many get confused and think altruism and egoism can reconcile and meet half way. Your desire to help John is about you whether you realise it or not.

FINALLY: We can only be either egoistic or egotistic. Altruism is often egoism posing as altruism. That is why people think they can be mixed. They cannot.