

# The Legacy Code: The Altruism Paradox

(Year 9 - Ages 14-15)

## Lesson 1 of 9

### Teacher Preparation

#### Introduction for Teachers

Welcome to the Year 9 Unit. At this age (14-15), students are questioning authority, exploring identity, and seeking logical explanations for social behavior. This unit shifts from "Donation is Nice" to "Donation is Smart." We use Evolutionary Psychology and Game Theory to prove that altruism (helping others) is not just a "soft" emotion but a hard-wired survival strategy.

The Core Concept: Humans are "Super-Cooperators." We are the only species that helps strangers we will never meet (e.g., via blood or organ donation). This "Social Code" allows our complex society to exist.

### Safety and Sensitivity Considerations

- Scientific Distance: This lesson uses scientific terms (Dopamine, Evolution, Game Theory) which can help create a safe distance from the emotional weight of "death." Use this to your advantage.
- The "Selfish" Debate: Students might argue "There is no such thing as pure altruism because it makes you feel good."
  - Response: Validate this! "That's a great point. The 'Helper's High' is our brain's way of rewarding us. Does it matter why we save a life, as long as the life is saved?"
- Opt-in/Opt-out: Briefly mention Australia's system if asked, but save the deep legal debate for later lessons.

### Teacher Resources

- Video Suggestion: Search for "The Prisoner's Dilemma Explained" or "Golden Balls Split or Steal" (a game show clip that perfectly demonstrates trust/betrayal).
- Resource: "The Neuro-Cards" (See below).
- Prop: A bag of chocolates or tokens for the "Split or Steal" simulation.

### The Alchemist's Data: The Survival of the Kindest (Year 9)

The "Tribal" Advantage Anthropologists found that tribes with more altruistic members survived longer than selfish tribes. Sharing food (or organs) is a group survival strategy.

The Trust Economy Countries with high rates of organ donation also tend to have high rates of "Generalized Trust" (trusting strangers). Donation is a barometer for the health of a society.



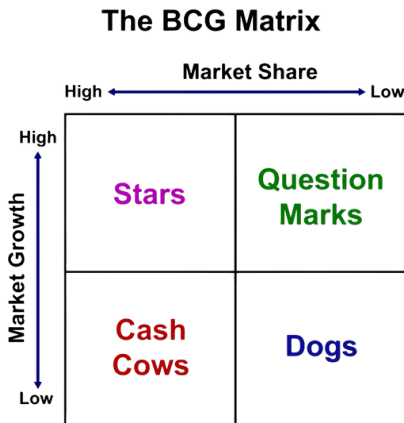
# Key Concepts & Language for Teachers

## 1. The Altruism Paradox

- Darwin's Puzzle: Survival of the fittest suggests we should be selfish to survive. So why do we help others?
- The Answer: Reciprocal Altruism. If I help you today, you might help me tomorrow.
- The Donation Twist: Organ donation is Pure Altruism. You help a stranger after you are gone. You get no direct payback. This is unique to humans.

## 2. Game Theory (The Prisoner's Dilemma)

- A mathematical model of conflict and cooperation.
- Scenario: Two people can "Cooperate" (stay silent) or "Defect" (betray the other).
- Outcome: If both Cooperate, both win. If both Defect, both lose. If one defects, they win big while the other loses big.
- Lesson: Society works best when we all agree to Cooperate (The Social Contract). Donation is the ultimate Cooperation.



## 3. The Neuroscience of Giving Why does it feel good to give?

- Dopamine: The "Reward" chemical. Released when we achieve a goal or help someone.
- Oxytocin: The "Bonding" chemical. Released during hugs, trust, and social connection.
- Serotonin: The "Mood" regulator. Giving boosts serotonin, reducing depression.
- The "Helper's High": This is a real biological state. Evolution bribes us to be kind.

## HAPPY CHEMISTRY

THE CHEMICALS THAT  
MAKE YOU HAPPY

