

wrote in his *Ethics*, "The primary and sole foundations of virtue or of the proper conducts of life is to seek our own profit." Hence any altruistic action—indeed, any action of which I can conceive—has as its basis personal gain.

The compelling problem now becomes the differentiation between admirable and disagreeable manifestations of the soul's inner drive for fulfillment. How can the altruist be better-loved than the egotist if they both are actually self-seeking? The solution to this enigma is inextricably linked with another mystery not designed for man to comprehend: it is linked with the explanation of man's purpose for existing on earth. When we understand what our basic goal in life was meant to be, we will understand what determines the most acceptable personal needs. If, for example, we were created to progress materially, the man who has a drive to explore science or help others do so is at the summit of selfless endeavor.

Only one trait of mankind mars the smooth fabric into which I have woven all of humanity's efforts on earth. In my cold approach to even the most graciously-rendered of services, I have not provided for one man's instinctive, thoughtless risk of his own life to save another's. Here we may advance a theory which sounds a note of hope for the petty, selfish existence we seem to be leading. Perhaps all of mankind is one great Being exhibiting self-interest in its own entirety rather than in its component parts. We may all indeed be a part of the main to which John Donne refers in telling us, "No man is an island entire unto himself."

## A Logical Conclusion—Don't

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TO THE average medical layman, the three days I spent in bed with a minor ailment several years ago would be nothing. But to me these few days marked a time when I became aware that I was suddenly allergic to the slightest dose of penicillin and had to give up all antibiotic drugs. This discovery seemed especially peculiar to me because until this time I had always taken my penicillin along with the best of the seventh-graders and had been able to hold the drug with no aftereffects. These were not facts that I particularly boasted about, but nevertheless, I did feel a certain sense of belonging in knowing I was accepted as being normal.

Heeding my mother's frantic call to save her from a child staying home from school, the family doctor, a man I trusted medically and hated financially, came to give me the penicillin shot that was intended to get me well as soon as possible. I looked forward to his visit with the same apprehension any twelve-year-old boy would have who knows he is about to be shot with a hypodermic needle in a very tender spot.

When the foul act was finished, the doctor and my mother walked to the door to say goodby. When she returned, her face foretold she had noticed a rather abrupt change in my appearance. Small things—like swollen cheeks that were slowly closing my eyes, swollen ears that were breaking out in hives, and little red spots all over my exposed arms and legs—caught her attention.

The doctor returned immediately to the scene of his crime and announced his belief that my reaction was merely a passing thing and I would soon get over it. For the next few days as I lay in bed and scratched, this bold statement gave me much comfort. To test his theory the doctor gave me a small dose of diluted penicillin several weeks later and immediately I became quite bloated again. He firmly resolved that I was completely allergic to penicillin and should never again take another shot of the drug.

My allergy problem with penicillin was mentioned to a close friend of the family who is a vice-president of the Eli Lilly Drug Company. This self-dubbed angel-of-mercy presented me with a small vial of a new wonder-drug that was supposed to be as effective as penicillin but lacked the aftereffects of the drug. This new serum had been tested all over the country on penicillin-allergic people, and of the thousands of tests only four people had been found who could not take the drug.

A small injection of this drug found me to be number five.

It was at this point that I swore off all antibiotics. My idea that all penicillin shots would result in the same reaction was now endorsed by several doctors and the results of several experiments. They carried their warnings so far that I am now afraid to take even aspirin for fear of being branded a major scientific observation case and placed in a glass bottle for all to observe.

The Lilly executive attempted to point out the advantages of my condition such as the almost certain medical discharge from the Army because of the lack of activities a bloated soldier can perform, the many occasions my condition will lend itself to stopping a friend from launching into details on his latest operation, and the idea that it marks me a medical wonder. The idea of being recognized in my own lifetime, even as a medical wonder, has some merit, I suppose, but this too is of little consolation when I remember those awful three days when I first discovered the nature of my condition.