

# from the editors

## Greater Good

Magazine of the Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley

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*Greater Good* (ISSN 1553-3239) collects, synthesizes, and interprets groundbreaking scientific research into the roots of compassion, altruism, and peaceful human relationships. It fuses this cutting edge science with inspiring stories, promoting dialogue between social scientists and parents, teachers, community leaders, and policy makers.

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**Greater Good**  
SCIENCE CENTER

IN THIS ISSUE OF *GREATER GOOD*, Robert Emmons argues that Americans trivialize gratitude. It's easy to understand why. After all, "thank you" is one of the first phrases we teach children to say—how complicated could the concept be? We see gratitude as a basic form of politeness, like chewing with your mouth closed, and we don't usually consider what deeper significance it may hold.

Yet the fact that we try to make "thank you" such an essential part of a child's vocabulary, and that children (and adults) often have a hard time bringing themselves to utter those two words, suggests gratitude is more complex than we typically assume. Indeed, as the contributors to this issue make clear, true gratitude is more a state of mind than a single act, and it takes real effort to cultivate.

Fortunately, we have good reason to believe that gratitude is a skill most of us can develop—and there's overwhelming evidence to suggest that we should. Inspired by remarkable new research findings, our goal in this issue of *Greater Good* is to show how gratitude can serve as a powerful tool to build trust, cooperation, and respect between people. Emmons, perhaps the leading scientific expert on gratitude, makes this case convincingly in his essay.

Other contributors show how the research on gratitude can be put into practice. In her essay, Catherine Price recounts how she tried several of the research-tested methods for cultivating gratitude, and reports on the pleasures, challenges, and insights she experienced as a result. Researchers Jess Alberts and Angela Trethewey explain the vital role that gratitude plays in healthy marriages, particularly when it comes to housework, and offer tips on how to infuse your relationship with more gratitude—and, in turn, more stability and satisfaction. Psychologist Jeffrey Froh describes his own experiment in teaching gratitude to hundreds of middle school students, finding that the lessons—and the benefits—of gratitude are not lost on the young. And this issue's Q & A explores how gratitude can affect relationships on a global scale: Iraq's first post-Hussein ambassador to the United States, Rend al-Rahim Francke, discusses the complicated role of gratitude in Iraqis' feelings toward the U.S.

These essays illustrate how gratitude is a crucial tool for the greater good—exactly

the kind of human trait this magazine is designed to explore and make us rethink. In their thoughtful treatments of gratitude, our contributors offer hope that there are indeed realistic, concrete, and practical steps we can take everyday to foster stronger and more peaceful bonds.

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This marks *Greater Good's* first issue on a quarterly schedule, and you'll notice some changes to its format along with its increase in frequency. After hearing from many readers that they value the magazine's ability to report on groundbreaking scientific findings in a way that makes them accessible and engaging, we've made our In Brief section several pages longer, which enables us to provide more extensive coverage of the science of social and emotional well-being. Within this section are several new columns that apply scientific insights to everyday life: Brain Teaser, Body Language, and Social Intelligence. This last column will feature contributions from a range of thought leaders; appropriately, the first installation comes from Daniel Goleman, who popularized the term "social intelligence."

Over the past three years, we've also noticed that an increasing number of books and other media have explored themes relevant to the magazine, and readers have said they look to *Greater Good* for guidance on how to navigate all this new material. As a result, we've expanded our reviews section. In addition to our short book reviews, we now feature a longer essay evaluating trends across several new books, as well as an essay discussing how topics such as altruism, compassion, and empathy are manifesting in popular culture.

We believe these additions give *Greater Good* an analytic edge to complement its focus on science reporting and storytelling. The magazine's content will surely continue to evolve. But for the time being, we hope you enjoy these new dimensions to *Greater Good*.



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