

Helping and Cooperation

What's it about?

Prosocial behavior can take different forms: **Altruism** is helping motivated by the desire to benefit others for their own sake, while helping driven by personal rewards to the helper is termed **egoism**. Offering help is crucially dependent on people's perception of someone as both needing and deserving help. Whether people really help depends on the behavior of others, social norms, and own standards. Help may be motivated by perceived rewards for the helper, or deterred by perceived costs or risks. These rewards and risks can be emotional: People sometimes help to alleviate their own distress at the victim's suffering, reflecting **egoism**. People are often motivated by a feeling of empathy to relieve another's suffering, reflecting **altruism**.

In a **social dilemma**, rewards for each individual are in direct conflict with what is best for the group. Group identification promotes cooperative behavior. When helping is a considered decision, it can result in a long-term commitment. Personality factors related to prosocial behavior include differences in empathy and in self-efficacy. Receiving help can have positive, but also negative, consequences, especially if recipients cannot reciprocate, or because receiving help makes you look and feel less competent. Helping in society can be increased by making needs clear, teaching and activating helping norms, fostering helpful self-concepts, focusing rather than diffusing responsibility, and promoting connectedness to engender empathy, altruism, and group identification.

Chapter topics

- When do people help?
- Why do people help? Helping and cooperation for mastery and connectedness
- Role of superficial or systematic processing in helping and cooperation
- Prosocial behavior in society

WHEN DO PEOPLE HELP?

Ask yourself

- What are the crucial factors leading you to help others?
- When is helping up to you, and when is it not?

What you need to know

IS HELP NEEDED AND DESERVED? (<i>SP pp. 529–531</i>)	
• Perceiving need	
• Judging deservingness	
SHOULD I HELP? (<i>SP pp. 531–535</i>)	
• Is helping up to me? Diffusion of responsibility	
• When norms make helping inappropriate	
• When norms make helping appropriate	

IS HELP NEEDED AND DESERVED?

(*SP pp. 529–531*)

Perceiving need

To become aware of the need for help, you should be able to notice it. Busy and noisy surroundings make this noticing more difficult.

A happy mood leads to a more social perspective, so that the need for help is noticed more easily.

Audience inhibition: To avoid appearing foolish, we avoid helping behavior in front of an audience.

The unresponsiveness of others influences our helping behavior. If others fail to react, we are not likely to help.

Judging deservingness

There are various norms that dictate the deservingness of your help:

- Norm of social responsibility: Those who are able to take care of themselves have a duty and obligation to assist those who cannot.
- Helping others who have less than we have.
- Norms in close relationships or cohesive groups.

Controllability: If someone is in need due to an uncontrollable cause, we are more motivated to help.

SHOULD I HELP?

(*SP pp. 531–535*)

Weblink: Kitty Genovese: The real story

www.onthedia.org/story/131359-the-witnesses-that-didnt/transcript/

Weblink: Additional resources and a podcast detailing what really happened to Kitty Genovese

www.thepsychfiles.com/2007/11/episode-36-the-myth-of-the-kitty-genovese-story/

Is helping up to me? Diffusion of responsibility

The more other people there are to help, the less responsible we feel to help, and the smaller the chance that we actually help.

Weblink: Diffusion of responsibility and mass emails

www.psychologytoday.com/blog/science-small-talk/201302/mass-emails-and-mass-apathy

Weblink: A tragic example of the bystander effect

www.nytimes.com/2012/12/05/nyregion/suspect-in-fatal-subway-push-is-in-custody.html?hp&_r=4&

CASE STUDY: The larger the number of other people that are present, the less responsible for helping every individual feels: Diffusion of responsibility (Darley & Latané, 1968) [see ch14-CS-01.doc]

When norms make helping inappropriate

There are norms that prescribe not to help:

- When others' reactions suggest that help is not needed.

Weblink: More about the smoke study

www.sociallypsyched.org/item/the-smoke-filled-room

- Norm of family privacy: You don't intervene in a familiar/marital problem. The wife could feel embarrassed and the husband could become aggressive towards the helper.

When norms make helping appropriate

People who hold leadership responsibility, or are the ones who should help, serve as a model or example, implicitly defining the norm for helping behavior.

Mentioning the (amount of) help of other people facilitates people's *prosocial behavior*.

Strong norms of concern for others, taught by parents or religion, lead to more prosocial behavior.

Weblink: More information on the Good Samaritan study

www.sociallypsyched.org/item/good-samaritan

Weblink: A real-life example of a Good Samaritan

<http://abcnews.go.com/US/california-samaritan-recounts-dramatic-kidnapping-rescue/story?id=11810423>

So what does this mean?

To be able to help, you should notice the need for help. After noticing, you have to decide whether the potential helpee deserves your help. The decision to help depends on the presence and actions of others: The more others there are, the less likely you are to help. Social and personal norms also play a role in helping. Another factor in helping is the (in)appropriateness of your help: You don't interfere in marital problems.

WHY DO PEOPLE HELP? HELPING FOR MASTERY AND CONNECTEDNESS

(SP pp. 536–551)

Ask yourself

- Why do we help?
- Is helping “baked” in our genes?
- Why do we sometimes run a great risk to help others?
- Is helping only favorable for the people that we help, or is it also beneficial to ourselves?

What you need to know

BIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES: IS PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR IN OUR GENES? <i>(SP pp. 536–538)</i>
HELPING FOR MASTERY: THE PERSONAL REWARDS AND COSTS OF HELPING <i>(SP pp. 538–541)</i>
• Rewards and costs of helping
• Emotional rewards of helping
• Is helping pure egoism?
HELPING FOR CONNECTEDNESS: EMPATHY AND ALTRUISM <i>(SP pp. 541–544)</i>
MASTERY AND CONNECTEDNESS IN COOPERATION <i>(SP pp. 544–550)</i>
• Social dilemmas: Self-interest versus group interest
• Mastery motives in social dilemmas: Rewards and costs
• The role of trust

• Connectedness motives in social dilemmas: social identification

• Individual differences in cooperation

BIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES: IS PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR IN OUR GENES?

(SP pp. pp. 536–538)

Helping might have costs for the helper ('s genes), but for the (genes of the) group in general, helping behavior can be favorable. There are four ways in which helping others could benefit the survival of the helper's genes:

- Helping your own genes (kin) is helping yourself.
- Reciprocity: The helper will be helped back.
- Altruistic group members perpetuate the group's existence.
- Cooperation leads to indirect rewards such as creating a positive reputation for the helper.

Helping behavior in humans is a result of a naturally selected predisposition that is activated and influenced by cognitive and social processes. There are two motives for helping: our desires for mastery and concrete rewards, and connectedness with others.

Weblink: A nice example of reciprocal altruism

<http://downtownspokane.kxly.com/news/community-spirit/67660-woman-parts-three-rings-salvation-army>

HELPING FOR MASTERY: THE PERSONAL REWARDS AND COSTS OF HELPING

(SP pp. 538–541)

Rewards and costs of helping

According to Batson (1998) there are 11 rewards (e.g., gratitude) that can be gained, and 9 punishments (e.g., the painful aspect of a drowning person) that can be avoided by helping behavior. However, there are also costs of helping behavior, like physical danger. These costs

depend on the helper's abilities to help. Men perceive themselves as better able to help than women do, which leads to more helping behavior by men than by women.

Weblink: People will help, if they know how

<http://am.blogs.cnn.com/2011/03/04/man-survives-after-96-minutes-of-cpr/>

CASE STUDY: Do you know the way to Valentine Street? Priming chivalrous behavior in men [see ch14-CS-02.doc]

Emotional rewards of helping

Helping others gives us a good feeling. It helps to keep our good mood, but also lets us escape from a bad mood. For instance, feelings of guilt make people help more. The reason of this effect could be that helping distracts.

RESEARCH ACTIVITY: Helping [see ch14-RA-01.doc]

Is helping pure egoism?

The negative-state relief model of helping (Schaller & Cialdini, 1988) says that people help because of **egoism**. Egoistic motives lead us to help others in bad circumstances in order to reduce the distress we experience from watching the bad situation of the helpee. The negative-state relief model also explains why people walk away instead of helping: this is another way of reducing distress.

However, not all negative emotions do increase helping. When negative emotions are self-focused, people become blind to the opportunity of helping. Only other-focused people help others more when they feel bad, a finding that contradicts the negative-state relief model and adds another motive for helping; the need for connectedness.

CASE STUDY: Tainted altruism [see ch14-CS-03.doc]

Weblink: How Egoistic or Altruistic are you?

www.queendom.com/tests/access_page/index.htm?idRegTest=692

HELPING FOR CONNECTEDNESS: EMPATHY AND ALTRUISM

(SP pp. 541–544)

The empathy-altruism model of Batson et al. (1981) suggests that people can experience two types of emotions when they see someone suffer: personal distress (alarm, anxiety, fear) that leads to egoistic helping, or empathic concern (sympathy, compassion, tenderness) that leads to altruistic behavior. **Altruism** is motivated by a desire to benefit others. As a result, altruistic people always help, even when they can escape the stressful situation very easily, as was shown in a famous experiment by Batson et al.

Weblink: More on empathy

<http://changingminds.org/explanations/emotions/empathy.htm>

As we have seen, the extent to which people empathize with the victim plays a key role in helping behavior. We empathize with the people we feel connected to more than we do with other people. In other words, connectedness facilitates helping.

CASE STUDY: Mimicry promotes helping (Van Baaren, Holland, Kawakami, & Van Knippenberg, 2004) [see ch14-CS-04.doc]

RESEARCH ACTIVITY: Imitation and helping [see ch14-RA-02.doc]

Weblink: The identifiable victim bias

www.wired.com/2010/08/the-identifiable-victim-bias/

MASTERY AND CONNECTEDNESS IN COOPERATION

(SP pp. 544–550)

We help people from our own group more than people from the out-group. This is especially the case in collectivistic cultures.

Social dilemmas: Self-interest versus group interest

In a **social dilemma**, people have to choose between self-interest and group interest: Each individual group member is better off not cooperating, but all group members are better off if they all cooperate (Dawes, 1980). There are two important types of social dilemma:

- Resource depletion dilemmas: If one group member uses a certain resource, there will be enough left for it to reproduce and replenish itself. If all group members use this resource, it will be depleted so that nobody can use it.
- Public goods dilemmas: The availability of a public good depends on the individual contribution of all group members.

Weblink: More on social dilemmas

<http://perspicuity.net/sd/sd.html>

Mastery motives in social dilemmas: Rewards and costs

In general, most people choose the selfish option: the choice for self-interest, especially when they see other group members make that choice.

To make people choose for the group interest, laws and rules are formulated that dictate this choice. However, there are some consequences of this imposed choice:

- An authority is needed to impose a choice, but who is this authority?
- Imposing choices leads to resistance.
- Resistance makes it necessary to have a monitoring agency that inspects and penalizes.

Weblink: A social dilemma from Stephen King

http://stephenking.wikia.com/wiki/The_Plant

The role of trust

Trust is the expectation that other will act in a prosocial way during a social interaction. Factors that increase trust are:

- Communication among group members
- Equality of opportunities and outcomes among group members
- Accessibility of group norms
- Linking individual efforts to the group good.

Connectedness motives in social dilemmas: Social identification

What makes people forgo their personal interest for the interests of the group? One key factor is identification with the group. When individuals identify with the group, three changes usually take place:

- The greater good of the group becomes the top priority.
- Group members trust other group members to act cooperatively.
- Group norms favoring cooperation become salient guides for individual action.

Identification and altruism are very distinct mechanisms: Identification leads to cooperation, whereas altruism leads to favoring specific members, which is not good for the group as a whole.

Group identification can also make our universal humanity salient, which might explain why we help others who are not members of our own group.

Individual differences in cooperation

People show stable differences in their social value orientation.

- Those with an individualist or competitive orientation are more likely to try to maximize their own outcomes. In contrast, those with a prosocial orientation seek to maximize outcomes for the group as a whole.
- Men and women tend to cooperate to the same extent, although different situations may lead to different patterns of cooperation among men and women.

CASE STUDY: Testosterone and prosocial behavior [see ch14-CS-05.doc]

So what does this mean?

Evolutionary principles suggest that some forms of helping, such as reciprocal helping or helping kin, have been naturally selected because they increase survival. In humans, however, cognitive and social processes mediate such biologically driven helping.

Help may be motivated by perceived rewards for the helper, or deterred by perceived costs or risks. These rewards and risks can be emotional: People sometimes help to alleviate their own distress at the victim's suffering, reflecting **egoism**. People are often motivated by a feeling of empathy to relieve another's suffering, reflecting **altruism**, because it is not motivated by even indirect or emotional rewards for the helper. In a **social dilemma**, rewards for each individual are in direct conflict with what is best for the group. However, people can be motivated by feelings of group connectedness to act for the good of the group. When group identification increases commitment to shared goals and norms, social dilemmas can be successfully resolved.

ROLE OF SUPERFICIAL OR SYSTEMATIC PROCESSING IN HELPING AND COOPERATION

(*SP pp. 551–554*)

Ask yourself

- Is helping behavior different if it is based on an emotional or a cognitive process?
- Are there typical motivations to help?
- Which personality traits are especially involved in helping behavior?

What you need to know

THE IMPACT OF PROCESSING (<i>SP pp. 551–554</i>)
• Superficial processing, spontaneous helping
• Systematic processing, planned helping
• Helping in organizations
• More helping from impulse or from deliberation?

THE IMPACT OF PROCESSING

(*SP pp. 551–554*)

Superficial processing, spontaneous helping

Strong emotions lead to quick and impulsive reactions. When arousal is high and time for reflections is limited, people act on their most accessible motives and norms. Superficial processing leads to behavior that is driven by the most readily accessible mental representations. Priming manipulations can therefore influence this behavior by making representations more accessible.

Weblink: [Hero who rescued teens during Norwegian island massacre says he acted on instinct](http://www.nbcnews.com/id/43880728/ns/world_news-europe/#.U-JQrnwtjp)

Systematic processing, planned helping

Decisions based on extensive thought produce long-lasting commitments that are not easily changed. Thinking thoroughly about helping and repeated involvement in helping behavior reinforce that behavior. Processes of self-perception, self-efficacy, and positive health benefits also strengthen the prosocial behavior, such as volunteering.

There are six motives for helping: expressing personal values related to humanitarian concern for others; gaining understanding, new knowledge, and skills; socializing with friends and earning approval; obtaining career benefits; helping solve personal problems; and enhancing self-esteem and personal growth.

Helping in organizations

Organizational citizenship behaviors, helping with tasks that go beyond the formal job description, arise from the motivation to help the organization, not from the motivation to look good.

MORE HELPING FROM IMPULSE OR FROM DELIBERATION?

(SP pp. 553–554)

Research shows by Rand, Greene, and Nowak (2012) shows that people are most likely to engage in prosocial behavior when the decision to cooperate is made quickly.

RESEARCH ACTIVITY: An analysis of heroic behavior [see ch14-RA-03.doc]

So what does this mean?

When desires and norms conflict, various factors may be considered superficially or thought through extensively before a decision about helping is made. Emotions can play a role in this process, because strong emotion disrupts extensive processing. When helping is a considered decision, though, it can result in a long-term commitment. Finally, when deciding whether to cooperate or compete in a social dilemma, those who are under time pressure tend to engage in more prosocial, cooperative behavior.

PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR IN SOCIETY

(*SP pp. 554–558*)

Ask yourself

- Is help always experienced in a positive way?
- Are there gender differences in the way we experience help?
- How can we promote prosocial behavior?

What you need to know

HELP THAT HELPS; HELP THAT HURTS (<i>SP pp. 554–555</i>)
INCREASING PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR IN SOCIETY (<i>SP pp. 555–558</i>)

HELP THAT HELPS; HELP THAT HURTS

(*SP pp. 554–555*)

Help is experienced in a positive way when the help is aimed to relieve physical suffering, or when it creates a positive relationship between helper and helped, and this kind of help leads to positive feelings for both the helper (pride) and the helped (gratitude).

Help is experienced in a negative way when the person being helped is not able to do something back for the helper, or when the person being helped feels less capable or competent.

Autonomy-oriented help leads recipients to feel more competent and respected than dependency-oriented help.

INCREASING PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR IN SOCIETY

(*SP pp. 555–558*)

Ways to make help more likely include:

- Reducing ambiguity: Making the need for help more clear.
- Increasing internal attributions for prosocial behavior: If the cause of helping is internal, the chance for subsequent prosocial behavior increases.

- Teaching norms that support prosocial behavior in school, and showing personal examples or models.
- Activating prosocial norms: By directing attention to (norms of) helping behavior, or by making people self-aware, which leads to more helping behavior.
- Infusing, not diffusing, responsibility: Direct your request for help to a specific person.
- Promoting identification: Connectedness leads to more helping behavior.

Weblink: Learn more about real heroes

<http://carnegiehero.org/>

RESEARCH ACTIVITY: Do a random act of kindness for someone else [see ch14-RA-04.doc]

So what does this mean?

Receiving help can have negative as well as positive consequences, especially if recipients cannot reciprocate because of an unequal power relationship between helper and helped, or because receiving help makes them look and feel less competent. Helping in society can be increased by making needs clear, teaching and activating helping norms, fostering helpful self-concepts, focusing rather than diffusing responsibility, and promoting connectedness to engender empathy, altruism, and group identification.