

The Landscape and Promise of Prosociality

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Why Prosocial?

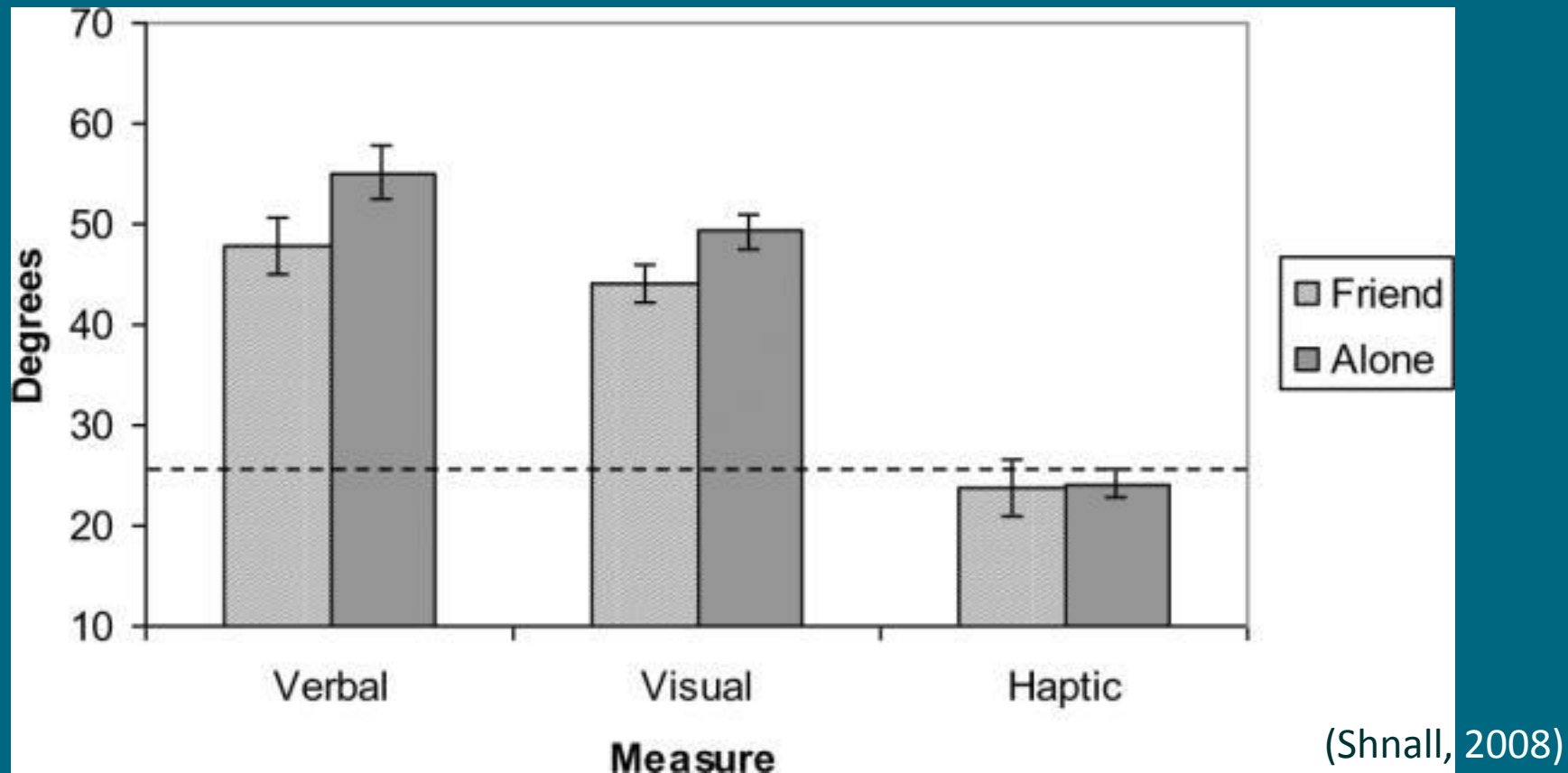
(Suchek et. al. 2016)



The Semai: a Culture of Affiliation and Nurturance



The world looks easier in the presence of friends



The Social Baseline Theory

“The human brain *expects access to social relationships that mitigate risk and diminish the level of effort needed to meet a variety of goals...*”

(Coan, 2015)

Oxytocin: The Cuddle Neuropeptide

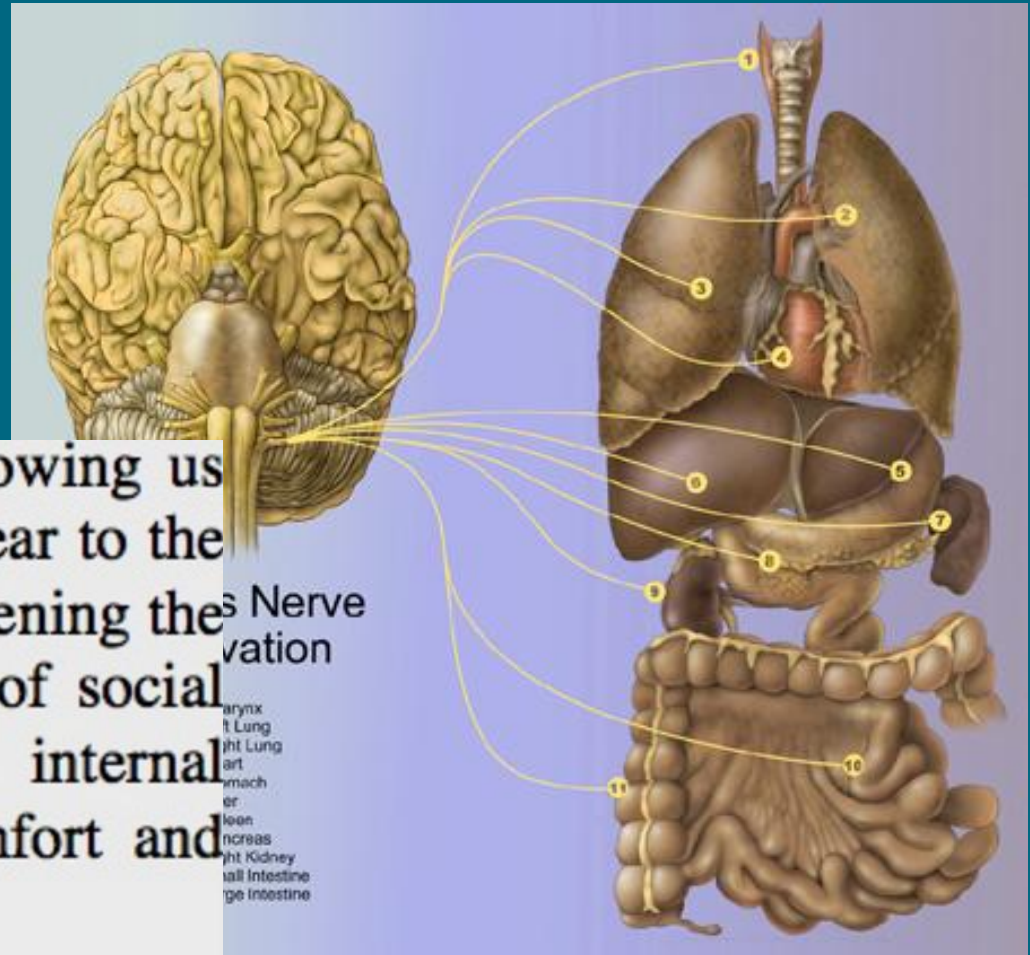


The Vagus: The Social Affiliation Nerve

The Polyvagal theory-

Porges original theory outlines three viscerally based systems we've evolved to manage and the concerns of safety and danger. From the more recently evolved to earlier evolved they are:

1. The unmyelinated vagus nerve and supports social engagement- slowing us down for contact, attuning our ear to the human voice, opening and enlivening the eyes to give and receive cues of social response, and fostering internal sensations associated with comfort and warmth.



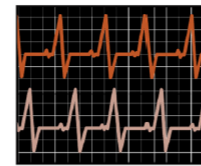
Biobehavioral Synchrony: Our Bodily Signals of Social Connection

(Feldman et. al. 2016)

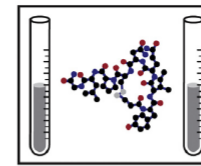
Biobehavioral synchrony in human attachments



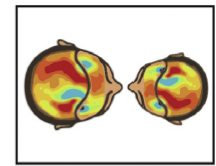
Behavioral synchrony



Heart rate coupling



Endocrine fit



Brain-to-brain synchrony



Parents



Romantic partners



Friends

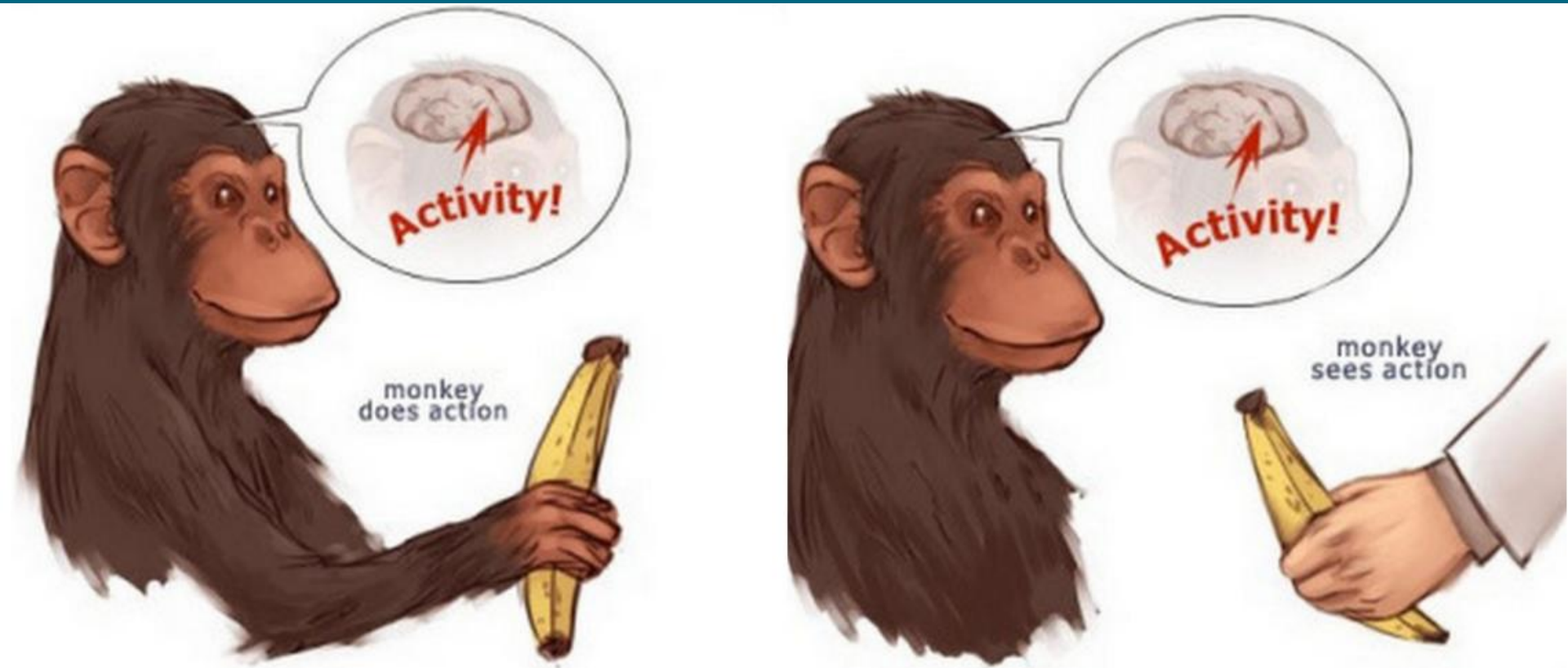


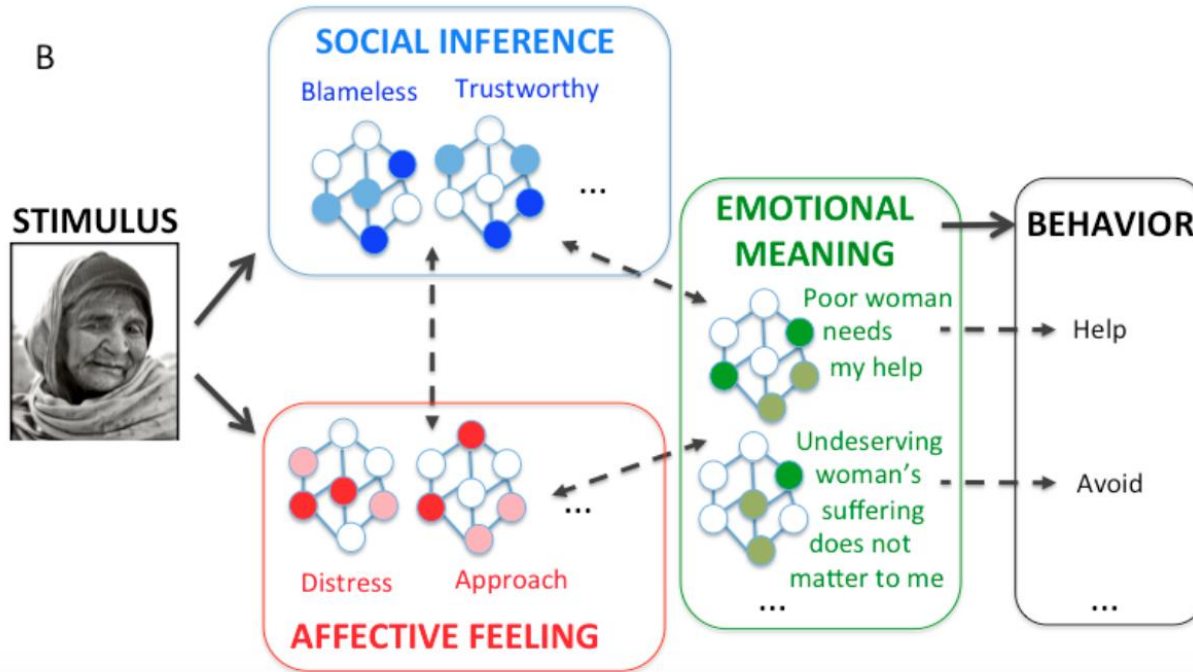
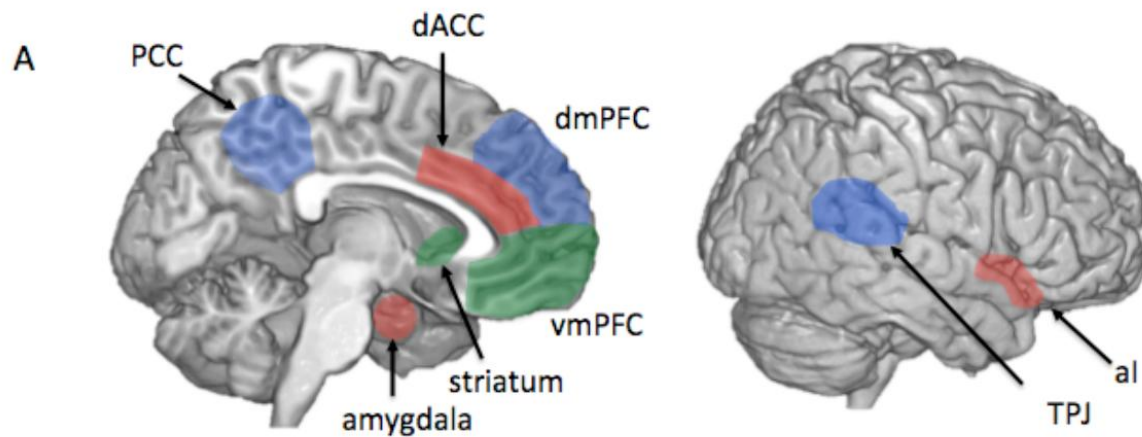
Strangers

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synchronized behavior in gaze, affect, vocal, and touch • Mother-specific father-specific 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synchronized HR during synchronized interactions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinated OT response following contact • Coordinated cortisol response to stress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinated brain oscillations in alpha and gamma rhythms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synchronized nonverbal patterns • Coordinated self-disclosure + empathy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR coordination during or following interaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination of OT and cortisol among parents • Coordination of OT among lovers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination of brain response in mentalizing network in parents • Coordination of gamma oscillations in temporal cortex in lovers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patterns of social reciprocity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teams coordinate heart rhythms during joint action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OT is released during interactions with friends • No evidence for coupling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alpha response to behavioral synchrony among teams in social brain • Coordination among teams in mirror network
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination of culture-specific display rules (e.g., eye gaze) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence for some coordination during joint action in close proximity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OT is implicated in acts of empathy • No evidence for coupling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence for coordinated activation in mentalizing areas during interaction

Trends in Cognitive Sciences

Empathy: For Sharing Feelings and Understanding Each Other





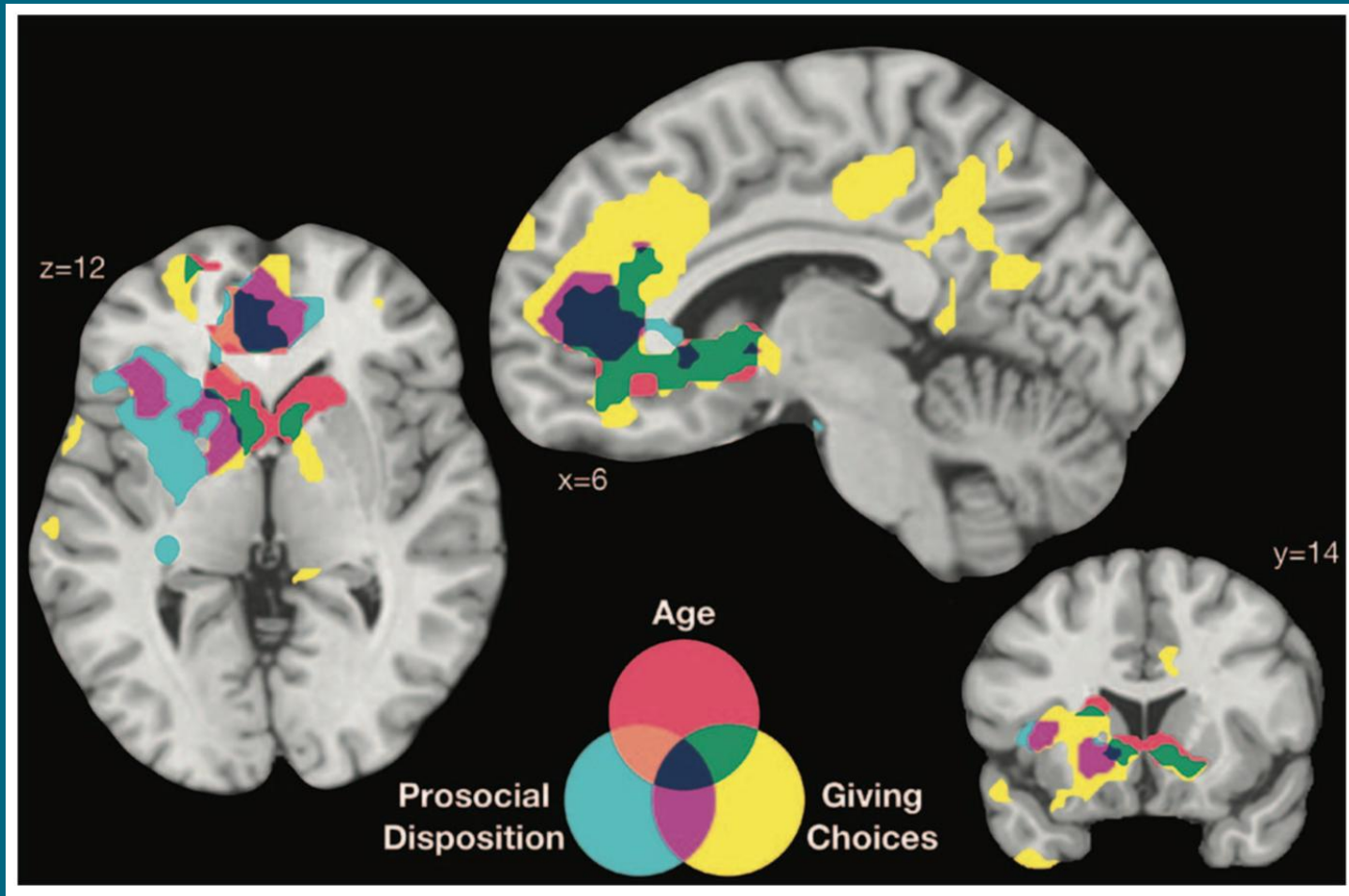
Compassion: For Tending to Each Other's Needs

(Ashar, 2016)

Self-Compassion: For Tending to Ourselves



Altruism: For Sharing and Cooperating and Upholding Fairness



(Hubbard, 2016)

The Human *General Benevolence Dimension*

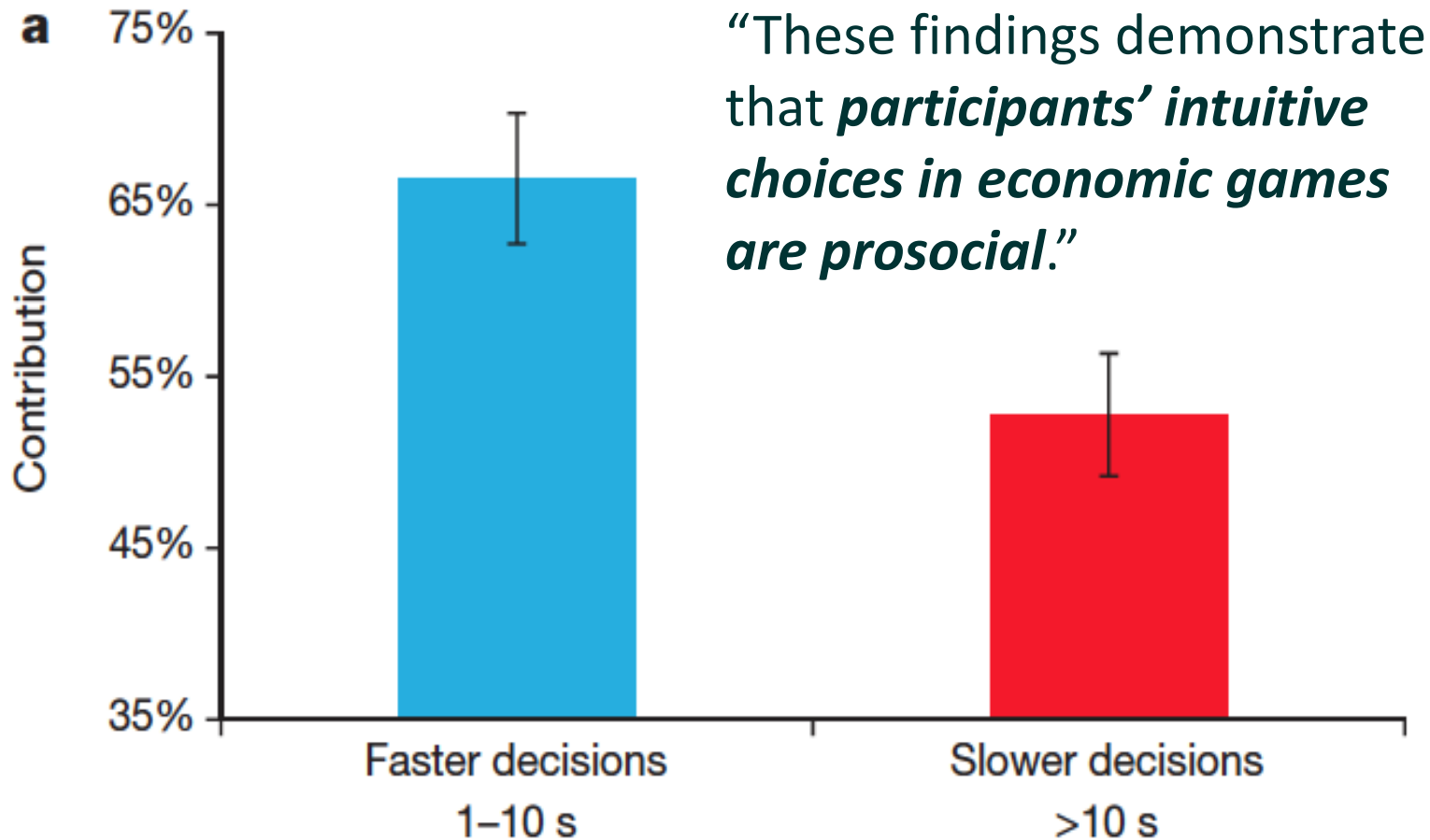
“...pure altruism is fueled by the utility that comes from *knowing that the public good is increased*”
(Hubbard, 2016)

The Primacy of Prosociality



(Warneken, 2009)

The Primacy of Prosociality



(Rand, 2012)

The Primacy of Prosociality

“These findings demonstrate that *participants’ intuitive choices in economic games are prosocial.*”

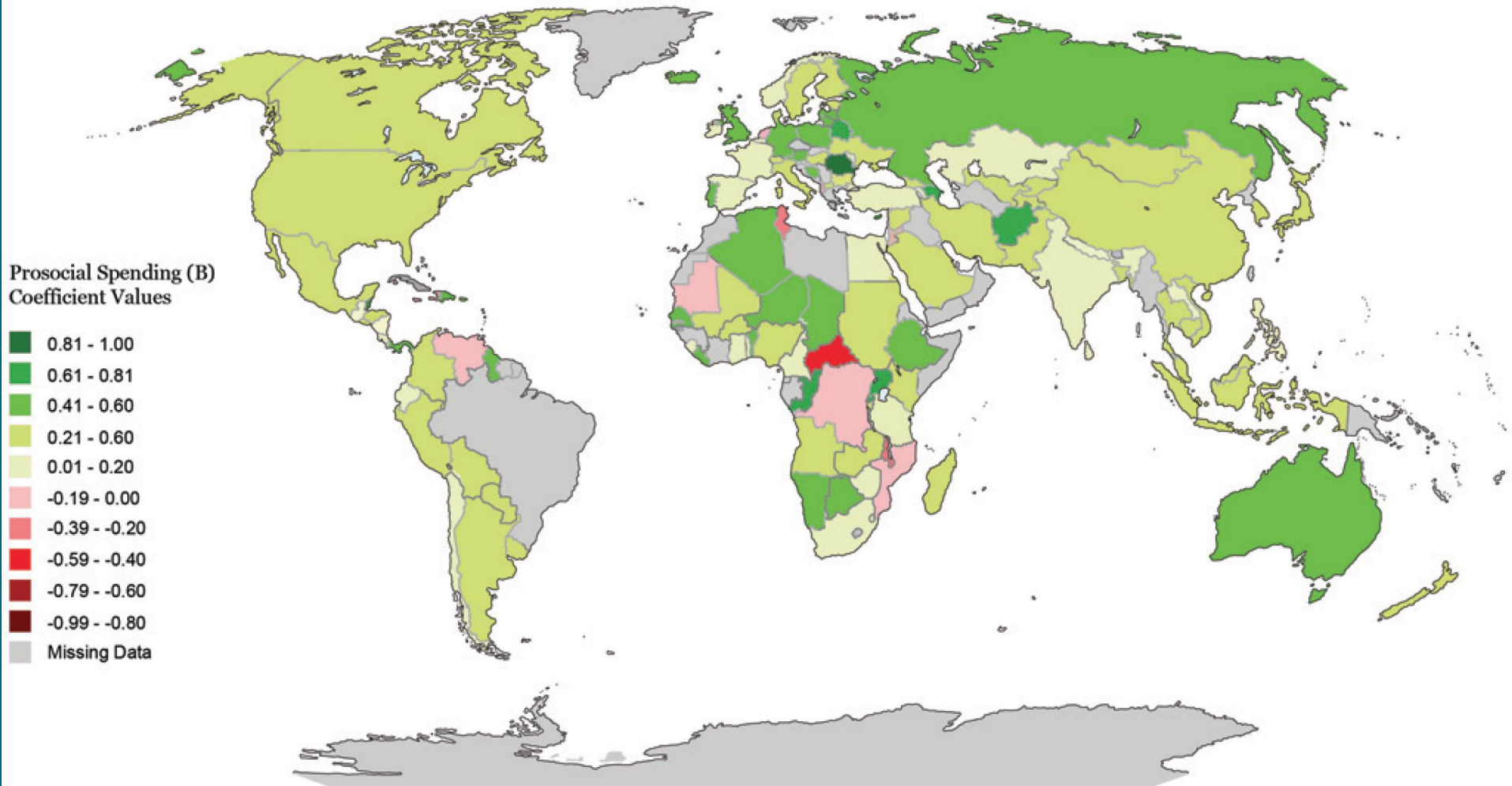
(Rand, 2012)

The Primacy of Prosociality

“These results demonstrate that disruptive stimulation to right DLPFC and DMPFC increased subjects’ offers, suggesting that *these prefrontal areas exert an inhibitory influence on a prepotent prosocial inclination.*”

(Moore, 2016)

Prosocial Spending Predicting Well-Being



(Aknin, 2013)

The Perks of Prosociality

Kindness

“...individuals in poor and rich countries alike reported *more happiness if they engaged in prosocial spending.*”

(Aknin, 2013)

The Perks of Prosociality



"I think what Alice is trying to say is that she feels unappreciated."

The Perks of Prosociality

Gratitude

“The feeling of reverence for things that are given”
(Emmons, 2007)

“... gratitude stems from the perception of a positive personal outcome, not necessarily deserved or earned, that is due to the actions of another person.”
(Emmons, 2003)

Correlations of Two Measures of Gratitude With Measures of Affectivity and Well-Being, Prosociality, and Spirituality/Religiousness (Study 1)

Scale	GQ-6	M of 12-item informant ratings
Affectivity and well-being		
Life satisfaction (SWLS)	.53***	.34**
Vitality	.46***	.23**
Subjective happiness	.50***	.26**
Optimism (LOT)	.51***	.28**
Hope		
Agency	.67***	.21**
Pathways	.42***	.18*
Positive and negative affect		
Positive subscale	.31**	.32**
Negative subscale	-.31**	-.31**
Psychological symptoms (BSI)		
Anxiety	-.20**	-.11
Depression	-.30**	-.26**
Prosocial traits and behaviors		
Dispositional empathy		
Empathic concern	.28**	.17*
Perspective taking	.32**	.22**
M of 5 peer-reported prosocial behaviors in past month	.12	.40**
Peer-rated prosocial traits		
Goes out of way to do favors for others	.14	.47**
Has volunteered time to help others	.19*	.42**
Tends to be generous with time and resources	.22**	.50**
Expects other people to do him/her favors	-.20**	-.41**
Is helpful and unselfish with others	.18*	.54**

The Perks of Prosociality

Gratitude

(McCullough, 2008)

The Perks of Prosociality

Post-Conflict Consolation and Reconciliation



(Frans deWaal)

The Perks of Prosociality

Consolation and Reconciliation (i.e. apology and forgiveness)

Apologizing

- Lowers stress, increases likelihood of forgiveness from the transgressed, and generates esteem towards the apologizer.

Forgiveness

- Improves mental health (reduced anxiety, stress, and hostility), lower blood pressure and stronger immune response, and increases relationship satisfaction.

The Promise of Prosociality

- 1) A 10% increase in “having someone to count on” is equivalent to doubling per capita GDP (World Happiness Report, 2017)
- 2) A foundation of social affection and trust affords resilience against every physical and mental health disease that researchers have evaluated (McWilliams & Bailey, 2010)
- 3) Social isolation registers like physical pain, and loneliness is tied to hyper inflammation, cardiovascular risk, and earlier death (Eisenberger, 2003; Steptoe 2013)

The Promise of Prosociality

“...If I wanted to predict your happiness, and I could know only one thing about you, I wouldn’t want to know your gender, religion, health, or income. *I’d want to know about your social network – about your friends and family and the strength of the bonds with them.*”

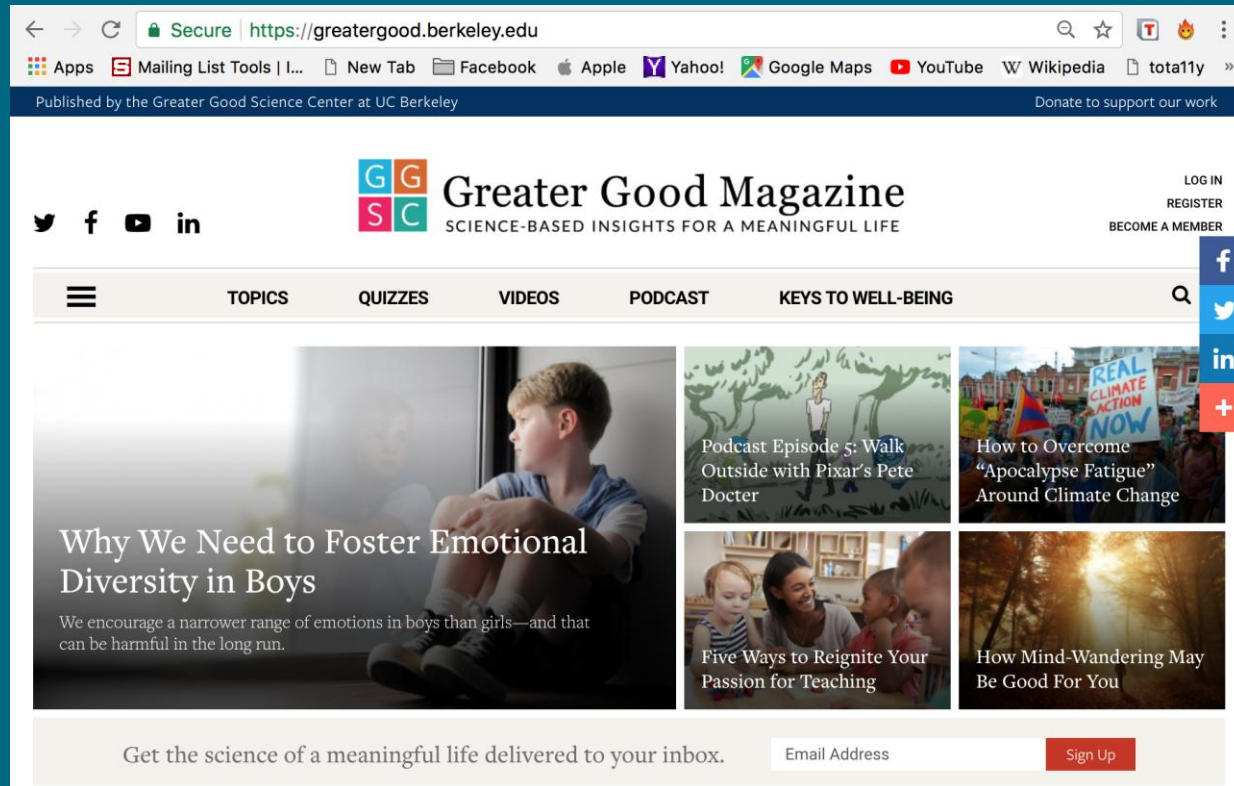
(Gilbert, Harvard)

The Greater Good Science Center

URL:

<https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/>

— Articles,
Resources,
& Events



Greater Good in Action


URL: <https://ggia.berkeley.edu/>

– Happiness Practices, Exercises and Activities

Share: 6.6K 282


HOW TO BUILD...

Showing 1-9 of 9 results Select sorting option...




CASUAL ★★★★★
Frequency: 1x/month | Duration: 15 mins

Feeling Supported
Recalling how others have




MODERATE ★★★★★
Frequency: 1x/day | Duration: 15 mins

Loving-Kindness Meditation
Strengthen feelings of kindness



MODERATE ★★★★★
Frequency: 1x/month | Duration: Variable

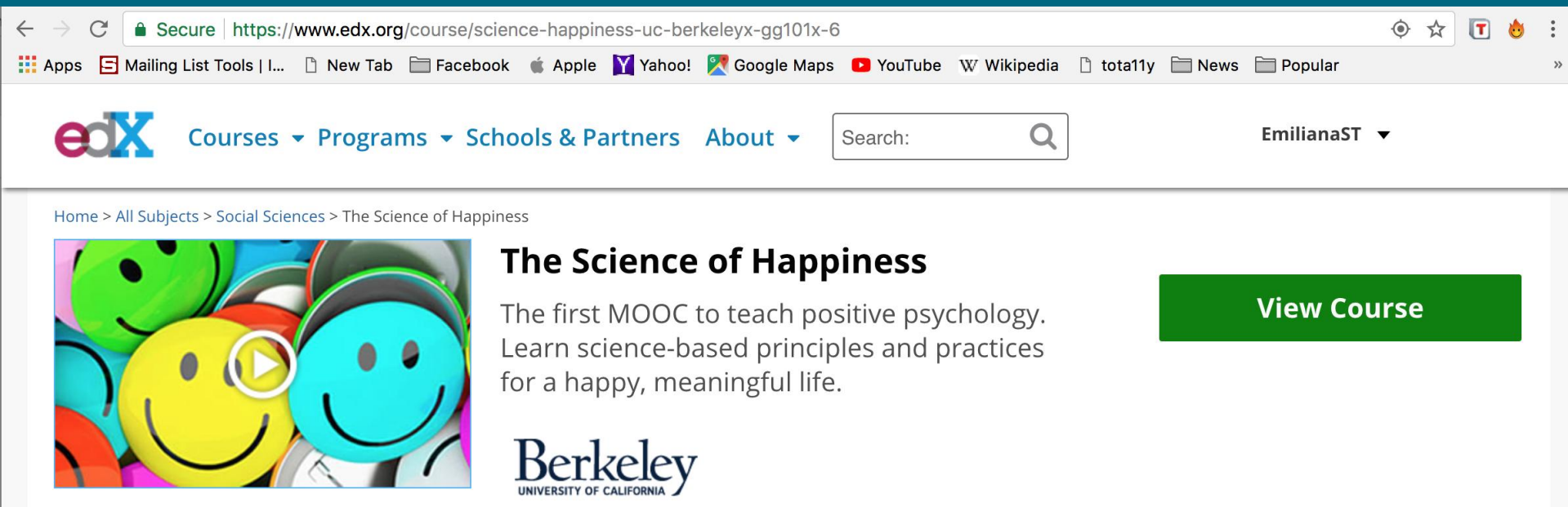
Eliciting Altruism
How to overcome barriers to



MODERATE ★★★★★
Frequency: Variable | Duration: 5 mins

Letting Go of Anger through Compassion

GG101x: The Science of Happiness on [edX.org](https://www.edx.org)



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <https://www.edx.org/course/science-happiness-uc-berkeleyx-gg101x-6>. The browser's address bar shows 'Secure' and the URL. Below the address bar, there are navigation links: 'Apps', 'Mailing List Tools | I...', 'New Tab', 'Facebook', 'Apple', 'Yahoo!', 'Google Maps', 'YouTube', 'Wikipedia', 'tota11y', 'News', and 'Popular'. The edX logo is on the left, followed by navigation links: 'Courses', 'Programs', 'Schools & Partners', and 'About'. A search bar is on the right, and the user's name 'EmilianaST' is displayed. Below the navigation bar, the breadcrumb trail reads 'Home > All Subjects > Social Sciences > The Science of Happiness'. The main content area features a large image of colorful smiley faces with a play button icon. To the right of the image, the course title 'The Science of Happiness' is displayed in bold, followed by a description: 'The first MOOC to teach positive psychology. Learn science-based principles and practices for a happy, meaningful life.' Below the description is the Berkeley University of California logo. A green button labeled 'View Course' is on the right.

Home > All Subjects > Social Sciences > The Science of Happiness

The Science of Happiness

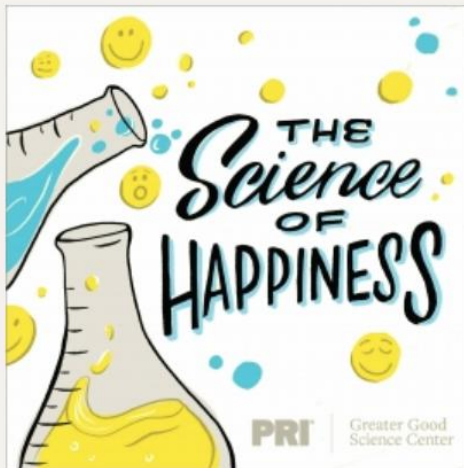
The first MOOC to teach positive psychology. Learn science-based principles and practices for a happy, meaningful life.

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The Science of Happiness Podcast

PODCAST



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The Science of Happiness

Learn research-tested strategies for a happier, more meaningful life, drawing on the science of compassion, gratitude, mindfulness, and awe. Hosted by GGSC Director Dacher Keltner. Co-produced by the GGSC and PRI.

Play the trailer:



THANK YOU!