



HELPING

Origins and Consequences of Prosocial Behavior

CHAPTER 8

Prosocial Behavior and Altruism

Dealing with Emergencies:
When Would You Help a Stranger in Distress?

Altruism: Disregarding the Rewards
and Costs of Helping

Evolutionary Explanations for Helping:
Is Helping in Our Genes?

Exploring Diversity Cultural Differences
in Helping

Empathy: The Heart of Altruism

Prosocial Collectivism and Principlism:
Is There More Than Egoism and Altruism?

Emotions and Norms

Emotions and Attributions:
The Feelings of Helping

Overhelping: Killing with Kindness

Norms and Helping: Standards of Aid

Receiving Help: Is It Better to Give
Than to Receive?

Increasing Prosocial Behavior

Rewarding Prosocial Behavior

Modeling and Helping

Experiencing a Helper's High:
The Rewards of Helping

Teaching Moral Behavior: Do As I Say,
Not (Necessarily) As I Do

Values Clarification and Moral Reasoning:
Instruction in Morality

The Informed Consumer of Social Psychology
Increasing Helpfulness

PROLOGUE

A Lesson in Helping



Jake Geller and Jack Buchholz are an inseparable pair.

Jake Geller will leave his Medway [Massachusetts] home this morning in a lift-equipped van that will take him and his parents to Phoenix, where he will be a freshman at Arizona State University.

The trip will be one of the longest and most difficult of his life. Geller, 19, has muscular dystrophy, which makes any type of travel an elaborate effort.

But after Geller's parents drop him off on August 17, he will not be alone. His lifelong friend, Jack Buchholz, will be his roommate and serve as his personal care attendant.

While many people have been amazed by Buchholz's dedication to his friend, Buchholz himself is unfazed.

"It's not that big a deal," he insisted. "Waking up a half hour earlier in the morning is not that difficult."

Buchholz will get Geller, who uses a wheelchair, out of bed every morning, dress him, and help him shave and shower. At night, he will undress him, help him with such routine bathroom chores as brushing his teeth, and put him into bed. . . .

Geller says he is grateful to Buchholz for the sacrifices he has made, and Geller hopes to hire a personal care attendant in the next few months to help him at school and take the burden off his friend.

But do not expect them to be spending any less time together.

"As a pair, they're inseparable," said George Murphy, the director of the computer camp where the two have spent the last few summers. "Their personalities mesh together so well that they're a great team. I think of them as a pair of super-heroes, each with his own strength." (Kiehl, 1998, p. C1)

LOOKING AHEAD

In an era in which the news is often bad, Jack Buchholz's willingness to sacrifice his energies and time for Jake Geller stands out. People like him, and others who make exceptional sacrifices, seem unusual. Yet, such behavior is an essential—and not, it turns out, altogether rare—part of human behavior, and social psychologists have sought to answer the questions of why, and under what circumstances, we help our fellow humans.

In this chapter, we examine prosocial behavior. **Prosocial behavior** is helping behavior that benefits others. The help may be trivial, such as picking up a dropped piece of paper for a stranger, or extraordinary, such as rescuing a child who has fallen through the ice in a partly frozen pond. It may be premeditated and thoughtful, as when volunteers collect money for

prosocial behavior: Helping behavior that benefits others.

charity, or impulsive, as when a person rushes heroically into a burning car to save a trapped mother and child. The common thread tying together prosocial behaviors is the benefit that flows to others from an individual's helping actions.

We first consider the roots of helping behavior. We begin by examining prosocial behavior in emergencies, detailing the forces that lead people to intervene—or not to intervene—in a crisis. We then turn to altruistic behavior, helping that requires self-sacrifice. After examining whether any helping behavior can be entirely altruistic, we question whether such behavior may be genetically programmed. We also consider how empathy, attributions, and emotions relate to helping, and we examine societal norms, or standards, that promote helping.

Finally, we consider practices that are designed to increase prosocial behavior. We discuss how rewards and helpful models bring about increased prosocial behavior. We also speculate on the adequacy of methods for directly teaching moral behavior and moral reasoning.

In sum, after reading this chapter, you'll be able to answer these questions:

- ◆ What is prosocial behavior, and how is it exhibited in emergencies?
- ◆ What is altruism, and does it have genetic roots?
- ◆ How do emotions and attributions affect helping?
- ◆ What societal norms, or standards, promote helping?
- ◆ How can we increase prosocial behavior?

PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR AND ALTRUISM

- ◆ Miep Gies, a resident of Holland, risked her life every day for more than 2 years to feed and provide a place to hide Anne Frank and her family during the Nazi Holocaust.
- ◆ Lenny Skutnik repeatedly jumped into the freezing Potomac River to rescue victims of a plane crash. "I just did what I had to do," explained Skutnik later.
- ◆ Hundreds of people of all ages rushed to help residents of Oklahoma after a devastating series of tornadoes leveled whole towns and killed over 50 people. Although their own homes were safe, many felt compelled to help strangers who lived hundreds of miles away.

What makes people like these so helpful? Social psychologists have long pondered the question, and they have come up with a variety of answers. We'll investigate the major considerations that go into helping, beginning with the way in which people react during emergency situations.

DEALING WITH EMERGENCIES: WHEN WOULD YOU HELP A STRANGER IN DISTRESS?

Suppose you were in an experiment, talking to a small group of students over an intercom, and you suddenly heard one of them say the following:

I-er-um-I think I-I need-er-if-if- could-er-er-somebody er-er-er-er-er-er give me a little-er give me a little help here because-er-I-er-I'm-er-er-h-h-having a-a-a real problem-er-right now and I-er-if somebody could help me out it would-it-would-er-er s-s-sure be-sure be good . . . because-er-there-er-er-a cause I-er-I-uh-I've got a-a one of the-er-sei-er-er-things coming on and-and- and I could really-er-use some help so if somebody would-er-give me a little h- help-uh-er-er-er-er-er c-could somebody-er-er-help-er-us-us-us [choking sounds]. . . I'm gonna die-er-er-I'm . . . gonna die-er-help-er-er-seizure-er- [choking sounds, then silence]. (Latané and Darley, 1970, p. 379)

Most of us probably assume that if we were in such a situation, we'd rush into action, trying to see how we could help the victim.

Unfortunately, most of us would be wrong. According to the results of a landmark study carried out by social psychologists Bibb Latané and John Darley—first mentioned in Chapter 1—and a series of experiments that followed, the poor victim would probably have been better off with just a single companion, rather than with a group.

Diffusion of responsibility: Where more is less. Latané and Darley's research confirmed that the *greater* the number of people present in a situation in which help is required, the *less* likely it is that any one person will provide it—a phenomenon they labeled diffusion of responsibility. **Diffusion of responsibility** is the tendency for people to feel that responsibility for acting is shared, or diffused, among those present. The more people that are present in an emergency, then, the lower is any one individual's sense of responsibility—and the less likely it is that a person will feel obligated to help. In contrast, with fewer people present to share the responsibility for helping, the more likely it is that help will be provided (Darley & Latané, 1968; Latané & Darley, 1970; Latané & Nida, 1981; Kalafat, Elias, & Gara, 1993; Swin & Hyers, 1999).

Such reasoning has been proved sound in literally hundreds of experiments. For example, in the experiment using the seizure "emergency" described above—which was, in reality, staged by the experimenters to test the theory—Latané and Darley found clear evidence for the diffusion-of-responsibility phenomenon. In the study, participants, placed in groups of either two, three, or six people, heard the faked seizure over the intercom. As predicted, the more people who supposedly could overhear the seizure, the less likely it was that any one person would provide help. Specifically, when just two people were present (the bystander and victim), 85% of the participants helped. In contrast, when two bystanders and the victim were present, 62% provided aid; and when five bystanders and the victim were present, only 31% helped (Darley & Latané, 1968).

The concept of diffusion of responsibility helps to explain—although not pardon—a considerable number of everyday incidents that exemplify "Bad Samaritanism." For instance, perhaps you recall the true events depicted in the Jodie Foster movie *The Accused*, in which a New England woman was savagely raped on a pool table in a bar as dozens of onlookers stood idly by. Police accounts describe her crying and begging for help, and yet not one person came to her aid. While she was being repeatedly raped by several men, one customer did try to call the police, but he dialed a wrong number and gave up. Finally, the woman broke away from the rapists and fled the bar, dazed and half-naked. A passing motorist stopped and drove her to a telephone, where she called for help.

The concept of diffusion of responsibility allows us to speculate on the social psychological situation that permitted the rape to proceed without intervention. Because the bar was crowded, each of the patrons could feel little individual responsibility for helping the victim. Instead, the obligation for helping was shared among the many people present, a diffusion that lowered the likelihood that any one person would be sufficiently moved by the victim's plight to help her. Ironically, if fewer people had been in the bar, the victim's pleas might well have been answered.

Help in emergencies: A model. Although the diffusion-of-responsibility phenomenon explains part of what goes into making the decision to help, it is just one of the factors that accounts for helping in emergency situations. As illustrated in Figure 8-1, several distinct decision-making points must be traversed to determine whether helping will occur. Specifically, they include:

- ◆ *Noticing a person, event, or situation that potentially may require help.* For even the potential for helping to exist, an individual must notice the circumstances that may require assistance of some sort.
- ◆ *Interpreting the event as one that requires help.* Simply noticing an event is no guarantee that someone will provide help. If the event is ambiguous enough, onlookers may decide that it really is not an emergency at all (Shotland, 1985; Bickman, 1994).

diffusion of responsibility: The tendency for people to feel that responsibility for acting is shared, or diffused, among those present.

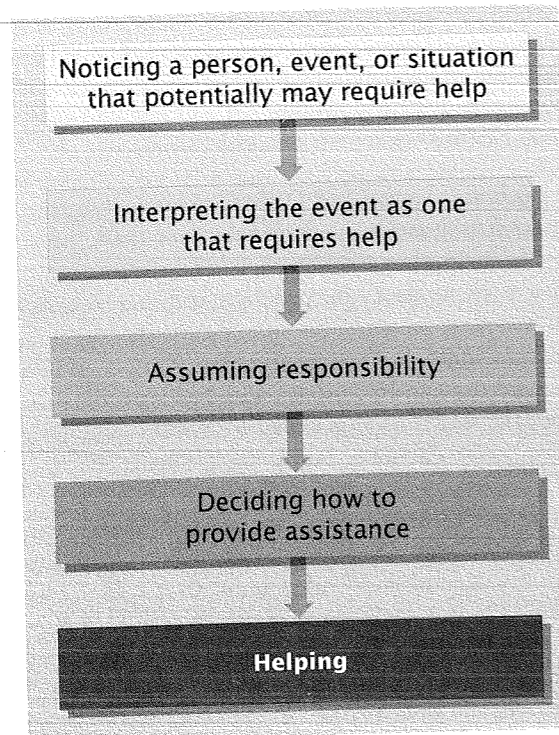


FIGURE 8-1 Latané and Darley's Model of Helping in an Emergency
According to the research, the decision to help is made in several steps. (Source: Latané & Darley, 1970.)

People are often motivated to decide that a situation is not an emergency. Defining the situation as a routine, nonemergency event means that no further psychological (and physical) effort is required. We may thus be primed to discount information that would lead us to conclude that a situation is an emergency, and conversely, especially attentive to information suggesting that there is no emergency (Wilson & Petruska, 1984).

Similarly, viewing other bystanders who are not themselves intervening may help bolster the interpretation that the event is not an emergency (Harrison & Wells, 1991). We may convince ourselves that if the situation really were an emergency, then others would be jumping in to help. Such a mind-set is due to **pluralistic ignorance**, a phenomenon in which bystanders in an emergency or ambiguous situation use the behavior of others to determine whether help is actually required (Taylor, 1982; Miller & McFarland, 1987; Miller & Prentice, 1994; Schroeder & Prentice, 1998). Each person in the situation mistakenly assumes, based on the behavior of the others, that help is unnecessary. As a result, no one intervenes.

Unfortunately, in such situations the reality may be quite different. Like us, the other people present may feel uncertain about what to do, and they may be looking to others to figure out the appropriate course of action. But when all the people in a situation see no one responding, they make the same, erroneous attribution, and everyone becomes immobilized. If people are able to move beyond pluralistic ignorance and understand the true motivation behind the collective inactivity of the onlookers, they are more likely to intervene. Obviously, in an ambiguous situation, communication with others helps to end the state of pluralistic ignorance.

- Assuming responsibility.** If people notice an event and determine that it is an emergency, they have reached a major decision point. At this point, they ask themselves whether they should take responsibility for helping. This is the point at which diffusion of responsibility may occur: If many others are present, the burden of helping is seen to be shared, and helping by any one person is less likely to occur.

Of course, diffusion of responsibility is not the only reason that people may not be helpful in an emergency. Sometimes people take no responsibility because they don't know what they ought to do and they lack the expertise to intervene effectively. For instance, if someone

pluralistic ignorance: A state that occurs when bystanders in an emergency or ambiguous situation use the behavior of others to determine whether help is actually required.

with apparent medical expertise is present when a medical emergency occurs, it is unlikely that a person without medical training will feel compelled to offer aid; more likely the inexperienced person will defer to the specialist.

One study, conducted on the subways of New York, illustrated this point nicely. In the experiment, researchers arranged for a bogus crisis to occur, in which a passenger appeared to collapse, with blood trickling out the corner of his mouth. Other passengers were considerably less likely to intervene when an apparent medical school "intern" was present than when no such person was present. Not unreasonably, those without medical training readily deferred to the supposed expertise of the intern (Piliavin & Piliavin, 1972).

Ironically, fear of unwanted legal ramifications may prevent experts from becoming involved in providing emergency medical assistance. For example, physicians have been successfully sued for intervening unsuccessfully in emergency situations. In response, many states have passed "Good Samaritan" laws, which prevent medical and other professionals from being sued for providing unsuccessful assistance in emergencies (Northrop, 1990; Taylor, 1990; Rosenberg, 1992).

Moreover, people who furnish emergency help are sometimes viewed suspiciously by onlookers. A person who is providing aid may be seen by late-arriving onlookers as the possible source of the harm that befell the victim—a phenomenon dubbed **confusion of responsibility** (Cacioppo, Petty, & Losch, 1986). Awareness of the confusion-of-responsibility phenomenon may in fact suppress a person's willingness to provide aid during an emergency.

- Deciding how to provide assistance.** If people reach this step in the sequence, they must choose from a variety of potential forms of assistance. Should they call the police? Provide medical assistance? Ask another bystander to get help?

Because the potential choices for helping vary so widely, helpers must weigh the costs and benefits of each potential action, employing a kind of psychological calculus. In an emergency, people quickly tally both the actual and psychological costs of providing particular kinds of aid. For instance, indirect forms of aid, such as getting others to help, are less costly than direct aid. At the same time, various types of help bring different kinds of rewards. You can expect to receive more gratitude and approval when you leap into a pond to save a drowning child than when you merely call the child's plight to the attention of a nearby police officer.

Many experiments have confirmed that as the costs of helping increase, relative to the rewards, helping is less likely to occur (Bell et al., 1995; Yee & Greenberg, 1998). One example comes from a classic study involving theology students who were on their way to give a talk either on the Good Samaritan parable—which emphasizes the importance of helping—or on a subject having nothing to do with helping (Darley & Batson, 1973). To control the cost of helping, the researchers manipulated the degree to which the students were late in arriving to give their talk.

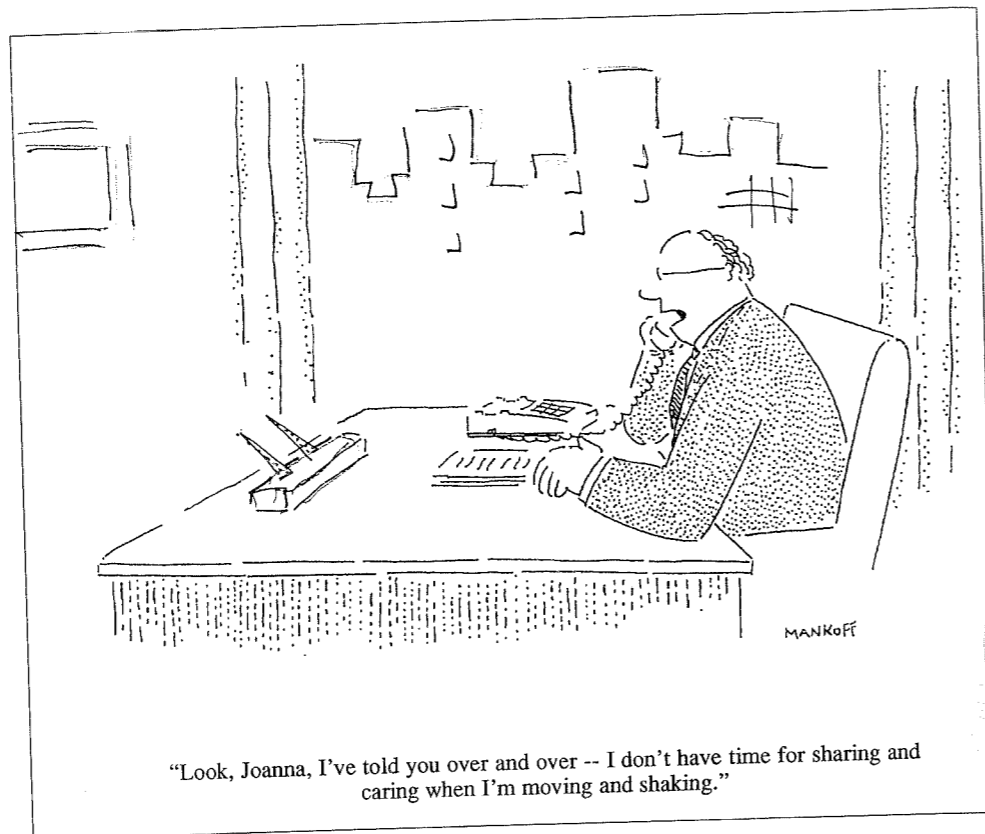
On the way to give their talk, participants passed a confederate, planted by the experimenters, who was slumped on the ground in an alley, coughing and groaning. Would the theology students help?

Whether you decide to help this person depends on a number of factors, such as whether you think he needs help, whether you perceive it is an emergency situation, and how many others are present.



confusion of responsibility: A state in which observers assume that a person who is actually aiding a victim is in some way responsible for the emergency situation.

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The answer depended on whether the participants were late. Participants who were late (which corresponded to a greater cost for helping) were less likely to provide help than participants who had ample time. Ironically, the topic of their talk had no effect on their helping behavior; participants about to speak on the virtues of helping were no more likely to provide help than those who had rehearsed a speech on another subject.

We should not sink into despair over the unwillingness of the tardy theology students to help the confederate. Subsequent research suggests that their lack of help may have been induced by their perception that the "greater good" would be fulfilled by their arriving at the talk on time, thereby helping a larger number of people, than by their stopping to help a lone person in need (Batson et al., 1978).

Clearly, then, the kind of assistance to be offered in an emergency situation is selected in part by an assessment of the personal rewards and costs of helping. Tallying the rewards and costs of various types of helping, people make a decision about what kind of assistance they will provide.

- ◆ *Helping in the emergency—the final step.* After weighing the rewards and costs of intervening in an emergency situation, people finally reach the stage of action. However, their intention to help does not guarantee that their help will be effective. For instance, if bystanders decide to phone the police for help, they may find that route blocked: They might not be able to find a phone, or the phone may be broken. Even if they decide to intervene directly, they may be frozen with fear and unable to act. The decision to help, then, does not guarantee that those in need will receive the aid they require.

ALTRUISM: DISREGARDING THE REWARDS AND COSTS OF HELPING

Latané and Darley's model emphasizes the rational weighing of the rewards and costs of helping. However, in some cases a logical analysis of the benefits and expenses of helping does not satisfactorily explain why helping occurred. For example, a cost-reward analysis does

not convincingly explain why a medic would risk his own life during fierce combat just to retrieve the body of a dead soldier so that it can be sent back to the soldier's family.

To explain such situations, some social psychologists have proposed the concept of **altruism**: helping behavior that is beneficial to others but requires clear self-sacrifice. In altruism, helpers have no expectation of receiving rewards, and they expect no condemnation from others if they do not provide help (Eisenberg, 1986; Batson, 1990b, 1991; Batson et al., 1999).

Many forms of helping can be considered altruistic: running into a burning house to rescue a stranger, sheltering Jews in Nazi-occupied countries during World War II, adopting a baby born with AIDS. In each of these cases, the costs (or potential costs) to the helper are significant, far outweighing possible rewards.

Some experts have criticized the notion of altruistic behavior. They argue that if we analyze various helping situations closely, we can often identify potential rewards even in behavior that at first seems completely altruistic. For instance, a helper may gain greater self-esteem, may receive praise from others, or may be the recipient of enormous gratitude and a sense of obligation on the part of the victim. Hence, psychological rewards may lie behind seemingly altruistic behavior (Batson, 1990a; Anderson, 1993; Serow, 1993; J. Baron, 1997).

A number of social psychological studies have examined altruism and the question of whether a behavior can be totally altruistic (Shapiro & Gabbard, 1994). For instance, some investigators have focused on altruism, and helping in general, as a type of personality trait. The concept of an **altruistic personality** suggests that certain individuals have enduring personality characteristics that consistently lead them to help (Bierhoff, Klein, & Kramp, 1991; Ashton et al., 1998).

Despite the appeal of the notion that some people are consistently helpful, evidence for the existence of a consistently altruistic personality type has not been found. Most research suggests that people are not invariably helpful or, for that matter, unhelpful. Instead, whether particular individuals act in a prosocial manner depends on their personality *and* the specifics of the situation. Furthermore, no single pattern of specific, individual personality traits determines prosocial behavior. Rather, the way that specific personality factors fit together, as well as the demands of the particular situation, determines whether a person will help (Carlo et al., 1991; Knight et al., 1994).

Research has shown, however, that some groups of people are more helpful than others. For instance, some studies have suggested that men exhibit slightly higher levels of helpfulness, in general, than women (Eagly, 1987). However, the greater helpfulness of men may be more apparent than real and may depend largely on the type of situation in which it has been studied. For instance, men show particularly high levels of helping when they are being observed by others and when the victim is a woman (Eagly & Crowley, 1986). Such results suggest that men may be motivated as much by their desire to exhibit strength and mastery as by altruistic intentions (Erdle et al., 1992).

In contrast, the type of help offered by women may be more nurturing than the help offered by men (George et al., 1998). For instance, one study found that women were more likely than men to say they would help a friend in need (Belansky & Boggiano, 1994).

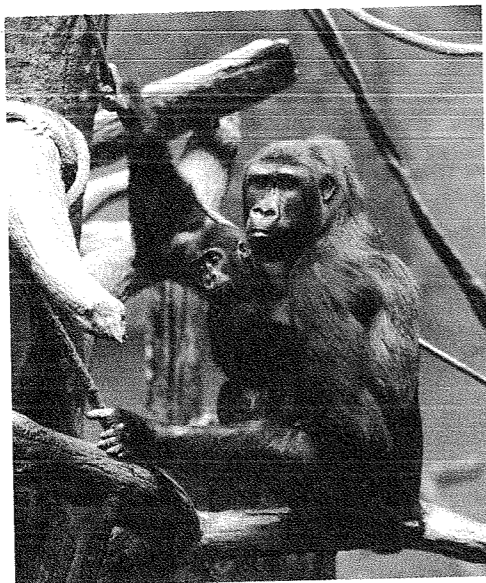
EVOLUTIONARY EXPLANATIONS FOR HELPING: IS HELPING IN OUR GENES?

When an elephant is injured and falls to the ground, other elephants will try to help it get up again. When a mother grouse's chicks are threatened by a predator, she will pretend to have a broken wing—calling attention to her presence—in order to divert the predator's attention from the chicks. When a bee hive is threatened, bees will seek to protect the hive by stinging the intruder. The act of stinging, however, results in certain death to the bee. (Sikes, 1971; Trivers, 1971; Wilson, 1975)

altruism: Helping behavior that is beneficial to others but requires clear self-sacrifice.

altruistic personality: A concept suggesting that certain individuals have enduring personality characteristics that consistently lead them to help.





In an extraordinary case of primate help-giving, this female gorilla (shown with her baby, named Koola) went to the aid of a boy who fell into her habitat at a zoo in Illinois.

Such seemingly altruistic behavior seems to fly in the face of Darwin's notion of natural selection, or "survival of the fittest." The theory of evolution stresses that organisms are genetically programmed to behave in ways that enable them to survive long enough to pass on their genes to future generations. Therefore, we would not expect animals to engage in behavior that has no benefit to themselves and actually can threaten their existence. Helping other members of the species, particularly when it incurs costs to themselves, seems to be unusual behavior for animals that are instinctually programmed toward self-preservation.

One explanation for the phenomenon of animal helping comes from evolutionary psychology, which considers the biological roots of behavior. Focusing on how organisms pass on their genes to future generations, evolutionary approaches suggest that helping actually advances the goal of strengthening the species as a whole (Paris, 1994; Sober & Wilson, 1998).

How does this happen? Proponents of evolutionary approaches argue that natural selection occurs at the level of genes, not individuals. Rather than seeking to preserve themselves, then, organisms have as their goal the preservation of their genes. What this implies is that individuals who share one's genes—one's kin—are likely to help the general goals of natural selection (Barber, 1994). For instance, when a mother aids her child at the expense of her own well-being, the mother is actually ensuring the continuation of her gene pool, because the child has a relatively high percentage of similar genes.

But what of nonkin, who do not share similar genes? Why should they be the recipients of seemingly altruistic behavior? The answer is *reciprocity*, the notion that we help other members of the species because we (or our kin) will receive help from others in the future. Consequently, helping increases the probability that our genes will be protected for future reproduction (Nowak, May, & Sigmund, 1995; Sigmund, 1995).

In some ways, evolutionary explanations make sense. They certainly help explain such phenomena as why we are more likely to run into a burning house to save our own children than the children of our neighbors (Burnstein, Crandall, & Kitayama, 1994; Wilson & Sober, 1994; Reeve, 1998). Yet, evolutionary approaches have many critics. Because evolutionary explanations are based more on nonhuman species than on human behavior, they do not take into account the higher cognitive abilities of humans. In addition, they do not provide much in the way of specific predictions about the conditions under which people will be helpful. Furthermore, they do not explain why different cultures vary so much in terms of their helpfulness, as we see next. Still, because no evidence convincingly rules out evolutionary approaches as an explanation for altruism, they remain viable, although quite speculative.

TABLE 8-1 Helping in Different Cultures

The number of helpful acts that occur during children's play varies according to culture. In a 1975 survey, children in the Philippines, Kenya, and Mexico showed higher levels of helpfulness than children in Japan, the United States, and India.

COUNTRY	NUMBER OF HELPFUL ACTS
Philippines	280
Kenya	156
Mexico	148
Japan	97
United States	86
India	60

Source: Whiting & Whiting, 1975.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN HELPING

Does culture affect helping behavior? The clear answer is yes. For instance, people living on Israeli kibbutzim, or collective farms, tend to show greater helpfulness and even different reasoning about morality than members of the dominant culture in the United States (Mann, 1980; Fuchs et al., 1986).

Differences in altruistic behavior are linked to the way in which a culture's children are raised. For instance, one cross-cultural study found that children's helping behavior, as judged from observations made while they were playing, varied substantially in different cultures (see Table 8-1). Children in the Philippines, Kenya, and Mexico were most altruistic, whereas children in the United States scored among the lowest. These differences appeared to be related to the degree of children's involvement with family obligations. In those cultures in which children had to cooperate with other family members to do chores or to help in the upbringing of younger children, altruism was greatest. In contrast, when a culture promoted competition—such as in the United States—altruism was lowest (Whiting & Whiting, 1975; Whiting & Edwards, 1988).

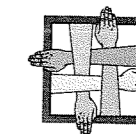
Similarly, different cultures vary in the ways they view reciprocity, the notion that we help because we expect to receive help from others in the future. Yet, significant differences exist in views of reciprocity across various cultures. For example, Hindu Indians see reciprocity as a moral obligation, whereas college students in the United States consider reciprocity as more of a personal choice (Moghaddam, Taylor, & Wright, 1993; Miller & Bersoff, 1994; Miller, 1997).

EMPATHY: THE HEART OF ALTRUISM

Despite the evidence against the existence of consistent altruistic behavior, not all investigators have abandoned the issue. For instance, according to C. Daniel Batson and colleagues, at least some helping behavior is motivated solely by the goal of benefiting someone else and thus represents what could be described as altruistic behavior. But he argues that our altruism is limited to certain cases: It occurs only when we experience empathy for the person in need (Batson, 1990a; Batson, 1998).

Empathy is an emotional response corresponding to the feelings of another person. When people see a person in distress, they feel that person's suffering; when they encounter a person

EXPLORING
DIVERSITY



empathy: An emotional response corresponding to the feelings of another person.

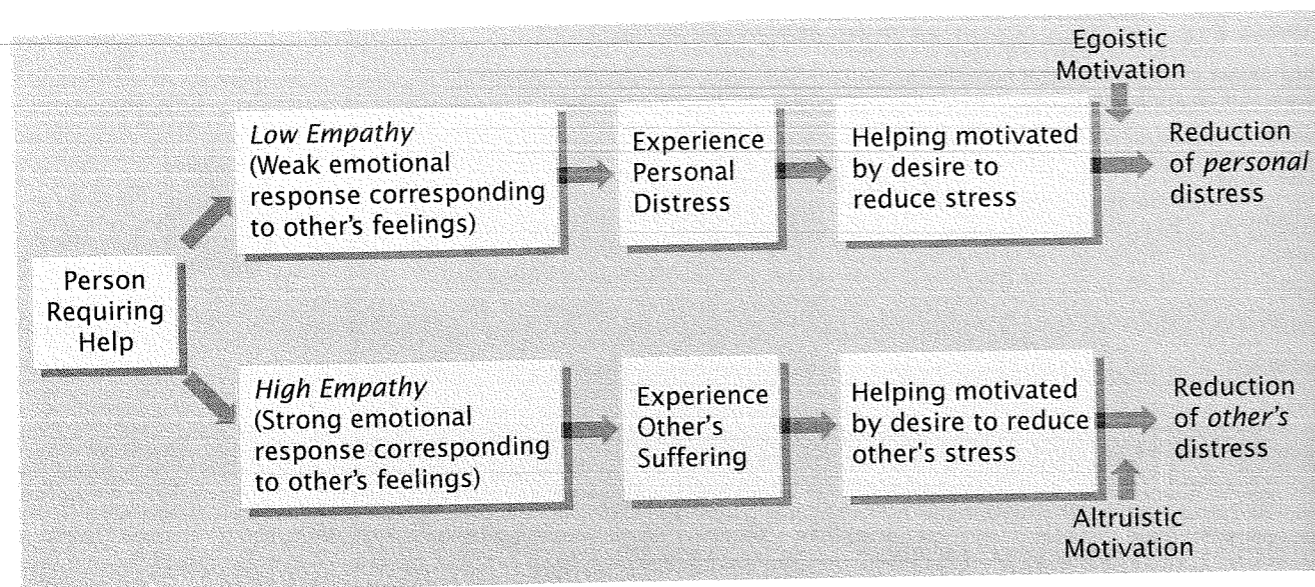


FIGURE 8-2 The Empathy-Altruism Hypothesis According to Batson's empathy-altruism hypothesis, experiencing empathy motivates people to reduce others' distress. In contrast, egoistic motivation leads to helping due to a desire to reduce one's own personal distress. (Source: Batson, 1991.)

who is sad, they experience the person's sadness. According to Batson's **empathy-altruism hypothesis**, empathy lies at the heart of altruistic behavior. As can be seen in the bottom half of Figure 8-2, experiencing true empathy motivates people to reduce other people's distress.

In contrast, people may help only because helping reduces their own personal distress or produces pleasure at meeting another's needs. In this case (illustrated in the top half of Figure 8-2), they are acting with **egoism**, behavior motivated by self-benefit (Batson & Oleson, 1991; Batson, 1991).

Finding support for the empathy-altruism hypothesis is difficult, because to distinguish altruistic from other motivations we must assess underlying motives that can be inferred only indirectly from behavior. However, researchers have come up with some ingenious experimental solutions to this problem (Batson, 1991; Davis, 1994; Davis, Luce, & Kraus, 1994; Batson & Weeks, 1996; Batson et al., 1999).

For example, support for Batson's reasoning comes from a study that directly compared the empathy-altruism hypothesis with the negative state relief model, which—as we'll consider later in the chapter—suggests that helping is based on an effort to end unpleasant emotions that come from observing a victim's plight. In the experiment, participants listened to an account of a female college student who was having difficulty completing an important assignment because of illness and then were given the opportunity to help (Dovidio, Allen, & Schroeder, 1990).

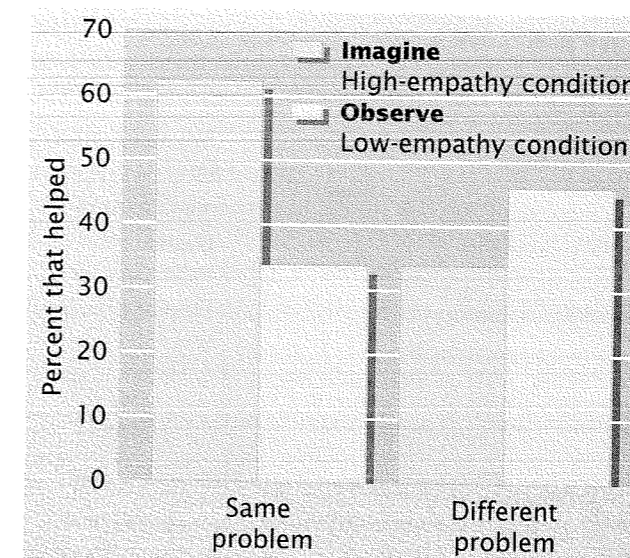
The experimenters manipulated the degree of empathy for the woman by telling participants either that they should imagine how the woman felt, thereby inducing high empathy, or that they should simply observe the circumstances being described, inducing low empathy. In addition, participants were given the opportunity to help the woman either on the specific problem that they heard about or on a different problem.

The researchers reasoned that if empathy were the source of helping, participants would be motivated to relieve the student's immediate, particular problem—not to solve her problems in general. Consequently, if the empathy-altruism hypothesis were valid, participants in the high-empathy ("imagine") condition would show high levels of helping on the same problem and low levels of helping on a different problem. Conversely, if the negative state relief model were valid, helping should occur regardless of whether the problem were the same or different, because the goal of the egoistic motivation would be to reduce the helper's negative emotions, which could be accomplished by helping on any task.

empathy-altruism hypothesis: The theory that empathy lies at the heart of altruistic behavior.

egoism: Behavior motivated by self-benefit.

FIGURE 8-3 Empathy Leads to Helping Supporting the empathy-altruism hypothesis, the results of the Dovidio, Allen, and Schroeder (1990) study showed that the degree of helping varied according to whether participants could help solve a current problem or a different one. When helping was possible on the current problem, participants who were asked to identify with the woman's feelings—the high-empathy condition—were more apt to help than those who had been asked merely to observe. Conversely, helping did not differ significantly between high- and low-empathy conditions when a different problem was involved. (Source: Dovidio, Allen, & Schroeder, 1990.)



As you can see from Figure 8-3, the experiment supported the empathy-altruism prediction. Helping levels varied according to whether participants could help on the same or a different problem. When helping was possible on the same problem, participants who were asked to identify with the woman's feelings were more likely to volunteer than were those who had been asked merely to observe. Conversely, when helping was possible for a different problem, the difference in helping between high- and low-empathy conditions was not significant.

Findings from other research also support the empathy-altruism hypothesis (Shaw, Batson, & Todd, 1994; Batson et al., 1995; Sibicky, Schroeder, & Dovidio, 1995). For instance, in one recent study participants identified as high or low in empathy were led to be successful on a task meant to help another person, but they failed to relieve the other person's need through no fault of their own. Although low-empathy participants showed little mood change as a result of their failure, the mood of high-empathy participants declined substantially (Batson & Weeks, 1996).

Even though many studies support the empathy-altruism hypothesis, no final word can be said on the ultimate validity of the hypothesis. Plausible alternatives to the hypothesis abound. For instance, one suggestion is that helping is motivated not by selfless altruism but by the potential "empathic joy" an individual experiences when helping others (Smith, Keating, & Stotland, 1989; Cialdini, 1991; Warren & Walker, 1991; Roberts & Strayer, 1996; Cialdini et al., 1997; Neuberg et al., 1997).

Although a plausible hypothesis, the empathic joy explanation remains only one of several reasonable hypotheses. To date, no experiment has unequivocally supported any of the alternatives.

Furthermore, even if helping behavior is motivated by empathy-induced altruistic behavior, such help is not without cost. For instance, although altruism may benefit a particular individual, it may come at the expense of the larger group. For example, a business executive may keep an ineffective employee employed out of concern for the employee's welfare, but the company and customers may suffer. Similarly, shepherders may overgraze their fields not out of selfishness but to feed their families (an altruistic motive). The problem in both cases is that the altruism results in a cost to the greater good. Even altruism, then, can have its downside (Batson et al., 1999).

PRINCIPLE	CHARACTERISTICS
Egoism	Behavior motivated by self-benefit
Altruism	Helping behavior that is beneficial to others but requires clear self-sacrifice
Prosocial collectivism	Helping behavior whose goal is to increase the welfare of a group or collective
Prosocial principlism	Helping behavior with the goal of upholding some broad moral principle

PROSOCIAL COLLECTIVISM AND PRINCIPLISM: IS THERE MORE THAN EGOISM AND ALTRUISM?

According to Daniel Batson, the debate between egoism and altruism has contributed to a lack of attention to two other, potentially important, forms of motivation that may underlie prosocial behavior: collectivism and principlism (Batson, 1994). **Prosocial collectivism** is motivation with the goal of increasing the welfare of a group or collective, whereas **prosocial principlism** is motivation with the goal of upholding some moral principle.

Prosocial collectivism can be seen in efforts to help members of various groups, even if one does not belong to the group. For instance, we may wish to support members of various racial or ethnic groups, the homeless, or gays and lesbians, although we ourselves are not members of such groups. Although collectivism sounds in some ways similar to altruism—acting for the benefit for others—it is different: Altruism focuses on the welfare of another, single individual, whereas collectivism targets members of a group. The group may be small (marriage partners or a couple), or it may be large (members of a race or religion), but it is a group of some sort. In the words of Robyn Dawes and colleagues, the concern is “not me or thee but we” (Dawes, van de Kragt, & Orbell, 1988).

In contrast, prosocial principlism has a more abstract goal: the support of some broad moral principle such as justice or equality. Supporters of principlism reject the existence of altruism, because altruism is too often based on empathy. Similarly, they disavow collectivism, because it singles out particular groups of individuals to the exclusion of others. Instead, proponents of principlism suggest that adherence to broad principles, such as “love thy neighbor as thyself,” can produce prosocial behavior.

More than likely, all four major forms of motivation—egoism, altruism, prosocial collectivism, and prosocial principlism (summarized in Table 8-2)—underlie helping at different times, depending on the circumstances, who is doing the helping, and the type of help required. One challenge for social psychology is to sort out these different motivations to learn the best ways of improving people’s helpfulness.

REVIEW AND RETHINK

Review

- According to the phenomenon of diffusion of responsibility, the greater the number of people present in an emergency, the lower the likelihood that any one person will provide help.
- According to one model of helping behavior, a person must pass through several decision points before determining to offer help.
- The question of whether truly altruistic behavior exists is a difficult one, confounded by many possibly self-serving motivations.

prosocial collectivism: Motivation with the goal of increasing the welfare of a group or collective.

prosocial principlism: Motivation with the goal of upholding some moral principle.



- Prosocial behavior varies across the genders and across cultures.
- According to Batson, empathy, rather than egoism, lies at the heart of altruistic behavior. Also important are prosocial collectivism and principlism.

Rethink

- What is the relationship between the number of bystanders present during an emergency and (a) the odds that any single, particular bystander will provide aid, and (b) the odds that *someone* will provide aid?
- How does pluralistic ignorance affect the likelihood that a situation will be interpreted as an emergency? What factors might motivate a person to misinterpret emergency situations?
- Does the principle of reciprocity—that we help others in the hope of receiving help in the future for ourselves or our kin—operate among strangers? If so, how?
- Why might U.S. children have scored low on a cross-cultural measure of altruism? Can this be changed? Should it?
- How might an evolutionary approach explain prosocial collectivism and principlism?

EMOTIONS AND NORMS

You’re walking down a busy city street, and an unshaven, disheveled man, wearing dirty clothes and carrying a sign that says, “I’m homeless,” comes up to you. In a loud voice, he asks for some spare change to buy some food.

How do you respond? The way in which you interpret the man’s request, your mood, and the standards for helping that you employ may well influence your response to the man’s request. We turn now to the role played by attributions, emotions, and norms in determining helping behaviors.

EMOTIONS AND ATTRIBUTIONS: THE FEELINGS OF HELPING

According to the **attributional model of helping and emotions**, you may experience any one of a number of emotions at the moment you’re approached by a man asking for help: sadness over his plight, annoyance at being accosted on the street, disgust that the government has not been able to solve the problem of homelessness, happiness that you have a job and do not have to beg for food, fear that the man may be deranged and is about to rob you. The specific emotion you experience may well determine whether you’ll agree to his request or refuse it.

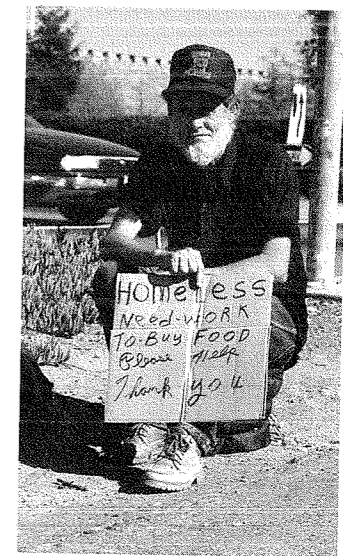
The attributional model suggests that when you initially are approached by the stranger, your general physiological arousal increases due to the uncertainty of the situation. To understand and label the arousal, you initiate an attributional assessment process in which you analyze the cause underlying the person’s need for help. If you attribute his need to internal, controllable causes—he’s lazy or he’s a drunk—the emotion will likely be a negative one. Conversely, if you attribute his need to external causes that the victim is unable to control—he’s been trying to find a job for months and hasn’t been able to find one because the economy is bad—your emotions will be more sympathetic and positive (Meyer & Mulherin, 1980; Weiner, 1980, 1996; Menec & Perry, 1998; see Figure 8-4).

Ultimately, the emotions you experience help determine whether you will provide help (Dooley, 1995). According to the attributional model, if the emotions the person evokes are positive, you’ll be more apt to help. A negative emotional response will probably discourage you from providing aid.

Mood and helping. The attributional model just examined assumes that we approach helping situations in an emotional state that is not already positive or negative. But suppose it’s been a great day and you feel on top of the world. Are you more likely to help than you would be at the end of a long, upsetting day, when you are in an awful mood?

attributional model of helping and emotions: A model suggesting that the nature of an attribution for a request for help determines a person’s emotional response and the help provided.

When confronted with a request for help, we are likely to experience a range of emotions. Whether we help or not is determined by the particular nature of the emotions aroused by the request.



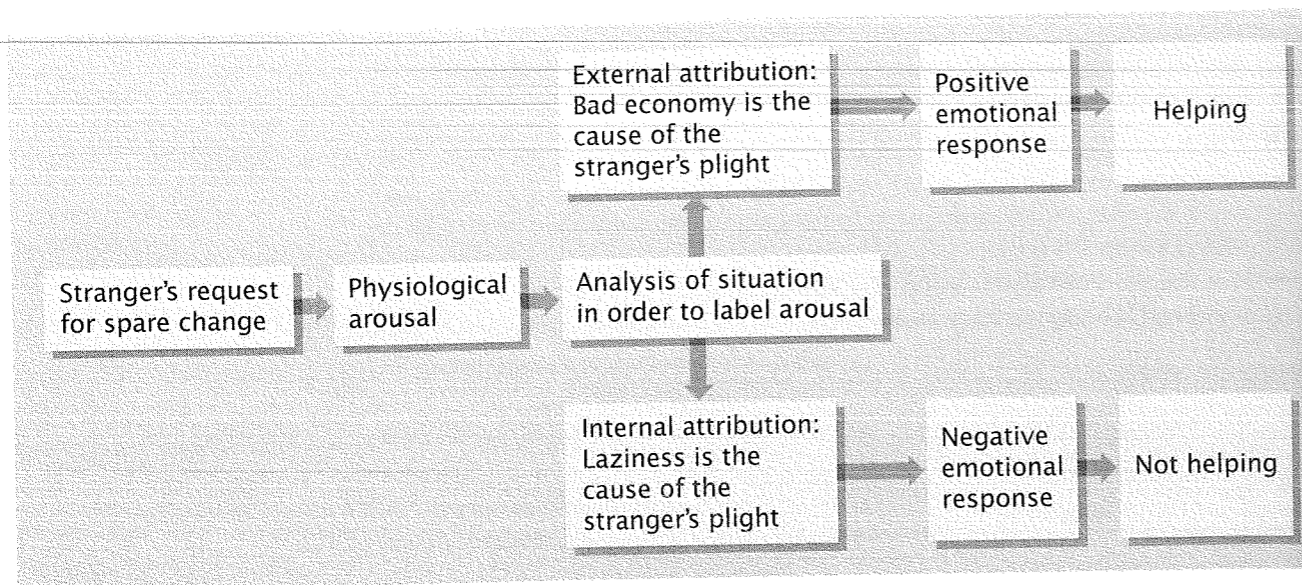


FIGURE 8-4 An Attributional Analysis of Helping The attributional model of helping suggests that the way in which people attribute their physiological arousal determines whether they will provide help. (Source: Based on Weiner, 1980, and Meyer & Mulherin, 1980.)

The answer is a definite yes. People who are in a good mood are considerably more apt to help than those who are not (Carlson, Charlin, & Miller, 1988; Eisenberg, 1991; R. A. Baron, 1997). And it does not take much to bring on a good mood: Something as simple as finding a dime in a pay phone or smelling coffee and cookies in a mall is enough to make a person more likely to help others in need (Isen & Levin, 1972; R. A. Baron, 1997).

Of course, if you plan to use these findings to choose a good-mood moment to ask your boss for a raise, you'd better move quickly. Good moods do not last too long, and helpfulness drops off after only a few minutes (Isen, Clark, & Schwartz, 1976).

A person in a good mood is more likely to help for several possible reasons. For one thing, the circumstances that put people in a good mood may lead them to focus their attention on themselves. Because of this, they may be reminded of the societal standards that they learned as children about the importance of helping, and their thought processes may lead to greater helpfulness. Similarly, the good mood may activate a whole network of positive memories, leading to recollections of previous favorable experiences in which helping occurred. Finally, people may want to maintain their good mood, and acting helpfully toward another person may help them sustain their good feelings (Salovey & Rodin, 1985; Carlson, Charlin, & Miller, 1988; Salovey & Rosenhan, 1989; Carlson, Charlin, & Miller, 1994; Wegener & Petty, 1994).

If good moods lead people to behave more prosocially, does it follow that being in a bad mood will lead to a lower likelihood of helping? In this case the answer is: It depends.

Bad moods often foster lower levels of helping than neutral moods. However, they also sometimes lead to more helping, and in other cases make no difference at all (Cialdini, Kenrick, & Baumann, 1982; Feldt, Jagodzinski, & McKinley, 1997). One explanation for this confusing state of affairs is provided by the negative state relief model proposed by social psychologist Robert Cialdini (Cialdini et al., 1987; Cialdini & Fultz, 1990).

The **negative state relief (NSR) model** seeks to explain the relationship between bad mood and helping behavior by focusing on the consequences of prosocial behavior for the help provider. The model suggests that people in a bad mood will be helpful if they think their own mood will be improved by helping. For instance, we might help a fellow student study

negative state relief (NSR) model: The model that seeks to explain the relationship between bad mood and helping behavior by focusing on the consequences of prosocial behavior for the help provider.

for an exam if we think that our own bad mood might thereby be improved (Manucia, Baumann, & Cialdini, 1984; Schaller & Cialdini, 1990).

On the other hand, if people perceive that helping will do nothing to benefit their mood—or, even worse, if helping will make them feel bad—they will do nothing to provide aid. In support of such reasoning, studies show that younger children, who have not yet learned the rewards of helping, are less apt than adults to be helpful if they're in a blue mood (Cialdini & Kenrick, 1976).

Others argue that the NSR model does not tell the full story regarding the relationship between negative mood and helping. One alternative explanation suggests that negative mood influences what people think about, which in turn influences the tendency to be helpful. If their mood arouses inward-focused thoughts, such as despair, helplessness, and thoughts of personal inadequacy, people are unlikely to help others. In contrast, if their mood leads them to look outward, such as to the unfortunate plight of the person who needs help, a negative mood can increase the incidence of helping (Rogers et al., 1982; Pyszczynski & Greenberg, 1987; Wood, Saltzberg, & Goldsamt, 1990; Salovey, Mayer, & Rosenhan, 1991).

It is also possible that a negative mood changes the feelings of responsibility that people have for the welfare of others (Gibbons & Wicklund, 1982; Aderman & Berkowitz, 1983). If a bad mood leads people to feel less responsibility for others, then helping will be inhibited. Conversely, if an unpleasant mood increases people's sense of responsibility—perhaps because it raises their level of guilt—then the mood will be associated with more helpfulness.

Does helping improve one's mood? The relationship between mood and helping is not a one-way street. Although we've been considering how good and bad moods affect helping, we can also examine how helping affects mood.

According to social psychologist Peter Salovey, people may provide help for others precisely in order to regulate their moods over the long term. Helping may do more than give them a momentary emotional boost: It also may bolster their spirits over long periods of time. People's awareness that they have been helpful in the past may permit them to view themselves more positively in the future. Ultimately, their self-concept may rise due to their prior helpfulness (Salovey, Mayer, & Rosenhan, 1991).

Considering the long-term benefits that helping brings to mood provides a way of at least partially understanding some of the more extraordinary instances of helping, in which the immediate consequences are quite negative. For example, Christians who helped Jews escape from Nazis during World War II put themselves at substantial risk, while probably feeling little immediate satisfaction from their actions. In the long run, however, they could look back on their behavior with pride, thereby uplifting their mood. In fact, interviews with rescuers and their relatives show that they experienced pleasure from their actions long after the war had ended (Oliner & Oliner, 1988).

OVERHELPING: KILLING WITH KINDNESS

There are different ways of assassinating a man—by pistol, sword, poison, or moral assassination. They are the same in their results except that the last is more cruel.

—Napoleon I, *Maxims* (1804–1815)

According to social psychologists Daniel Gilbert and David Silvera, Napoleon had it right: The way to injure a fellow person most grievously is not through physical means, but by injuring his or her character. And one of the best ways to accomplish such injury is by offering help in a way that makes the recipient seem incapable, inept, and generally incompetent—a process that Gilbert calls **overhelping** (Gilbert & Silvera, 1996).

Gilbert suggests that overhelping occurs when an individual tries to damage an observer's impression of a person by offering help in achieving a goal in such a way that the person's success is viewed as due to the help and not to the person's efforts or characteristics. Consequently, rather than being viewed positively, as a sign of hard work or superior ability, the

overhelping: The offering of help in a way that makes the recipient seem incapable, inept, and generally incompetent.

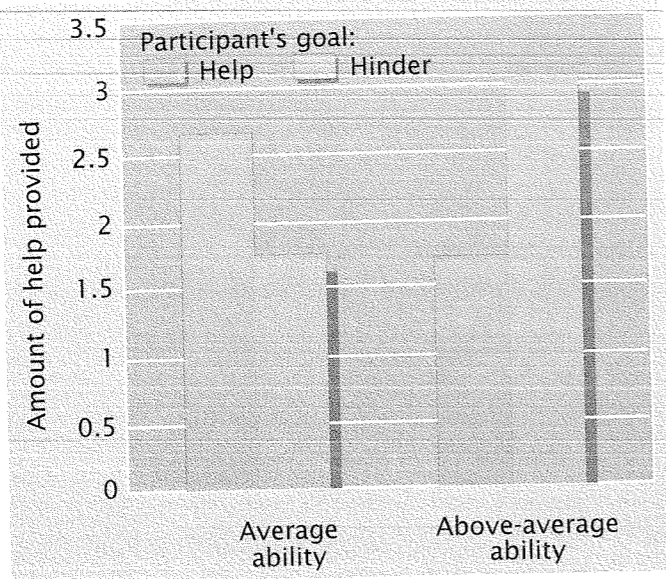


FIGURE 8-5

Overhelping When a job candidate supposedly had only average ability, participants in a study who were asked to help the job seeker provided a relatively high amount of aid, whereas participants motivated to hinder the average-ability job applicant provided relatively little help. However, when the job candidate was supposedly above average in ability and participants' goal was to help the job seeker, participants actually provided relatively little help. In contrast, participants who were seeking to hinder a high-ability job candidate provided *more* help to the candidate—a case of overhelping. (Source: Adapted from Gilbert & Silvera, 1996.)

person's success is attributed to the efforts of the helper or to sheer luck. In addition, overhelping can actually prevent success, inducing the recipient of the aid to fail.

For instance, consider a manager at a cookie factory, whose rival at work is asked by the company president to complete a complex, difficult report on the amount of peanuts being consumed in the production of peanut butter cookies. One way for the manager to sabotage the rival is to schedule a long meeting, during which the manager provides an overwhelming amount of data on peanuts—current peanut farm production figures in Georgia, the latest weather in Georgia, the amount of peanuts that are used in peanut butter, and so forth.

If the amount of data is simply overwhelming, the rival may spend hours sifting through it. As a consequence, the report is delayed and the reputation of the rival suffers. At the same time, the manager looks good, because he is viewed as having helpfully provided the information needed to produce the report. Another scenario is possible, however. Suppose the rival produces an excellent report. Here, the president of the company may attribute the success of the report to the data supplied by the manager. In either case, the "helping" provided by the manager has made the recipient look bad—a clear-cut case of overhelping.

Gilbert and Silvera found support for the occurrence of overhelping in a series of experiments. For instance, participants in one study were told their goal was either to help or hinder (depending on condition) a job applicant who was trying to solve word problems in order to get the job. When the job candidate supposedly had only average ability, participants trying to help the job seeker provided relatively substantial aid. On the other hand, participants motivated to hinder the average-ability job applicant provided relatively little help—a case of underhelping.

The story was very different when the job candidate supposedly had far-above-average ability. In this case, participants whose goal was to help the job seeker actually provided relatively little help. In contrast, participants who were seeking to hinder the high-ability job candidate provided *more* help to the candidate, making it appear that the candidate could succeed only because of the help—a clear case of overhelping (see Figure 8-5).

Of course, overhelping works only under certain conditions. People are most likely to overhelp when they think that they are actually providing insufficient help, but that the help will be considered effective by observers. If they are wrong, overhelping may backfire. For instance, sometimes help will be so effective that the person actually succeeds. If observers attribute the person's success to his or her own efforts or abilities, then overhelping will have failed (from the overhelper's point of view, at least).

At the same time, overhelping can be an effective sabotage strategy, particularly in cases in which the help actually worsens a person's performance but is thought (mistakenly) by observers to improve it. People can—and sometimes do—kill by kindness, providing useless aid to those they wish to see fail. Not all helping, then, is helpful.

NORMS AND HELPING: STANDARDS OF AID

The United Way, the largest charity in the United States, frequently employs a formula to suggest how much money people should contribute on a regular basis. Called the "Fair Share," it implies that people ought to donate a fixed percentage of their income in order to shoulder their part of the burden of caring for the needy.

The ability of the Fair Share concept to produce large donations—which, it turns out, it does quite impressively for the United Way—rests on societal norms about helping. **Norms** are general standards or expectations regarding appropriate behavior. When people are taught, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you," "Kindness is its own reward," and "He who helps others helps himself," they are learning the norms that society holds dear.

Norms of social responsibility. One of the most fundamental societal norms that encourage helping behavior is the norm of social responsibility. The **norm of social responsibility** suggests that people should respond to the reasonable needs of others, and that all people have a societal obligation to aid those in need (Rutkowski, Gruder, & Romer, 1983; Bornstein, 1994; Unger & Thumulari, 1997). The norm of social responsibility is particularly influential when those requiring help are seen to be dependent or lacking the capacity to help. Thus, obligations to children, who are clearly dependent, are felt especially keenly themselves (Berkowitz, 1972; Harrell, 1994).

At the same time, the norm of social responsibility is so broad that it sometimes can be interpreted in ways that permit people to *sidestep* helping others. Thus, people might justify not giving change to a panhandler by the rationalization that true social responsibility lies in discouraging begging. Furthermore, norms that encourage helping must be experienced internally; it's not possible to force people to help and expect them to become more helpful in the future, as we discuss in the Applying Social Psychology box.

Norms of reciprocity. If you agree with the sayings "What goes around, comes around," "tit for tat," or "an eye for an eye," then you probably adhere to the norm of reciprocity. The **norm of reciprocity** asserts that we should help others because they have helped us in the past or may help us in the future.

Norms of reciprocity are found in almost every culture. We see them manifested when a student lends his car to his roommate with the expectation that the roommate will let him borrow his compact disc player at some point in the future. Similarly, people may donate to charity with the understanding that if they ever lose their jobs and need help, they will have the right to ask for charity because of their prior contributions (Gouldner, 1960; Miller & Bersoff, 1994; Uehara, 1995; Burger et al., 1997).

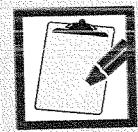
The norm of reciprocity is powerful. Indeed, people who have been helped not only reciprocate help to the specific individuals who have helped in the past, but also are more likely to help other people. However, their help may not be as generous to others as it would be to the specific person who initially provided them help (Lerner & Meindl, 1981).



norms: General standards or expectations regarding appropriate behavior.

norm of social responsibility: The norm suggesting that people should respond to the reasonable needs of others, and that all people have a societal obligation to aid those in need.

norm of reciprocity: The norm asserting that we should help others because they have helped us in the past or may help us in the future.



APPLYING SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

MANDATORY VOLUNTEERISM: A CONTRADICTION IN TERMS?

By the end of their senior year, all students must have engaged in some form of community service of at least 5 hours a week over the course of a term. Examples of community service include working at a shelter for the homeless or soup kitchen, tutoring, holding an internship in a human service agency, or working with children in an after-school program.

Sound like a good idea for a school requirement? It does to many high schools and colleges, which have instituted required community service programs to encourage students to become involved in their community. One reason for such requirements is to increase the probability that people will volunteer in the future, resulting in an increase in community volunteers.

There's a hitch, though: According to a study by social psychologists Arthur Stukas, Mark Snyder, and E. Gil Clary (1999), such programs may have unintended consequences. In fact, they found that those who felt forced into volunteering due to a requirement ended up saying they were *less* likely to volunteer in the future.

In the first of two studies, the researchers surveyed a group of students required to enroll in a college service-learning course. They found that students who had prior volunteer experience, but who saw themselves as required to participate in the service-learning course, had *lowered* intentions to volunteer in the future. Participation in the course, then, had the ironic effect of reducing their interest in future volunteer work.

In the subsequent study, the results of the survey were supported. In the experiment, a group of participants were required to carry out a "volunteer" activity—reading to the blind. For

participants who prior to the experiment said they were unlikely to volunteer in the future, being forced to volunteer in the study led to lower intentions to volunteer. On the other hand, for those who prior to the experiment felt that they would have volunteered even if they weren't required to, being forced to volunteer had little effect on their willingness to participate in the future.

Why would requiring volunteer work make participants less likely to volunteer in the future? One explanation is that community service requirements may alter people's perceptions of why they help. Instead of seeing themselves as willing volunteers, their forced participation may lead to the view that the sole reason they are helping is to fulfill a requirement. Consequently, they are unable to view themselves as volunteers doing good deeds, and they may be less eager to volunteer in the future. Furthermore, as we first discussed in Chapter 5, forced participation in any activity may lead to *reactance*, hostility and anger that results from the restriction of one's freedom (Brehm & Brehm, 1981). If people experience reactance as a result of being required to volunteer, they may seek to reestablish their sense of freedom by downgrading volunteerism.

The results of the studies suggest that "mandatory volunteerism" may have a downside. Rather than producing a corps of willing volunteers, community service requirements may lead to volunteers who are actually less likely to volunteer in the future. To be successful, then, community service programs must make people volunteer in as uncoercive a manner as possible.

Personal norms. Sometimes the most potent norms are not the general ones handed down to us by society. Instead, they are our **personal norms**, our own personal sense of obligation to help a specific person in a specific situation.

Consider, for example, a girl whose parents die in an auto crash and who is subsequently raised by an elderly uncle. When she is older, her sense of obligation to help her uncle may be profound—but it is not necessarily accompanied by a sense of responsibility toward the elderly in general. Indeed, it may be that the woman expends most of her resources on her uncle and has little sense of obligation to society as a whole.

Personal norms also help explain devotion to particular political causes. For instance, in the 1960s, strongly committed civil rights workers often displayed an unusually strong sense of identification with their parents, whom they viewed as holding high moral standards. In raising their children, these parents taught a philosophy that included an emphasis on the rights of others and the obligation to help others. Rather than adhering only to broad,

personal norms: Our own personal sense of obligation to help a specific person in a specific situation.

general societal norms, then, the civil rights workers viewed themselves as following a set of more personal standards based on their parents' standards (Rosenhan, 1970).

Norms deterring helping. Perhaps you've seen photos of people carefully avoiding a person sprawled face-down on the sidewalk of a city. This lack of care for someone so obviously in need reflects what has been called a **norm of noninvolvement**, a standard of behavior that causes people to avoid becoming psychologically (and physically) entangled with others.

The norm of noninvolvement is sometimes adopted by urban dwellers, who face so much stimulation that they may attempt to distance themselves from nonacquaintances (Milgram, 1977a). Furthermore, people in cities may experience insecurity about contact with individuals very different from themselves. Adopting a norm of noninvolvement permits them to remain detached from the needs of these others (Fischer, 1976; Matsui, 1981).

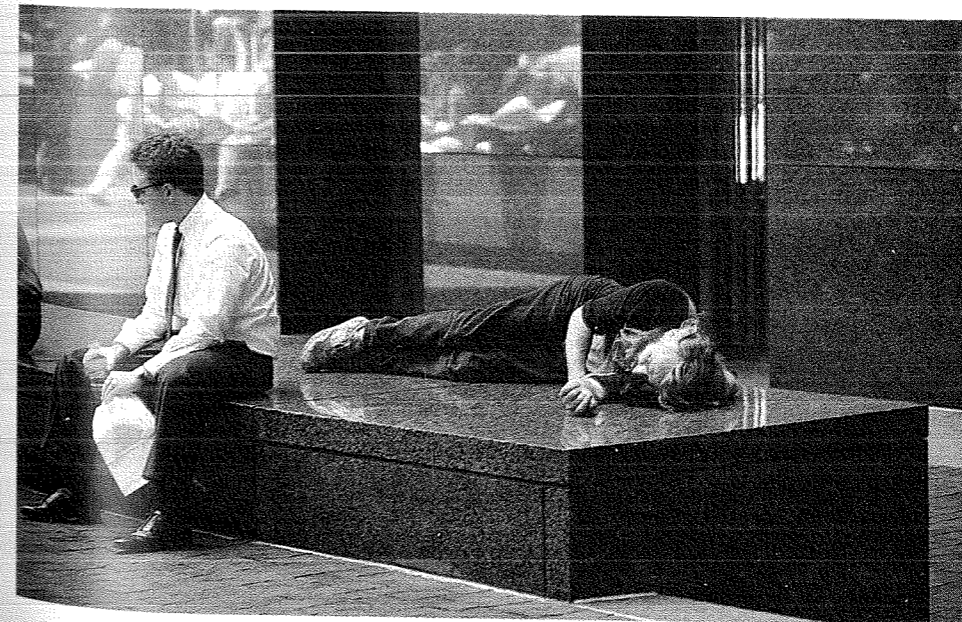
Norms acting to deter helping provide an understanding of one of the nagging problems found in our cities: the reluctance of people to act prosocially. Consistent with the stereotype of the cold-hearted, unfriendly city dweller, people living in urban areas are less prone to help others than people living in rural areas—whether the help required is direct or indirect, whether bystanders are present or not, and regardless of the age or gender of the victim. Furthermore, the higher the population density and the greater the cost of living in a city, the lower the level of helping behavior. Table 8-3 shows the top 20 cities ranked in one study in terms of overall helpfulness (Hedge & Yousif, 1992; Levine et al., 1994; Bridges & Coady, 1996).

Intriguingly, it is not true that people raised in rural areas are inherently more helpful; when living in a city they too begin to act less helpfully. City life seems to bring out the worst in people—at least when it comes to the likelihood of behaving prosocially.

RECEIVING HELP: IS IT BETTER TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE?

A classmate, who has finished her classroom project early, turns to you and offers to help you finish what you are doing. Instead of reacting with gratitude, you feel a combination of anger, embarrassment, and annoyance. You reject her help, with a cold "No thanks."

The norm of noninvolvement, the standard that allows us to avoid becoming psychologically and physically entangled with others, permits people to remain detached from the very real needs of others.



norm of noninvolvement: A standard of behavior that causes people to avoid becoming psychologically (and physically) entangled with others.

TABLE 8-3 Raw Scores and Ranks on Helping Measures by City

CITY	REGION ^a	POPULATION ^b	SCORE ^c	RANK
Rochester, NY	NE	M	10.81	1
Houston, TX	S	L	10.74	2
Nashville, TN	S	M	10.69	3
Memphis, TN	S	M	10.66	4
Knoxville, TN	S	S	10.62	5
Louisville, KY	S	S	10.58	6
St. Louis, MO	NC	L	10.58	7
Detroit, MI	NC	L	10.55	8
E. Lansing, MI	NC	S	10.54	9
Chattanooga, TN	S	S	10.54	10
Indianapolis, IN	NC	M	10.46	11
Columbus, OH	NC	M	10.42	12
Canton, OH	NC	S	10.35	13
Kansas City, MO	NC	M	10.33	14
Worcester, MA	NE	S	10.24	15
Santa Barbara, CA	W	S	10.17	16
Dallas, TX	S	L	10.13	17
San Jose, CA	W	M	10.11	18
San Diego, CA	W	L	10.05	19
Springfield, MA	NE	S	9.92	20

^aNE = northeast, S = south, NC = north central, and W = west. ^bS = small (350,000–650,000), M = medium (950,000–1,450,000), L = large (>2,000,000). Based on estimates for metropolitan or primary statistical area for 1989. ^cAverage of standardized scores ($M = 10$, $SD = 1.0$) for the six measures.

Source: Levine et al., 1994.

Does this sound familiar? It might, because such a reaction is common. Recipients of help are not always so grateful for the help that they are offered. In fact, some research suggests that recipients of aid may be psychologically worse off than before they receive any help. In fact, in many cases, the self-esteem of recipients drops after receiving help from others.

According to the **threat to self-esteem model**, the way in which help is offered influences whether the help is viewed as positive or negative (Fisher, Nadler, & Whitcher-Alagna, 1982; Fisher, Nadler, & DePaulo, 1983). Several factors produce negative consequences for recipients' self-esteem. For example, help that emphasizes the higher ability or status of a donor is likely to produce threats to the recipient's self-esteem. Furthermore, help that prevents a recipient from reciprocating (and thereby fulfilling societal norms of reciprocity) is likely to be seen as threatening. Help that is given grudgingly or out of guilt is also viewed as threatening. Finally, people with high self-esteem typically react more negatively to help than those with low self-esteem.

Fortunately, help can be provided in several ways that do not threaten self-esteem. Among the most nonthreatening kinds of aid are the following (Fisher et al., 1982; Searcy & Eisenberg, 1992; Shell & Eisenberg, 1992, 1996):

- ◆ Aid from donors with positive characteristics and motivation
- ◆ Aid from siblings and older relatives
- ◆ Aid that can be reciprocated by the recipient

threat to self-esteem model:

The model that argues that the way in which help is offered influences whether the help is viewed as positive or negative.

- ◆ Aid that does not threaten the recipient's autonomy and sense of control
- ◆ Aid that is offered, rather than asked for
- ◆ Aid that comes from donors with relatively low resources or expertise

The most effective aid, then, occurs when recipients feel that the donor likes and is interested in them and views them as independent and autonomous. Furthermore, a person most readily accepts help when it is clear that it will increase the recipient's likelihood of future success.

REVIEW AND RETHINK

Review

- According to the attributional model of helping and emotions, people in a potential helping situation attribute causes to a person's need for help, and they either help or don't help depending on their attributions.
- People's moods affect their helping behavior, with good moods generally contributing to a higher incidence of helping and bad moods having mixed effects.
- The negative state relief model suggests that even bad moods can induce people to be helpful if the people believe that helping will improve their moods.
- Helping affects people's moods positively, sometimes for a long time.
- Individual helping behavior is influenced by both societal norms and personal norms.

Rethink

- Would the attributional model of helping predict that a well-employed veteran would be more or less likely than a nonveteran to help a man holding an "Unemployed Vietnam Veteran" sign? Why or why not?
- How does helping affect a person's mood? Can this phenomenon explain altruistic behavior? What aspects of a helping situation affect whether a person in a bad mood will help?
- Does a charity that offers benefits to poor children in another country depend on different societal norms than a charity that focuses on curing a disease, such as cancer or heart disease, that potential givers may one day contract? What norms do the two charities depend on? Why?
- How do personal norms and societal norms differ? How might they clash or complement each other?
- Is the norm of noninvolvement related to the principle of diffusion of responsibility? How do they differ?

INCREASING PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR

You realize you left your wallet on the bus, and you give up hope of ever seeing it again. But someone calls that evening asking how to return the wallet to you.

Two toddlers are roughhousing when one suddenly begins to cry. The other child rushes to fetch his own security blanket and offers it to his playmate.

Driving on a lonely country road, you see a car stopped on the shoulder, smoke pouring from the hood. The driver waves to you frantically, and instinctively you pull over to help, putting aside thoughts of your appointments as well as your personal safety. (Kohn, 1988, p. 34)

CW

Although the acts of violence, terrorism, crime, and war that dominate the headlines may lead us at times to think otherwise, helping is a central aspect of human behavior. Indeed, instances of prosocial behavior are part of most people's everyday lives—acts as simple as holding the door for a stranger or picking up and replacing a package that has toppled from a grocery store shelf. In the remainder of this chapter, we consider some social psychological findings that suggest ways of increasing helping behavior.

REWARDING PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR

If you've ever received a reward for good conduct, you know the potency of reinforcement. We learn at an early age that acting prosocially brings rewards. At the most basic level, for example, parents reward children for sharing and behaving generously and punish them for selfishness. But, as social learning theory suggests, we also learn to be helpful by observing the behavior of others, vicariously experiencing the rewards and punishments that others receive. Ultimately, we model the behavior of those who have been rewarded (Bandura, 1974, 1977, 1978).

At first, prosocial behavior is guided through direct reward and punishment. One early experiment showed that when candy was provided to 4-year-old children who shared a marble, their sharing behavior increased (Fischer, 1963). But as children become older, verbal reinforcement becomes equally effective. In another study, 12-year-old children's donations to charity increased following verbal approval (Midlarsky, Bryan, & Brickman, 1973).

Just as positive reinforcement can promote increases in helping, negative reinforcement and punishment diminish the likelihood of future helping behavior. For instance, in one study, a confederate on a street corner in Ohio asked participants for directions (Moss & Page, 1972). To some participants, she offered thanks for the help she received, whereas to others she said, "I cannot understand what you're saying. Never mind, I'll ask someone else."

Further down the street, participants encountered a second confederate, who dropped a small bag but continued walking, pretending not to notice the dropped bag. Participants who had received the verbal punishment from the ungrateful confederate were less likely to provide help to the second confederate than those who had received thanks earlier. The moral: Verbal gratitude for helpful deeds is apt to increase helping, whereas verbal punishment is likely to discourage helping behavior.

MODELING AND HELPING

Just as Columbia University was about to begin a major fund-raising drive, it announced a gift of \$25 million by John W. Kluge, a 1937 graduate of Columbia and chairman of the Metromedia Company.

The announcement was no coincidence. It reflected the belief—well supported by a wealth of social psychological research—that the example of a generous model can nurture the generosity of others. In both adults and children, the observation of someone behaving prosocially leads to increased prosocial behavior on the part of the observer. The reverse holds true as well: If a model behaves selfishly, observers tend to act more selfishly themselves (e.g., Spivey & Prentice-Dunn, 1990; Grusec, 1991; Janoski & Wilson, 1995).

Social psychologists James Bryan and Mary Ann Test demonstrated the importance of a helpful model in a classic study (Bryan & Test, 1967). In the field experiment, people driving along a busy Los Angeles highway passed a woman whose car seemed to have a flat tire but who was receiving help in changing it from an apparent passerby. Coincidentally, a quarter mile down the road, another woman seemingly had a flat tire.

In actuality, the entire scene was an elaborate set-up, designed to determine how many people driving by would stop and help the (second) woman in distress. The rate at which people stopped was compared with another condition in which passersby did not first see a helpful model. The results were clear. In the no-model condition, just 35 out of 4,000 passersby stopped, whereas in the helpful-model condition, more than twice as many people (98) stopped to offer aid. (We might note, of course, that in neither condition was the incidence of helping terribly impressive.)



Not only do people sometimes report that helping and volunteering provides a sort of physical "high," but also that the feelings linger beyond the actual act of helping. Many people said they experience positive feelings simply by recalling instances in which they helped.

Later research confirms that the consequences of viewing a helpful model are powerful and lasting (Grusec, 1982, 1991; Grusec & Kuczynski, 1997). But why do helpful models lead to greater prosocial behavior on the part of observers? There are several reasons. For one thing, if we see models being rewarded for their helpfulness, we learn through the basic processes of social learning that prosocial behavior is desirable. In addition, though, models act as salient reminders of society's norms about the importance of helpfulness. They show us, in a concrete way, how socially desirable behavior may be enacted in a particular situation, thereby paving the way for our own prosocial behavior. In other words, they make it easier to do what we know we should do (Hensel, 1991).

Thus, modeling goes beyond simply mimicking the behavior of others, and it plays a particularly significant developmental role as we move through childhood into adulthood. As we get older, we build general rules and principles in a process called *abstract modeling*. Rather than always modeling others' specific behaviors, we begin to draw generalized principles that underlie the behaviors we have observed. Hence, after observing several instances in which a model is rewarded for acting in a prosocial manner, we initiate a process in which we infer and learn the meaning of such acts, and we build and internalize our own model of behaving in an altruistic fashion.

EXPERIENCING A HELPER'S HIGH: THE REWARDS OF HELPING

If you are a long-distance runner, you may experience a physical "high" during or after your run. Such a runner's high typically consists of feelings of well-being, calmness, and sometimes euphoria.

Surprisingly, some research suggests that similar physical responses may occur as a result of something much less exhausting—helping other people. According to the results of a large-scale survey of women who had helped others in some way, the majority reported feeling an actual pleasant physical sensation while they were helping (Luks, 1988). In fact, those who engaged both in helping and physical exercise frequently reported that the positive sensations were quite similar.

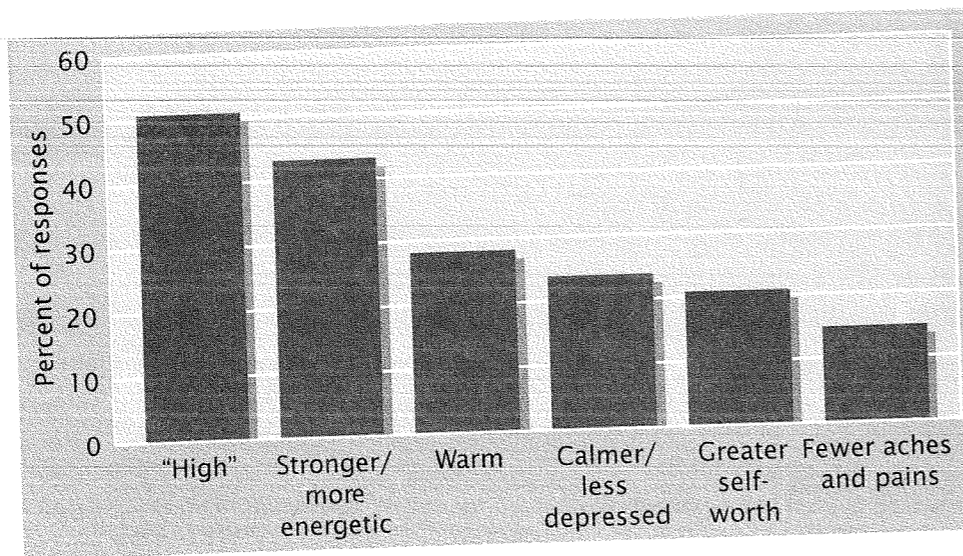


FIGURE 8-6 How Does It Feel to Help? Most people report that helping provides a kind of physical "high." (Source: Luks, 1988.)

As you can see in Figure 8-6, the actual response to helping differed among respondents. Approximately half reported feeling "high" in some way, and more than two-fifths said that helping made them feel stronger or more energetic. A significant proportion said they felt "warm" or "calmer and less depressed," and almost one-fifth said they felt greater self-worth and experienced fewer aches and pains due to their prosocial behavior.

The positive feelings that arose from helping also lingered beyond the actual period of helping behavior. Most respondents said they experienced positive feelings whenever they remembered their helping activities.

These findings are consistent with intriguing research that has been done on reactions to donating blood. According to the research of social psychologist Jane Piliavin and collaborators, people who habitually give blood may experience increasingly positive reactions following each donation. The positive emotional response leads habitual givers to become, in a very real sense, psychologically addicted to the donation process, and it increases the frequency with which they will give blood in the future (Piliavin, Evans, & Callero, 1984; Piliavin & Callero, 1991).

In sum, prosocial behavior may bring its own special reward—a helper's high. (For another perspective on the benefits of helping, see the accompanying Speaking of Social Psychology box.)

TEACHING MORAL BEHAVIOR: DO AS I SAY, NOT (NECESSARILY) AS I DO

Despite emphatic intentions to avoid it, more than one parent has fallen back on the adage "Do as I say, not as I do." The old dictum tends to emerge when a child points out some inconsistency between the parent's prior behavior and what the parent is now telling the child to do.

When such an admonition occurs, parents are engaging in a fundamental form of moral education. People often use moral exhortations and preaching in an effort to promote altruistic and prosocial behavior. It turns out, though, that such an approach is not terribly effective. For example, in comparison with models who *act* generously, a model who *preaches* generosity is considerably less effective in eliciting donations (e.g., Grusec & Skubiski, 1970).

Of course, not all exhortations to behave in a prosocial manner are doomed to failure. One key to the success of moral prompts is the attribution made by the targets of these prompts

if they do behave in a prosocial manner. Specifically, the effectiveness of preaching depends on the degree to which the preaching suggests that the enactment of moral behavior is related to someone's moral character, instead of simply representing a reaction to external pressure. For example, exhorting people to do good because of their underlying positive qualities ("underneath we're all good") is more effective than telling people to help in order to receive an external reward ("other people will owe you a debt of thanks").

Consequently, when people are led to believe that moral behavior demonstrates that they have high personal moral standards, they will be more likely to behave altruistically in the future. Conversely, to the extent that they are led to attribute their altruistic actions to external, situational pressures, they will be less apt to behave helpfully in the future (Lepper, 1983; Grusec & Dix, 1986; Grusec, 1991; Grusec, Rudy, & Martini, 1997).

Attributional approaches suggest that steering people toward the development of internal attributions for their prosocial behavior is an effective means of promoting more helping in the future. It is quite consistent with techniques used by charitable organizations, which sometimes engineer future large donations by attempting to obtain only tiny ones at first.

For instance, one successful slogan is "even a dollar will help." The motto represents a double-barreled strategy. First, once we have given even a small amount, we are likely to experience the positive reinforcements that a charity dispenses to any giver—a thank-you note, a membership card, and an explanation of how useful the contribution will be to the cause.

Second, the donation of even a small amount of money may be sufficient to allow us to modify our attributions about ourselves. Once we've given a donation in the past, we may come to see ourselves as donors motivated by an internal trait of generosity, as opposed to being motivated by external prompts. For both reasons, then, when asked for donations in the future, we may increase the size of our gifts (Dillard, 1991; Gorassini & Olson, 1995).

VALUES CLARIFICATION AND MORAL REASONING: INSTRUCTION IN MORALITY

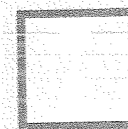
When the United States initiated formal schooling in the 19th century, one of the primary goals was to provide education in moral values. Slowly, however, educational objectives changed, and today the teaching of moral values occurs only rarely. In fact, the teaching of values is a highly politically charged notion, associated with particular political ideologies.

At the same time, certain basic prosocial values are universal, regardless of people's political orientation. For example, few people would dispute the general importance of helping others. To instill the value of prosocial behavior, educators have developed several approaches (Damon, 1989). Among the primary methods they have identified are values clarification techniques and the teaching of moral reasoning.

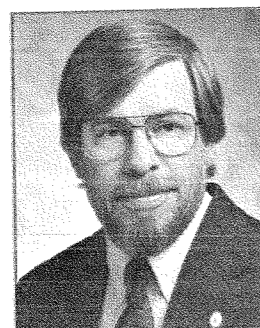
Values clarification is a procedure in which students are encouraged to become aware of their current values, to consider how their values were formed, and how their values may differ from those of others. Although there are several values clarification techniques, one of the most prevalent is "Either-Or Forced Choice" (Simon, Howe, & Kirschenbaum, 1972). In this procedure, teachers ask questions that raise two conflicting underlying values, such as "Do you identify more with a Honda Civic or a Mercedes?" Forced to choose and explain one of the two alternatives, students find that their underlying values come to the surface. In addition, by producing cognitive conflict between particular values, the technique may provide insight into the assumptions about prosocial behavior that students hold.

Of course, the values clarification method does have potential drawbacks. For one thing, although it makes people aware of their values, it does not provide them a means to resolve underlying conflicts. Furthermore, it really isn't designed to teach new values; it only provides a framework for understanding existing ones.

A more direct means for promoting prosocial values in schools is an attempt to increase the level of sophistication of people's moral reasoning. The underlying assumption here is that by improving people's reasoning powers, we can ultimately induce them to behave in more prosocial ways.



SPEAKING OF SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY



Gerard A. Jacobs

Red Cross Volunteer

Year of Birth: 1952

Education: B.A., Classical Languages, Xavier University;
M.A., Clinical Psychology, Xavier University;
Ph.D., Clinical/Community Psychology,
University of South Florida

Home: Vermillion, South Dakota

“In a disaster, the first priority for services goes to the disaster relief personnel.”

The Red Cross, through its tireless efforts to provide humanitarian care in times of war and peace, has come to symbolize prosocial and altruistic behavior. Whether at the front lines of a major international conflict or on the front lawn of a burning single-family home, the Red Cross is there to provide comfort and aid. Established by Clara Barton in 1881, the Red Cross involves more than 1 million active volunteers. Among them is Gerard Jacobs, National Consultant for Disaster Mental Health, who was on alert as Hurricane Bertha headed toward the United States in July 1996.

“In every one of the states that the hurricane was expected to hit, disaster services were busy getting teams together and preparing to feed and house people evacuated from their homes,” he reports. “Disaster health services bring in health nurses to take care of physical needs, and disaster mental health services are put in place to meet the emotional and psychological needs of the people affected.”

Within 1 day of receiving notice, Red Cross volunteers are in place and ready to provide aid, according to Jacobs. Of the thousands of people who work with the Red Cross, about 95% are, like Jacobs, unpaid volunteers.

One procedure for increasing the sophistication of moral reasoning involves the discussion of moral dilemmas. Students who are forced to articulate their moral reasoning and to hear the conclusions reached by others are better able to come to grips with the complexity of the issues entailed by moral dilemmas. Furthermore, the cognitive conflict created by class discussion can lead students to a better understanding of other students' logic and perspectives. Through the process of discussion, then, students' reasoning abilities may increase to higher, more sophisticated levels (Reimer, Paolitto, & Hersch, 1983).

Assuming that these techniques are successful in raising the level of moral thinking, does elevated moral thinking translate into behavior that is more socially responsible? The answer is mixed. Some research finds that moral judgments are related to prosocial behavior (Candee & Kohlberg, 1987; Janssens & Dekovic, 1997). In contrast, other studies suggest that the relationship between moral judgments and moral behavior is more tenuous. Understanding the difference between right and wrong does not invariably lead people to behave in a moral fashion (Darley & Schultz, 1990).

We should not think, then, that the values inherent in prosocial behavior are easy to convey in the classroom. But the possibility exists that people can be taught to appreciate the merits of helping others, and that their own conduct will improve as a consequence.

“In a disaster, the first priority for services goes to the disaster relief personnel. It is essential to keep them healthy and functional so they can help others. Then we provide services to the people affected by the disaster,” he says.

Although the Red Cross has always provided traditional disaster services, emergency services to military personnel, and the most advanced blood program in the world, the organization has moved only recently into the area of mental health services, assuming a formal role in that area in 1991, according to Jacobs.

“The reason I volunteered is that I could see the needs of people, and I wanted to help.”

Relief efforts are shared between local emergency workers and Red Cross people. The idea is for the Red Cross to supplement and complement local efforts, not to supplant them. For instance, Jacobs notes, when Flight 427 crashed in Pennsylvania in September 1994, a local mental health team had

already jumped into action while Red Cross mental health disaster volunteers were being brought in.

“The local people were well trained and in place,” he says. “We provided some support in areas that they were less strong in, and we did some outreach work. The job of the Red Cross is to augment the local disaster plan and to try to respond to the specific needs of the local workers. Basically, we get there as quickly as we can and try to fill whatever gaps exist.”

“Our role differs in each community. What we do depends on the resources of the community and the disaster plan that is in effect. In a disaster like a hurricane, services are typically provided at a Red Cross facility to anyone who comes seeking the service,” Jacobs says.

What motivated Jacobs to become one of millions of people who contribute their time and expertise to the Red Cross?

“The reason I volunteered is that I could see the needs of people, and I wanted to help,” Jacobs said. “I noted that the need for disaster mental health helpers was going unmet, and I volunteered to try and change that.”

“For me it is a sense of knowing that I am one small piece of a puzzle that must be completed in order to meet people's needs.”

INCREASING HELPFULNESS

Throughout this chapter we have considered a variety of techniques for increasing prosocial behavior. Let's summarize some of the main strategies that can be derived from our discussion:

- ◆ If you need help, be explicit and personal. In an emergency situation, explicitly ask for the kind of help that is required. Don't just say, “Help!” Instead, say, “I've fallen and hurt my leg—call an ambulance.” A victim should try to make eye contact with a passerby and direct the call for help to him or her, thereby personalizing the situation and reducing the possibility of diffusion of responsibility. Do anything that can reduce the ambiguity of the situation.
- ◆ Activate norms appropriate for helping. If you are raising funds for a charity, make use of the powerful norms of society that support helping behavior. Remind people that there is a duty to help those less fortunate (norm of social responsibility), or that donations of blood permit them to be recipients of blood themselves later on (norm of reciprocity). Former students can be reminded that they received scholarships when they were in college and they now have a chance to help others by contributing to their alma mater (personal norms).

THE INFORMED CONSUMER OF SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY



- ◆ Act as a helpful model. If you wish others to contribute to a worthy cause, make sure they know that you have already made your own contribution.
- ◆ Personalize help. Because we are more apt to help those for whom we feel empathy, efforts should be made to show the human side of those in need. It is relatively easy to refuse to help the abstract stereotype of “people on welfare.” It is far more difficult to refuse help to a particular single mother who has just given birth and who is on welfare because her husband has deserted her.

Use of these strategies should increase the probability that help will be provided. Of course, no approach works every time; there are no guarantees that people will show the care for others that represents the best side of humanity. Still, as social psychologists—along with other students of human behavior—clarify and refine their understanding of prosocial behavior, the promise exists of a betterment of the human condition that will help us all.

REVIEW AND RETHINK

Review

- Positive reinforcement and observation of helpful models are effective in increasing helping behavior.
- In some ways, helping is its own reward, producing a “helper’s high” that tends to increase the incidence of future prosocial behaviors.
- In teaching moral behavior, practice is more effective than preaching, but appeals to people’s underlying moral character can also be effective.
- Two techniques for moral instruction that have been used in the United States are values clarification and practice in moral reasoning. However, the link between moral thinking and moral behavior is tenuous.

Rethink

- What is abstract modeling, and how does it relate to prosocial behavior?
- Compare the effectiveness of moral exhortations with modeling in increasing prosocial behavior.
- Describe the values clarification approach to increasing prosocial behavior. Under what conditions would such an approach be most successful?
- Identify some common fund-raising techniques that rely on the principles of encouraging prosocial behavior discussed in this chapter. Do advertisers of commercial products use similar techniques?

LOOKING BACK

What is prosocial behavior, and how is it exhibited in emergencies?

1. Prosocial behavior is helping behavior that benefits others. Its roots and motivations are the subject of study by social psychologists. (p. 265)
2. Diffusion of responsibility—the tendency for people to feel that responsibility for acting is shared among those present—discourages helping. The more people present at an emergency, the less likely it is that any individual will take responsibility for helping. (p. 267)

3. According to one model of helping, among the steps that a person takes in emergencies are noticing a person, event, or situation that potentially may require help; interpreting the event as one that requires help; assuming responsibility; deciding how to provide assistance; and actually helping. (p. 267)

What is altruism, and does it have genetic roots?

4. One source of debate among social psychologists is whether altruism—helping behavior that is beneficial to others but requires self-sacrifice—actually exists. Rewards–costs analyses of helping suggest that some reward is always inherent in any act of helping. (p. 271)
5. The question of whether some people have an altruistic personality—a set of dispositional characteristics that consistently lead them to act helpfully—is also open. However, most research suggests that people do not invariably behave altruistically, and there are gender and cross-cultural differences in helping behavior. (p. 271)
6. According to evolutionary approaches, there may be genetic roots to helping behavior, with individuals working together to preserve their genes and the genes of their close relatives. The principle of reciprocity—the notion that we help others because we expect to receive from others future help for ourselves or our kin—is used to support evolutionary explanations. (p. 272)

How do emotions and attributions affect helping?

7. Although some researchers suggest that people are largely egoistic, or motivated by self-benefit, others suggest that altruism can occur when people experience empathy for needy persons. Empathy is an emotional response corresponding to the current emotions of another person. According to the empathy–altruism hypothesis, it is empathy that motivates us to help, rather than the desire to reduce our own unpleasant reactions to victims’ needs. (p. 273)
8. Two other forms of motivation that may underlie prosocial behavior are prosocial collectivism—the desire to increase the welfare of a group—and prosocial principlism—the desire to uphold moral principles. (p. 276)
9. The attributional model of helping and emotions suggests that uncertainty related to a person in need leads to an increase in arousal. When people attribute the need for help to internal, controllable causes, they feel negative emotions; when they attribute the need to external, uncontrollable causes, their emotions are positive. Negative emotions discourage helping, whereas positive ones increase the likelihood of helping. (p. 277)
10. People in good moods are more likely to help than those in neutral moods. On the other hand, being in a bad mood does not invariably produce a decrease in helping. According to the negative state relief model, people in a bad mood may be helpful if they think that their mood will be improved by helping. In contrast, if they perceive that helping will not improve their mood, they will be unmotivated to help. (p. 278)

What societal norms, or standards, promote helping?

11. Underlying helping behavior are several norms—societal standards or expectations regarding appropriate behavior. The norm of social responsibility suggests that people should respond to the reasonable needs of others. The norm of reciprocity states that we should help others because they have helped us in the past or may help us in the future. Finally, individuals have personal norms, their own sense of obligation to help a specific person in a specific situation. On the other hand, some norms deter helping, such as the norm of noninvolvement. (p. 281)

12. The threat to self-esteem model suggests that the way in which help is offered influences whether the help is viewed as positive or negative. Help that emphasizes the donor's higher ability or status, prevents the recipient from reciprocating, and is given grudgingly or out of guilt is likely to produce negative reactions from recipients. (p. 284)

How can we increase prosocial behavior?

13. One means of increasing prosocial behavior is to provide direct positive reinforcement, or reward, for instances of helping behavior. Another technique involves observation of helpful models, because the observation of someone behaving prosocially leads to increased prosocial behavior on the part of the observer. The reverse also holds true: If a model behaves selfishly, observers tend to act more selfishly themselves. (p. 286)
14. There is evidence that helping provides its own rewards, producing a sort of "helper's high" that can lead to a higher incidence of helping in the future. (p. 287)
15. Another technique to encourage helpful behavior is to use moral admonitions, urging people to behave prosocially. However, in comparison with models who act helpfully, a model who preaches helpfulness is considerably less effective. (p. 288)
16. Attributional approaches suggest that steering people toward the development of internal attributions for their prosocial behavior is an effective means of promoting more helping behavior in the future. (p. 289)
17. Other techniques have been used to produce increased prosocial behavior. One is values clarification, a procedure in which people are encouraged to examine their values. The notion behind the technique is that students will become aware of their current values and perhaps reexamine them. (p. 289)
18. In addition, attempts have been made to increase the sophistication of moral reasoning through the discussion of moral dilemmas. However, it is not clear that changes in reasoning capabilities about moral issues result in increased helping behavior. (p. 290)

————— EPILOGUE —————

As we've seen, the roots of helping are multifaceted. In considering the variety of complex explanations for prosocial behavior, we come to the understanding that helping is brought about not just by one simple cause but by a variety of factors operating jointly.

Before we proceed to our examination in Chapter 9 of aggression, the opposite side of the coin from the helping behavior we discussed in this chapter, return to the prologue of this chapter, about the help that Jack Buchholz provides to Jake Geller, who suffers from muscular dystrophy. Consider these questions:

1. What do you think is the primary motivation behind Jack Buchholz's willingness to help Jake Geller?
2. Discuss Buchholz's helping in terms of at least three different explanations of helping that were considered in this chapter (e.g., altruism, egoism, evolutionary explanations, the helper's high, empathy, societal norms, etc.).
3. Discuss evidence that supports and refutes the idea that Buchholz's helping is truly altruistic. What are possible benefits that Buchholz receives from acting as Geller's helper?
4. Based on the research on personality and helping, do you think that Buchholz is, in general, a particularly helpful individual? Why?

5. How do you think Geller feels in terms of being the recipient of help, particularly in the light of the research on self-esteem?

————— KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS —————

- | | |
|--|--|
| altruism (p. 271) | norm of reciprocity (p. 281) |
| altruistic personality (p. 271) | norm of social responsibility (p. 281) |
| attributional model of helping and emotions (p. 277) | norms (p. 281) |
| confusion of responsibility (p. 269) | overhelping (p. 279) |
| diffusion of responsibility (p. 267) | personal norms (p. 282) |
| egoism (p. 274) | pluralistic ignorance (p. 268) |
| empathy (p. 273) | prosocial behavior (p. 265) |
| empathy-altruism hypothesis (p. 274) | prosocial collectivism (p. 276) |
| negative state relief (NSR) model (p. 278) | prosocial principlism (p. 276) |
| norm of noninvolvement (p. 283) | threat to self-esteem model (p. 284) |

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To Kathy, my love.

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THIRD EDITION

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