

Swiss Center for Affective Sciences

Saving the planet because it feels good:
The role of warm-glow and intrinsic motivation in
sustainable decision-making

LECTURE SERIES

Tuesday,
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12:15 - 13:15

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Decades of research in the behavioral sciences has shown that people are willing to help others in need. What remains unclear, however, is whether people derive a similar sense of “warm-glow” from cooperating in more psychologically distant social dilemmas such as helping to save the environment. Moreover, although network contagion effects now increasingly allow social causes to reach a large number of interconnected individuals fast, efficiently, and at low cost, little is known about the duration of such viral online empathy and prosociality. I’ll review evidence from four studies, from saving energy and the environment to the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge, to help carve out a research agenda for understanding the evolving nature of human morality and altruism in the twenty-first century ■

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