# Living with Compassion

During my day of compassion, I attended a peaceful local protest sponsored by the local high school and city police officers. The moment was incredibly powerful as we stood in solidarity for a united cause. I greeted many familiar faces, and afterwards, I thanked the police officers for their service. Later that day, I attended a virtual meeting under the Yale Effective Altruism Fellowship Program. During that meeting, we discussed the mission of Effective Altruism: how to maximize global impact of altruism, and how to create the greatest benefit through giving. In those moments, I could feel several social psychology concepts at play:

## During the local protest:

Outgroup Homogeneity Bias - It was not necessarily uncommon for individuals to view police officers as a homogenous group, which may be reinforced by media coverage. In reality, our local police officers were incredibly diverse, each with different interests, roles, and qualities. During the event, this was increasingly apparent, especially seeing our law enforcement officers up close.

Conformity - During any rally or protest, it is important to recognize that many people follow the crowd in effort to "blend in". This is not always a bad thing but should be noted nevertheless, as it could be a source of issues in the future.

Deindividualization - Some individuals who I knew personally acted beyond their typical range of behavior. The presence of the crowd galvanized them to act beyond their normal comfort range.

## During the meeting:

1. Groupthink: There were certain moments where the entire room agreed on certain questions or concepts. The discussion was formatted to avoid these moments, however, and encouraged others to disagree often. Therefore, although groupthink was present, we were cognizant and had appropriate countermeasures.

2. Production-blocking: While others were expressing their ideas during brainstorming sessions, it was difficult to think of ideas. The time we spent transmitting ideas detracted from our time to create more ideas. We alleviated this problem through having certain moments of silence after each question in which people were able to brainstorm alone, free from groupthink or production-blocking effects.

Later that day, I played tennis. During this occasion, there was a homeless man at the park who was sitting nearby the courts, occasionally watching us play with excitement. Though I had no money or materials to offer, I waved at him and struck up a conversation with him. It was a great moment to share and was fitting for the day's theme of compassion. After our discussion, we parted ways having participated in a thoroughly enjoyable exchange of ideas.

Overall, the day of compassion was a success. Being mindful of your relationships and compassion throughout the day incentivizes you to act in accordance to your thoughts (not doing so could result in cognitive dissonance). Additionally, identifying opportunities to interact with others and create moment of compassion create strong and memorable experiences, as the interaction is salient and keeps your attention. Overall, I prefer my compassionate self and found this experience incredibly enlightening. I hope to continue these concepts in future encounters.