Supercharity

People donate their time and money for different reasons, but not all of them are good reasons. Some people give to charity because a friend asks, and they don't want to look bad. Some people give because the charity offers some benefit in return. Sometime people give out of guilt, to avoid self-reproach. Some people give because a charity has spent money to create a good image through impressive PR—whether or not the charity is effective.

To increase the good that people do through charity, I created a new term: "supercharity." I define *your* supercharity as the charity or group of charities that best address the problems that you would most not want to personally suffer. For instance, if someone thought that political torture was the worst kind of suffering, then giving to organizations that effectively minimized political torture would be supercharity for them. But if another person thought that sexual molestation was the worst thing that they could imagine, then giving to organizations that minimized that problem would be supercharity for them. Your supercharity (or supercharities) depends on you and your values.

People don't have to limit their supercharity to one issue or problem. There's no need to try to figure out what the all-time worst of many awful forms of suffering is. By defining this new term, *supercharity*, I'm encouraging people to donate more money and time to their supercharities, and less to other, less critical charities. When most people do this, you can expect the amount of suffering in the world to decrease.

Along with donating to your supercharities, you shouldn't forget to support behind-the-scenes organizations that attack some of the problems behind the problems. For instance, no one dies directly from illiteracy. But certain kinds of educational programs empower people to *avoid* problems and situations that cause suffering and death. The same is true for certain strategic environmental, political and public health programs.

Should you make all your donations of time and money to supercharities? If you did, the arts, some community organizations (and probably many of your friendships!) would suffer. It will irritate people when you don't give as much to their charities, but this can be an opportunity for you to educate them. If necessary, change your giving gradually. It may help you not to give in to pressure, if you realize that maintaining conventional giving patterns keeps the world as it is.— Do you want the world to change or not?

At least 75% of my giving of time and money is to supercharity and strategic causes like literacy. But it's up to people to make their own decisions.