

Sample One

Ah yes...here they come. The excuses. I'm surprised you took this long, to be honest.

I Don't Have Any Money and its evil twin **I Don't Have Time**. These shady characters get in the way of a good deal of philanthropic activity and should really be banned from the English language altogether. Remember that annoying elementary school teacher that kept telling you there is no such word as can't? Well, sorry to break it to you, she got a book writing gig. To people overcome by this sneaky deception I say, does your face work? Can you smile at someone? If the answer is yes, then we'll be able to work together. If not, then I recommend you put this book down immediately. No amount of witty commentary and carefully selected quotation will be able to help you.

For those of you that are on board the Good Ship *Altruisme*¹, get ready to deal with the money excuses. Readers who are independently wealthy but short on time may wish to proceed to the next chapter.

Let's address this whole philanthropy business for a minute. Philanthropy is old, rich people giving loads of money to their pet causes. A bourgeois obligation. People like Andrew Carnegie, JP Morgan, and JD Rockefeller...they were serious philanthropists. "I am neither old nor rich." you say, "I told you I couldn't do it."

Fast breaking news story: *Philanthropy doesn't have anything to do with money. Not a single cent is required. You can put your chequebook away forever and still be a philanthropist.*

"Are you kidding me?", I hear you say. "This no money required business sounds like Greek to me."

Interesting that you should express your confusion in this manner. What a convenient way to segue in to this next section describing the Greek origins of the world philanthropy. I couldn't have done it better if I wrote it myself.

The word philanthropy is made up of two Greek words. The first is *phillien*, which means loving, friendly to, fondness for, attraction to; strong tendency toward etc. You may recognize it from such dictionary hits as bibliophile (bookworm), audiophile (music snob) and philosophy (love of wisdom and Birkenstocks).

The second word is *anthropos* meaning mankind (that includes womynkind for those of you with a bra and lighter to hand). Arts undergraduates may have a dim recollections of an 8:30 Intro to Anthropology class that was devoted to studying mankind. Recollections of your own personal study of mankind may be much stronger but that's not so relevant at this particular moment.

¹ No, I didn't just add an extra vowel to the end to make it look exotic. This is an actual French word. It was coined by Frenchman Auguste Comte to describe his theory of positivism, which stated that people have a moral obligation to renounce self-interest and live for others. It also fulfils our bilingual obligations for this book. *Mais oui.*

If we use our compound word skills, we find that all philanthropy means *is loving, friendly to, fondness for, attraction to; strong tendency toward mankind*. Before you get too carried away, I'm not suggesting that you date all of mankind as a charitable endeavour. All I'm saying is that there are plenty of ways to be kind without spending any money, which is good because that's the whole point of this book.²

Sample Two

No, But Really....What's In It For Me?

If you try it you'll find out for yourself but if you really want to know now, I can assure you that there's plenty of in it for you. Nothing major mind you, don't get too excited...just a few fringe benefits like happiness, success and good health.

The Dalai Lama writes "the various features and aspects of human life, such as longevity, good health, success, happiness, and so forth, which we consider desirable, are all dependent on kindness and a good heart." He should know. He's had a lot of time to think things over.³ He also won a Nobel Peace Prize. See what kindness will get you?

"*Always look out for number one*" is one of the most preposterous things I've ever heard.⁴ Surely looking after yourself all the time gets a little boring. I mean, how can you surprise yourself with flowers or whisk yourself away for a weekend in the country? "I am not a crook" is up there as well, but that's another book entirely. "*Look out for numbers 2 through 6 billion*" isn't so catchy, it's true, but it that sort of attitude that will change the world, one person at a time.

Reciprocity

- *You reap what you sow.*
- *I'll scratch your back if you scratch mine*
- *You get what you give*
- *What goes around comes around*

As Chinese social philosopher Confucius observed, "*there is one word which may serve as a rule of practice for all one's life—reciprocity.*" Of course philosophers don't have anything to do all day except come up with wise little aphorisms such as this, even so, this is still a very astute observation.

While pure altruistic behaviour is engaged in without concern for personal gain, there is no denying that a kindness given usually results in a kindness received. Sometimes the reward

² A list of 365 ways to be kind is conveniently located in Section II of this book. There are still plenty of delightfully insightful nuggets of truth in the remaining sections, so reign in your enthusiasm and resist the urge to skip ahead.

³ He's been on the job since 1950, so there's been plenty of time to come up with such profound thoughts.

⁴ Runners up in the preposterous race include, "I am not a crook" and "I did not have sexual relations with that woman" but they were out-voted due to their complete irrelevance to the topic at hand.

comes immediately and other times your turn takes a while to come round. Whatever the timeframe, it does come around eventually.

Attention artists/philosophers/musicians/bohemians of any sort: If that altruism shtick from earlier is working for you and you want to go in for the kill try this one for size. “Idiosyncrasy credits” is the term used by social psychologists to quantify the favourable impression we make on others. If you can work that into the conversation, you’ve just mixed smart with sensitive and no girl can resist that.

Another, more popular, word for idiosyncrasy credits is karma. Karma is understood by Buddhists as a way to improve your status in reincarnation. Secular Westerners usually understand karma as more of a good deed bank account. Either way, it refers to the idea that for every event that occurs, there will follow another event whose existence was caused by the first. The second event’s pleasance is determined by the pleasance of the first event.

This notion of reciprocity is not a new concept. Greek playwright Sophocles wrote that *“kindness it is that brings forth kindness always.”* Fairly poetic for 447 BC but also right on the money. The idea that one kind deed results in another is quite exciting. You can be the Che Guevara of kindness by baking cookies for your office or cutting your neighbour’s grass. No beard growth necessary.

Those of you who are scientists will have to forgive the liberties I’m about to take with a fundamental scientific principle but just stay with me for a minute. Newton’s third law of physics states that:

For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction.

While we are dealing more with the spirit than the letter of the law, it illustrates the fundamental nature of reciprocity. In very general terms, this law can be described as push vs pull; up vs down and give vs take. We can extrapolate this idea to our kindness thesis and find that it supports Sophocles’ assertion, the idea of karma and Confucius. I’d like to see Boyle’s Law do all that.⁵

Finally, a word from Dr Albert Schweitzer, a 20th century musician, philosopher AND physician (save your swooning ladies, he died in 1965) *“Do something wonderful, people may imitate it.”* These people aren’t famous for being thick as bricks, so I’m going to go out on a limb and say that they know what they’re talking about. Go on. Live life on the edge. Bake some cookies.⁶

Wait. Hold the phone there a minute. Are you trying to pull a fast one by finishing the chapter without answering the question at hand? For the third time: WHAT IS IN IT FOR ME?

⁵ Boyle’s Law states that the product of the volume and pressure of a fixed quantity of an ideal gas is constant, given constant temperature. You’re halfway to a chemistry degree now.

⁶ Homemade is preferable but Pilsbury will do in a pinch. It’s the thought that counts after all.

Ok..ok.,calm down, no need to shout. I'm guessing you're in the extrinsic motivation camp here. No doing good for the sake of doing good for you. It's all about what you get out of the deal.

I don't have all day here. Out with it.

Ok. Fine. If you mow your neighbour's lawn, the he might mow yours once in a while or invite you go fishing, although I can't see how since you're so grumpy. But I digress. As always, the clichés are right. The more you give the more you get so if you want people to be kind to you, be kind to them first.