
LUCKY LIVES



When judgment calls, it's easy to forget the impact that good fortune has had on our lives, writes TARNYA DAVIS.

A GOOD life might be considered the fruit of a succession of an individual's good decisions. This line of thinking can certainly render those living a life that appears successful a little smug and superior. How much of what appears to be success is our doing, and how much is actually the great deal of fortune we may have experienced in our lives? Like the politicians who genuinely believe it's the white middle-class male who is down-trodden, perhaps fortune is less evident when it is so ingrained in a person's cultural and life experience that they fail to even notice it.

At a recent charity event, I spoke about the importance of realising the fortune, luck, and opportunity we have in our lives and how, if we walked in another person's shoes every day, we most probably would make the same choices they have. Real generosity is believing that there is very little difference between you and the person you are helping.

We tend to fall for the fundamental attribution error, which is the tendency people have to overemphasise personal characteristics and ignore situational factors when judging others. We believe others do bad things because they are bad people, whereas we tend to think the opposite of ourselves. If I'm late it's because of an external factor beyond my control, such as traffic. If you're late you're just disorganised or a poor time manager.

True compassion is about acknowledging our flaws as well as those of others and understanding, there, but for the fortune I was born with, goes I.

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