

ON JANUARY 23, 2014

PED SEMINAR SERIES PRESENTS

**PAYING IT FORWARD: GENERALIZED RECIPROCITY
AND THE LIMITS OF GENEROSITY**

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When people are the victims of greed or recipients of generosity, their first impulse is often to pay back that behavior in kind. What happens when people cannot reciprocate, but instead have the chance to be cruel or kind to someone entirely different—to pay it forward? In five experiments, participants received greedy, equal, or generous divisions of money or labor from an anonymous person, and then divided additional resources with a new anonymous person. While equal treatment was paid forward in kind, greed was paid forward more than generosity. This asymmetry was driven by negative affect, such that a positive affect intervention disrupted the tendency to pay greed forward. Implications for models of generalized reciprocity are discussed.