

Mr. rogers: an example of prosocial behavior in the media

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The paper "Mr. Roger's Neighborhood - Example of Prosocial Behavior in the Media" is an inspiring variant of a case study on media. Although Fred Rogers has since passed away, his impact upon public broadcasting and millions of children's lives and development (this author included) is without question. As the host of a widely watched "Mr. Roger's Neighborhood" that ran from 1968-2008 on PBS. However, even though Fred Rogers has subsequently passed away, the show continues to enjoy reruns on a host of other networks and via its own internet channel on pbs.org (Procházka et al 2011). Although the show incorporated many elements to include music education, appreciation of art, cultural acceptance, identity formation, and a host of other topics, the main thrust of the show was that it allowed viewers to experience the decidedly prosocial behavior of Fred Rogers as he gave freely of his own time and energy to promote values and ethics among his viewership. Obviously one does not enrich oneself by giving freely of their efforts and time to produce, direct, and act in a children's program that is intended for a Public Broadcasting output. However, Fred Rogers gave of his energy and time over a period of 40 years to affect just this. It is this factor alone that helps to categorize the actions that Fred Rogers engaged in over the years with reference to Mr. Roger's Neighborhood that is specifically prosocial in nature. Due to the fact that the show itself was not for profit and was not punctuated by advertisements encouraging viewers to buy/consume a given product, the show was fully sponsored and funded by the contributions of its viewers as well as the sponsorship of key industry partners; most notably the Sears Roebuck Corporation.

As a means of further driving home the point of Fred Rogers selfless and prosocial motives, one need only to look at the fact that it took the support of funding entities as well as his tireless work to keep such a widely popular show on the air for such a long period of time (Padilla et al 2011). Due to the fact that he was unwilling to sell the rights to the show to other networks that could have brought him a great deal of wealth and increased his viewership exponentially, Fred Rogers exhibited an even further level of prosocial behavior as he desired his viewership to have a pure experience free of the economic constraints of salesmanship and consumption during his half-hour program.

Although a high number of possible motives might exist for Fred Rogers to give of himself so freely for such an end, the most likely of these is the fact that his personal faith largely contributed to his desire to interact with and help the younger generation form valuable connections of experience based on moral and ethical choices. As such, Fred Rogers sought to incorporate an element of learning into each one of his programs so that not only would interpersonal skills and life lessons be related but that the curiosity and interest of the viewership might be Fred Rogers was not merely a television host of the widely enjoyed Mr. Roger's Neighborhood, he also was a part-time Presbyterian minister.

Although it can easily be argued that Fred Roger's beliefs have directly affected the means by which he told the life's lessons to his viewership, this author would rather consider the fact that his part-time ministry in the faith

of his choosing only served to exhibit the fact that Fred Rogers was an individual who was specifically driven to provide benefit to those he was surrounded by. Further evidence of this drive to better the world can be seen from a brief autobiographical sketch of Fred Rogers from the time he began his college education. Unhappy with his chosen major, Fred sought to major in music as a means of engaging and affecting a positive life effect on the lives of children (Dunfield et al 2012). This desire to better the world by means of teaching valuable life lessons via the medium of music and eventually his own children's program was a guiding principle that no doubt defined his role as Mr. Roger's Neighborhood as well as his personal worldview and work within his own community and church as well.

In short, the prosocial behavior which was expressed by Fred Rogers is evidence of an overarching framework and/or worldview that he put in place within the remainder of his life as a way of effecting positive change at every level that he was able to engage with. Though such a statement is categorical and somewhat broad, one need only perform a cursory amount of research into this individual in order to readily understand and recognize the amount of devotion, dedication, and care he exhibited in every area of his work and personal life.