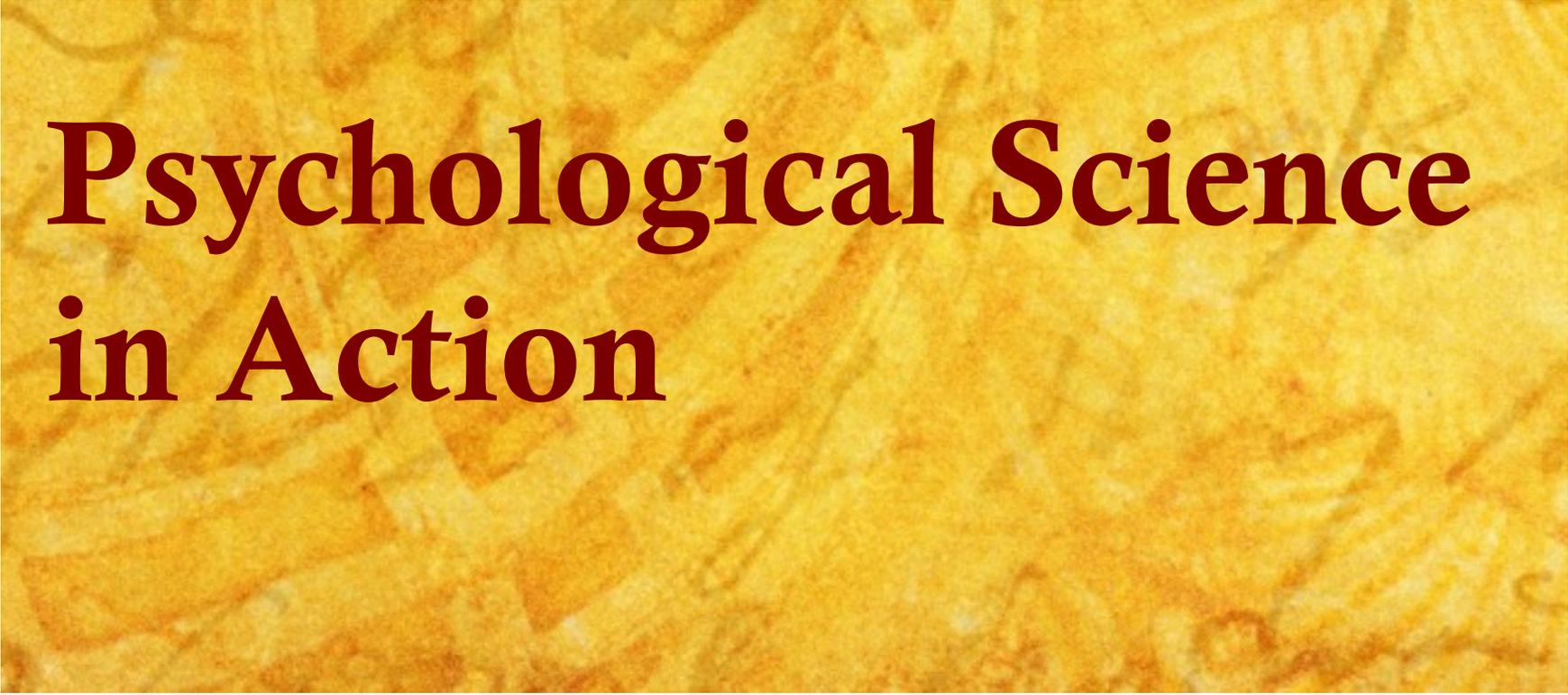




A Nudge in the Right Direction

Adapted from “Small Nudge, Big Impact,” by Scott Sleek



Psychological Science in Action

Intent vs. Reality

- How many people actually stick to their diets? How many keep the weight off long-term?
- Of the people that support organ donation, how many actually sign up to be organ donors?
- How many people commit to greener energy strategies for their homes?



Sources: www.info.firstcarbonsolutions.com,
dietideassite.blogspot.com

Dieting

Which incentive will cause dieters to lose the most weight, if the goal is to lose 16 pounds in 4 months?

A

Winning money if you achieve your weight loss goal.

B

Losing money if you fall short of your weight loss goal.

C

Monetary incentives don't help people lose weight.

Answer



Source: www.kvoa.com

A and B, incentives work

Adult dieters who received either financial incentive lost, on average, more than 13 pounds over four months. **Half reached the 16 pound goal.** The incentive groups also did not return to their original weight after 7 months. The control group lost an average of just 4 pounds.

Volpp, K. G., John, L. K., Troxel, A. B., Norton, L., Fassenber, J., Loewenstein, G (2008). Financial incentive-based approaches for weight loss: A randomized trial. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 300, 2631–2637.

Organ Donation

People are more likely to donate their organs if:

A

they have to “opt in” to donate their organs (i.e., they sign up to be organ donors).

B

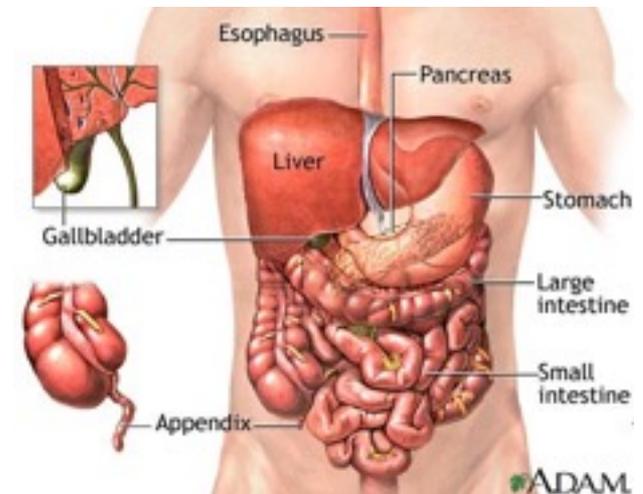
they have to “opt out” of being organ donors.

Answer

B “opt out”

In the U.S., where people have to opt in to be organ donors, 85% of people view organ donation positively, but **only 28% sign up to be organ donors.**

In most European countries – where you are automatically a donor unless you opt out – **more than 99% are organ donors.**



Source: www.texashealth.org

Green Energy Use

If you went door-to-door placing hangers on doorknobs in a neighborhood, which message would be **most effective in increasing energy conservation?**

A

Join Your Neighbors in Conserving Energy. A recent survey of households in your community found that 77% of residents often use fans instead of air conditioning to keep cool in the summer. Using fans instead of air conditioning—Your Community's Popular Choice!

B

Save Money by Conserving Energy. How can you save money this summer? Use fans instead of air conditioning! You could save up to \$54 per month by using fans instead of air conditioning to keep cool in the summer.

C

Protect the Environment by Conserving Energy. By using fans instead of air conditioning! You can prevent the release of up to 262 pounds of greenhouse gases per month. Using fans instead of air conditioning—The Environmental Choice.

Answer

A “Join your neighbors”

The only homes with a significant difference in energy reduction were those that received hangers that said **their neighbors were saving energy**.

Opower, a Virginia-based software company, has actually utilized this effect to help consumers **save \$75 million and cut CO₂ emissions by 1 billion pounds**.



Source: www.oprah.com

What does this mean?

Advances in behavioral psychology can have a large positive impact on both individuals and society as a whole.