

Study Finds Being Exposed To Buddhist Concepts Reduces Prejudice and Increases Pro-Sociality



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By [Eric W. Dolan](#) | [PsyPost](#)

Researchers from Belgium and Taiwan have found that being exposed to Buddhist concepts can lead to increased pro-social behavioral intentions and undermine prejudice towards others.

Buddhism contains a variety of teachings and practices – such as [meditation](#) – intended to help individuals develop a more open-minded and compassionate personality. Unlike the three dominant monotheistic religions, it does not draw a sharp line between believers and unbelievers.

In three separate experiments of 355 individuals, the

researchers found that being exposed to words related to Buddhism could “automatically activate prosociality and tolerance, in particular among people with socio-cognitive open-mindedness.”

The study adds to a growing body of research about priming, a phenomenon in which merely being exposed to certain words or concepts changes the way people think or behave. It was published in the April issue of the [*Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*](#).

When Westerners familiar with Buddhism read religious words like “Dharma” and “Nirvana” – which they were exposed to under the guise of completing a word puzzle – they reported lower negative attitudes toward outgroups compared to participants exposed to positive non-religious words like “freedom.”

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