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Social Psychology
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The Day of Compassion

When I was very young, my grandma told me that compassion is to treat a homeless person as though you were homeless; to treat a disabled person as though you were disabled; to treat a hungry child as though you were hungry. Compassion, as I understand it, is to put yourself in the same circumstance as others, and hence to share their feelings. Only if you know their emotion and suffer together will you truly grasp the meaning of compassion and have a desire to help from deep inside your heart.

A Little About Me

I am a 16-year-old high school student living in Shanghai, China.

My family is very warm—my father and mother's motto is that "When we release you into the world when you are 18, we can confidently say that you are a person who will never do serious harm to others, and is one who is always willing to help and love others." Thanks to them, I have a good heart, but because I am the only child in my family, I often feel lonely without a little brother or sister playing around me. I guess this is why I love kids and want to help them; spending time with young children is just so precious and warm.

Day of Compassion

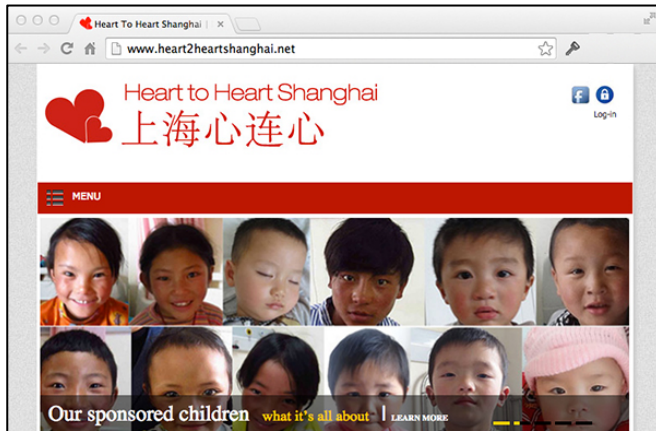
Over the past two years, I have been volunteering at an organization called Heart to Heart, which is a charitable organization that provides financial and emotional support for children and infants who suffer from congenital heart problems. My main job is to play with children in Shanghai Yodak Hospital's playroom, where there are many children who are sponsored by Heart to Heart and are going to have surgery. On my Day of Compassion, however, I decided to do something more than just play with children.

In the Morning

In order to show true compassion to people, you have to first understand their difficulties and know what they need.

My Day of Compassion began during a normal summer day in Shanghai, while I was on holiday. As usual, I went to the Yodak Hospital, but this time I wanted to learn more about Heart to Heart, so I went to its office in the hospital, hoping to have a short talk with the program's Executive Director, Karen Carrington.





After Karen finished a meeting, she invited me into her office. She told me that she has been working for Heart to Heart for ten years, and that she thinks of "compassion" as part of human nature rather than an ability. She said, "When you [see] kids who are suffering from diseases, you will want to help them—that's very natural."

Two weeks ago, a 10-month-old baby survived due to Karen organizing fundraising events to pay for the surgery. "I

felt lucky," said Karen, "but there are just so many of them; you know, their parents just simply cannot afford a surgery."

Karen paused a while, then continued, "We only have 40 volunteers in total, but we have saved 791 kids' lives since 2004... The only problem is that we have too few volunteers" (and not enough financial help, she added). When I left Karen's office, I decided to spend my Day of Compassion trying my best to help these kids.

In the Afternoon

After putting yourself into other's shoes, try your best to be of help.

As Karen said, what these kids and their parents need is money and help. Because I'm a 16-year-old student, I don't have any income to donate, but I can help make people aware of Heart to Heart and help recruit more volunteers.

To do this, I created and printed 100 leaflets, each with a detailed introduction and contact information for Heart to Heart. Then I visited my father's company in the center of Shanghai and started to distribute them. Many people showed an interest, and then an idea occurred to me: Why don't I ask each person to write a message to the kids, take a photo of them holding the message, and then show these photos to even more people to increase awareness? I was excited about this idea, and even though some people were reluctant to take a photo that showed their face, many workers did write down a message and take a photo. I also asked everyone who took a photo to post it online for more people to see and join, which many people did.

After visiting the company, I spent the rest of the afternoon visiting several gyms, schools, and shopping malls. Eventually, I gave away all the leaflets, and more than 300 people took a photo. I was pleasantly surprised that so many people were willing to show their compassion in front of others. Here are some of the photos that people took and emailed me:





In the Evening

Showing compassion for a moment is easy—what makes the word "compassion" meaningful is the ability to keep helping others over a long period of time.

After returning home, I decided that I wanted to continue helping Heart to Heart raise awareness, so I designed a poster with information about the organization and the photo-taking activity. I also set up an email address (h2h2014@sina.com) for people to send their photo, and I used social media to distribute the poster as widely as possible. By sharing this poster online, I hoped more and more people would learn about and support the great work of Heart to Heart, both financially as well as non-financially. Hopefully, what I did will make a difference and give more children the opportunity to survive and grow up healthy.

The "Day of Compassion Me" and the "Normal Me"

Before the Day of Compassion, I would have said that I was a compassionate person, but on that day I went further by encouraging others to behave compassionately—something I had never done before. Prior to this experience, I was rather shy (probably due to the spotlight effect) and not especially good at communicating with others. I worried that people would think I was weird for distributing leaflets, but once I started talking with other people and collecting their photos, I discovered that I was wrong. Most people not only encouraged my behavior but showed their own compassion and a willingness to help.

How can we promote greater compassion in society? The best solution might be to praise people when they show compassion and tell them that what they're doing is meaningful. Such a method resembles the Pygmalion effect, in which social expectations and positive perceptions of oneself can literally create reality. And here I am no exception: I expect to continue receiving photos and working on Heart to Heart for months to come, and I've already offered to participate in several sponsored runs and bike races to raise funds. In conclusion, the "Day of Compassion me" is now becoming the "normal me."

8月18日 为了孩子们，让我们一起写下祝福！
Take a photo for Heart to Heart!

想要在炎炎夏日做一件有意义的事吗？想让这个假期深深的可在你的脑海中吗？
Heart to heart, 心连心, 是一个非盈利性慈善机构, 成立十年间挽救了整整 791 个患有先天性心脏病孩子的生命。但是, 还是有无数孩子们, 甚至刚出生的婴儿, 因为这种疾病, 又缺乏经济支持而永远消失在这个世界上。
如果你想要帮助他们, 请将你最想对孩子说, 或是对人们说的话写在一张白纸上, 并与这张纸合照, 留下你的名字, 发送至 h2h2014@sina.com 如果你想让更多人注意到这些孩子们, 并了解他们的处境, 请将你的照片分享至朋友圈。你所做的一切, 将会使更多孩子有机会接受免费的手术治疗, 将会让更多孩子拥有健康的身体, 拥有一个机会慢慢的, 一点点长大成人。
谢谢你读完这封信, 如果你决定要为孩子们拍下这张照片并分享给更多人, 我作为 Heart to heart 中的一名志愿者, 向你表示最真挚的感谢。
附:
活动要求:
1. 请使用此格式: Heart to Heart + 你想要对人们或孩子们说的话, 并用记号笔清晰书写在空白纸上。(例如: HEART TO HEART 心连心, 加油!)
2. 请手持这张充满爱心的纸张, 微笑, 或是做一个加油的握拳入心的手势。
3. 请将照片命名为“心连心 2014”并发送至 h2h2014@sina.com。
4. 如果可能, 请将照片分享到朋友圈, 让更多人看到你做出的有意义的事。
Activity:
This activity aims to gain people awareness's of children with heart disease and to get to know more about H2H.
1. Please use this format: Heart to Heart + what you want to say, use a marker and clearly write it down on to piece of paper.
2. Please hold this paper, smile, or make your favorite pose and take a picture wherever you like. (e.g. at home, or in a little cafe, etc.)
3. Please send the photo to h2h2014@sina.com.
4. If you really appreciate what we are doing, please share the photo on Facebook, Weibo, Twitter, WeChat and other places so that more people can be aware of us and realize the meaningful things you are doing.

Please Join Me!

If you've read this essay and want to help these children live a long life, please send me a photo. Your behavior will not only benefit children in a desperate situation, but you will feel pleased with yourself after this simple act of compassion. Just follow these steps:

1. Use a marker to clearly write "Heart to Heart" and any message you want to say.
2. Hold up your message, smile, strike a favorite pose, and take a photo anywhere you like.
3. Email the photo to h2h2014@sina.com.
4. If you really appreciate what we are doing, please share your photo on Facebook, Weibo, Twitter, WeChat, and other places so that more people can learn about Heart to Heart and the meaningful thing you are doing.

For further information, to donate, or to volunteer, please visit:

<http://www.heart2heartshanghai.net/>

Thanks for reading!