## Test 2: Altruism in Everyday Life – Why Do We Help Others?

## **Passage**

Altruism is not limited to grand gestures or heroic actions—it often manifests in everyday behaviors that reflect a concern for others. From holding the door open for a stranger to volunteering time for a local cause, small acts of kindness contribute to stronger communities and improved mental health for both givers and receivers.

One reason people engage in altruistic behavior is empathy. When individuals witness someone in distress, they often feel a strong emotional response that motivates them to help. This empathetic response is believed to be rooted in mirror neurons—specialized brain cells that activate both when we perform an action and when we observe someone else doing the same. These neurons allow us to experience a sense of shared emotion, making us more likely to offer assistance.

Another factor influencing altruism is social identity. People are more likely to help others whom they perceive as part of their group, whether based on nationality, religion, profession, or shared interests. This tendency, known as in-group favoritism, can strengthen bonds within communities but may also limit altruistic behavior toward outsiders.

Interestingly, studies show that altruistic behavior can improve mental health. Research indicates that individuals who volunteer regularly report higher levels of happiness and life satisfaction. Helping others releases endorphins—chemicals in the brain associated with feelings of pleasure and reduced stress. This phenomenon has been dubbed the "helper's high."

The environment also plays a role in encouraging altruism. People are more likely to help in situations where they are not rushed and believe they are the only ones who can assist. Known as the bystander effect, this psychological phenomenon suggests that individuals are less likely to intervene in emergencies when others are present, assuming someone else will take action.

Education and upbringing significantly influence a person's willingness to help others. Children raised in households that value kindness and generosity are more likely to develop altruistic tendencies. Schools that incorporate character education and community service into their curriculum also foster a spirit of giving among students.

Technology has both expanded and complicated modern expressions of altruism. On one hand, crowdfunding platforms and online donation tools make it easier than ever to support causes worldwide. On the other hand, digital activism—such as liking or sharing posts—can create a false sense of contribution without meaningful action.

Organizations and governments increasingly recognize the importance of altruism in building resilient societies. Public campaigns encourage citizens to volunteer, donate, and participate in community improvement projects. In some countries, schools and workplaces incorporate structured opportunities for service learning and team-based charitable activities.

While altruism brings many benefits, it is important to balance giving with self-care. Experts recommend setting boundaries and practicing mindful altruism to ensure that helping others does not come at the cost of personal well-being.

Ultimately, whether driven by empathy, social connection, or personal values, altruism enriches lives and strengthens the fabric of society. As individuals continue to find ways to give back, the ripple effects of their actions can inspire others to do the same.

## ? Questions – Test 2

- 1. What is the main idea of the passage?
- A. Altruism is rare in modern society.
- B. Altruism only involves large-scale actions.
- C. Altruism includes small daily actions and improves well-being.
- D. Altruism is harmful to mental health.
- 2. According to paragraph 2, what are mirror neurons responsible for?
- A. Physical movement
- B. Learning languages
- C. Feeling empathy
- D. Controlling heart rate
- 3. The word "foster" in paragraph 6 is closest in meaning to:
- A. Prevent
- B. Encourage
- C. Reduce
- D. Ignore
- 4. Which term refers to helping people you identify with?
- A. Reciprocal altruism
- B. Empathetic altruism
- C. In-group favoritism
- D. Kin selection
- 5. According to paragraph 4, what chemical is released during altruistic acts?
- A. Insulin
- B. Dopamine

C. Endorphins
D. Adrenaline
6. Look at the four squares [■] in paragraph 5. Where would the following sentence best
fit?
"This diffusion of responsibility reduces the chance of someone stepping in."
A. First square
B. Second square
C. Third square
D. Fourth square
7. What does the author imply about digital activism?
A. It is always effective.
B. It guarantees real change.
C. It may not lead to a real-world impact.
D. It replaces traditional volunteering.
8. According to paragraph 7, what can parents do to encourage altruism in children?
A. Limit access to technology
B. Value kindness and generosity
C. Focus only on academics
D. Avoid community involvement
9. What is one way schools promote altruism?
A. By increasing homework
B. Through standardized testing
C. By offering competitive sports
D. With community service programs

- 10. Based on the passage, which THREE of the following are benefits of altruism?

  Choose three answers:
- A. Improved mental health
- B. Increased stress
- C. Stronger communities
- D. Reduced empathy
- E. Higher life satisfaction
- F. Greater social isolation

## Answers & Explanations – Test 2

- 1. C. Altruism includes small daily actions and improves well-being.
- ✓ The passage emphasizes everyday altruism and its positive effects.
- 2. C. Feeling empathy
- ✓ Paragraph 2 links mirror neurons to shared emotions and helping behavior.
- 3. B. Encourage
- ✓ "Foster" means to promote or encourage development.
- 4. C. In-group favoritism
- ✓ Paragraph 3 defines this as helping those seen as part of one's group.
- 5. C. Endorphins
- ✓ Paragraph 4 states that endorphins are released during altruistic behavior.
- 6. B. Second square
- ✓ The sentence follows a discussion about the bystander effect and shared responsibility.

- 7. C. It may not lead to a real-world impact.
- ✓ Paragraph 5 suggests digital activism can create a false sense of contribution.
- 8. B. Value kindness and generosity
- ✓ Paragraph 6 says children raised in such homes are more likely to be altruistic.
- 9. D. With community service programs
- ✓ Paragraph 6 mentions schools incorporating service learning into curricula.
- 10. A. Improved mental health
  - C. Stronger communities
  - E. Higher life satisfaction
- ✓ These are all supported by the passage.