

Pay it Forward

Can a simple idea make a big difference?

Cast:

Kevin Spacey	....	Eugene Simonet
Helen Hunt	....	Arlene McKinney
Haley Joel Osment	....	Trevor McKinney
Jay Mohr	....	Chris Chandler
James Caviezel	....	Jerry
Jon Bon Jovi	....	Ricki McKinney
Angie Dickinson	....	Grace
David Ramsey	....	Sidney
Gary Werntz	....	Thorsen
Marc Donato	....	Adam
Kathleen Wilhoite	....	Bonnie

Define: altruism Utopia

Questions:

1. Why does the reporter refuse the offer of the Jaguar?
2. Where does the “realm of possibility exist” according to Mr. Simonet?
3. Why do we consider eleven-year-olds incapable of making a difference in the real world?
4. What is the danger of putting acts of kindness into actual implementation? Does Trevor put his family in danger by inviting the homeless man home? Why?
5. Why can't Jerry, the homeless man, pay Trevor back?
6. What is the math of “pay it forward”? How powerful is this?
7. What is “faith in the goodness of people”? How does it work in Trevor's system?
8. Why is Trevor's project with Jerry initially a failure?
9. Even in a world of human frailty and weakness, good can exist. What is Trevor's mom's weakness? What is her first step towards “recovery”?
10. How does the woman on the bridge “save” Jerry?
11. Why do the words, “I forgive you,” from Trevor's mom to her mom mean so much?
12. Las Vegas, the city of sin and gambling, is the setting for the movie. How is the idea of *pay it forward* a gamble?
14. Roger Ebert in his review of the movie wrote that “in the real world, altruism is less powerful than selfishness, greed, nepotism, xenophobia, tribalism and paranoia. If you doubt me, take another look at the front pages.” Can an idea change the way people behave in this real world or do you need something more tangible than an idea?