

## **Charity Begins At Home – Or Does It?**

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America is the richest country on the face of the earth, yet has one of the lowest rates of charitable giving in the world. Why is this true? Are Americans naturally stingy – while other cultures naturally generous?

Certainly not! Americans believe everyone is equal – and equality demands that everyone be given the chance to achieve success on their own. From the earliest American settlers, success was determined by a willingness to work. Benjamin Franklin started out as a poor man yet ended life as one of the most respected and wealthy men of his time. Americans still subconsciously adhere to this belief and feel donations to charity hinder individuals from reaching his or her own potential.

How often have cultures that adopted the “dole” wound up with a generation unwilling to work? Why do immigrants do so well in cultures such as the United States? It all comes back to the American work ethic. People willing to take jobs – sometimes hard and dirty jobs – eventually achieve success. It is true that success doesn’t always come immediately. It is the responsibility of each generation to push the next generation a little further up the economic ladder.

The immigrant coming to America today is often willing to take jobs that Americans refuse. Yet look at the parade of winners at the Intel Science Talent Search each year. A large proportion of America’s “best and brightest” is a first generation American. Where are the children of prosperity? Why are they no longer willing to work as hard as the children from working class homes? It’s simple – giving someone everything denies him or her the impetus to work hard and achieve on their own merit. Charity isn’t kindness – charity is pity – and a way of rewarding the underachievers of the world.

How can the pity aspect be removed from charitable giving? Should all charities be closed down and children starve? Of course not! Give a man his dignity and you give him a future. Give him a handout and you condemn him to a life of poverty and hopelessness. Money comes to those who work – not to those who are idle. America is the land of opportunity and jobs are the right of every citizen. Why can't we re-institute the programs such as the Civilian Conservation Core or the Workers Progress Administration? The jobs provided by these programs during the Depression allowed many a man to feed his family while retaining his pride. His children learned that no matter how bad times were their father worked and brought home the necessities of life.

Let's teach our children to differentiate between "wants" and "needs" and make sure everyone can work to fulfill their needs. No one need starve and no one need accept charity. Let's return to the American that equated hard work and success and bring back the pride felt in "doing a good day's work for a good day's pay."