

Part 3:
The Identifiable Victim Effect

The Trolley Problem:

underscores the discrepancy
between cognitive and
emotional thinking.

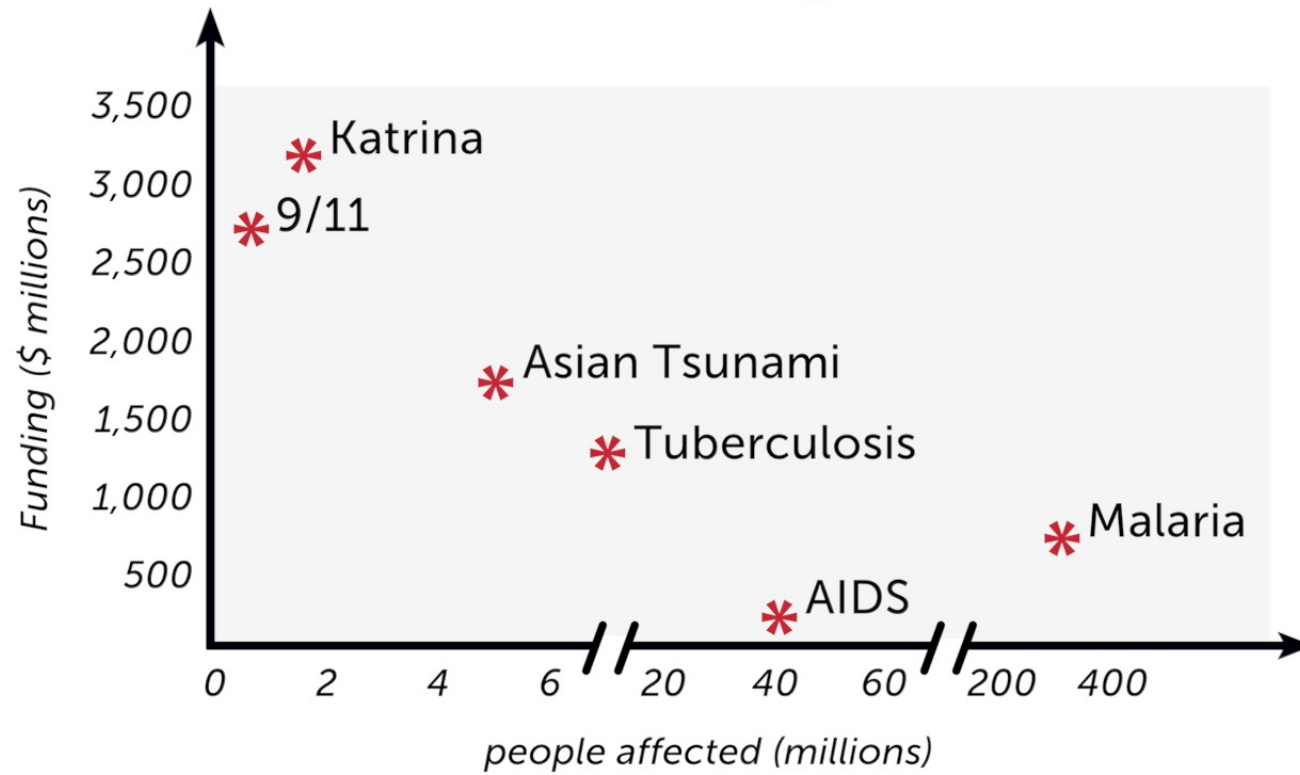
Cognition:

4 people > 1 person

Emotion:

1 person > 4 people

Mismatched Money and Need





The Identifiable Victim Effect

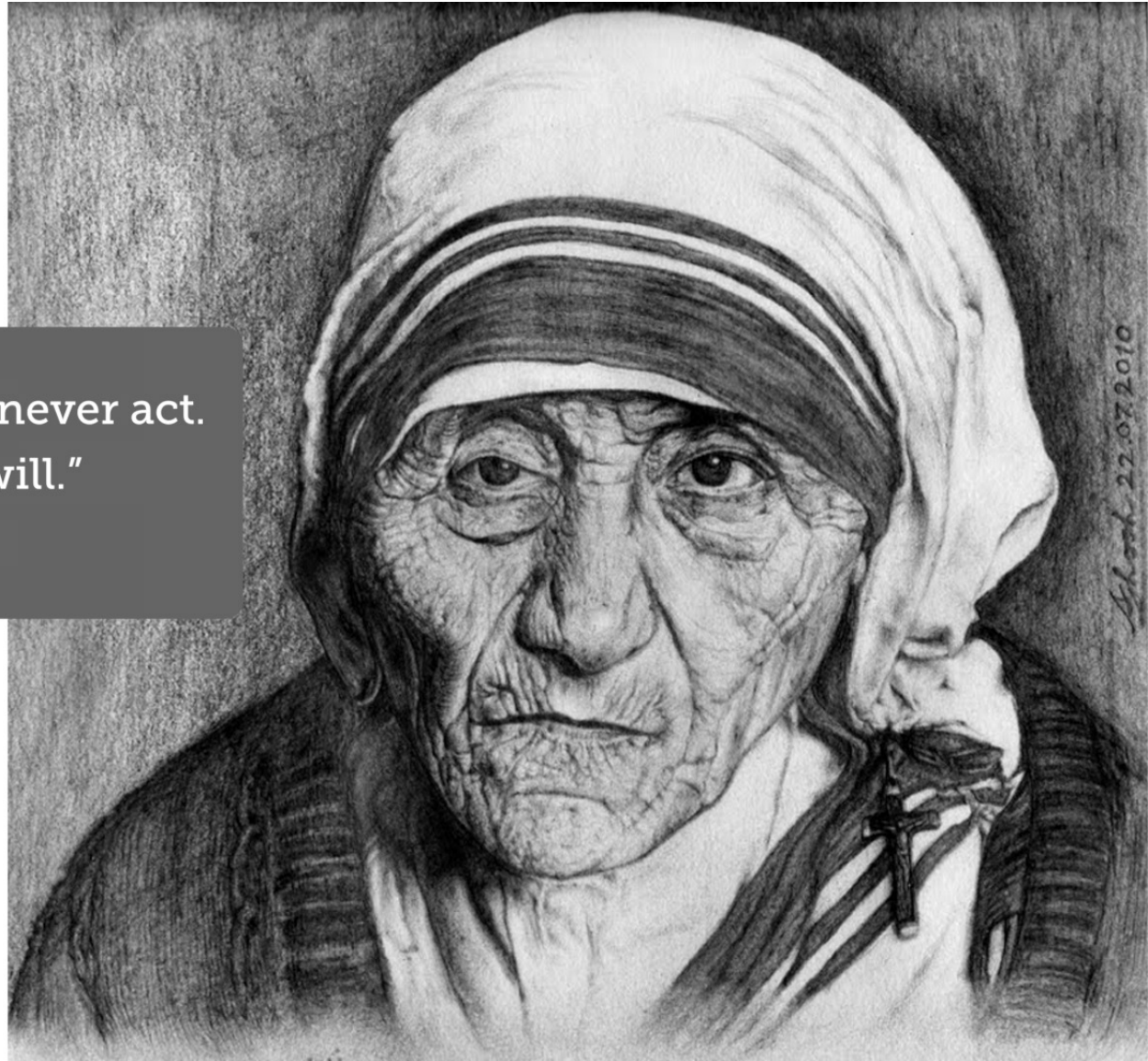
We care more about suffering when it is represented by one individual.





"One man's death is a tragedy,
a million deaths is a statistic."
— Joseph Stalin

"If I look at the masses, I will never act.
If I look at the individual, I will."
— Mother Teresa



Would you like
to help Rokia?



People are willing to
donate twice as much
money to Rokia
than the masses.





Would you jump?

Identifiable and Statistical Life



identifiable
life


Sta-

Adding statistics to the
equation dampens our
emotional response.



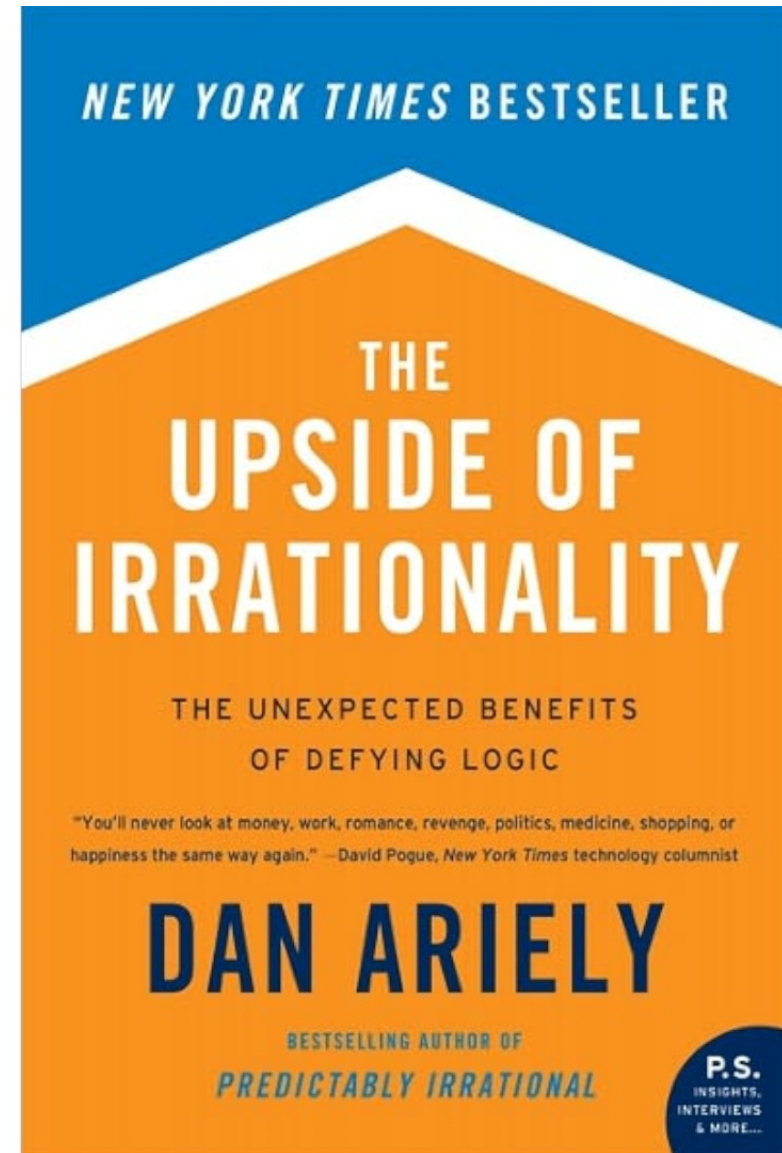
Merely thinking in
computational terms
causes empathy
to decrease.





Helping distant strangers in need
is economically irrational.

Call it an “upside” of irrationality...





When a particular child is pre-identified, people are more likely to help.

Condition 1:
child is selected randomly, after donation is secured

Condition 2:
child is selected randomly, but before donation



A staggering number of cows
were butchered to stop the
spread of the disease...





...but when one cute calf won the hearts of the British, action was taken to revise the intervention policy.

The Identifiable Victim Effect:

A single, specific victim
inspires action, whereas
general information about
masses of victims does not.