

## But The Heart Said No

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They saw the poor living in cardboard shacks, so they knocked the shacks down and started building projects. Huge blocks of cement and glass towered over asphalt parking lots. Somehow it wasn't much like home, even home in a shack. "What do you expect?" they asked impatiently. "You're too poor to live like us. Until you can do better for yourselves, you should be grateful, shouldn't you?"

The head said yes, but the heart said no.

They needed more electricity in the city, so they found a mountain stream to dam. As the waters rose, dead rabbits and deer floated by; baby birds too young to fly drowned in the nest while mother birds cried helplessly. "It's not a pretty sight," they said, "but now a million people can run their air conditioners all summer. That's more important than one mountain stream, isn't it?"

The head said yes, but the heart said no.

They saw oppression and terrorism in a far-off land, so they made war against it. Bombs reduced the country to rubble. Its population cowered in fear, and every day more villagers were buried in rough wooden coffins. "You have to be prepared to make sacrifices," they said. "If some innocent bystanders get hurt, isn't that just the price one must pay for peace?"

The head said yes, but the heart said no.

The years rolled by and they got old. Sitting in their comfortable houses, they took stock. "We've had a good life," they said, "and we did the right thing." Their children looked down and asked why poverty, pollution, and war were still unsolved. "You'll find out soon enough," they replied. "Human beings are weak and selfish. Despite our best efforts, these problems will never really end."

The head said yes, but the children looked into their hearts and whispered, "No!"