

Research Activity

Free hugs: Violating a social norm

Different cultures have different norms regarding personal space. In certain cultures, like the United States, people's personal bubbles are generally large and individuals may take offense if their personal space is encroached upon. So, what would happen if you tried to violate this norm of expansive personal space by offering people free hugs? Watch the following video clip and then consider getting together with some friends and recording what happens when you offer to give strangers free hugs. Do most people disregard their usual demand for personal space and hug you? If you have male vs. female huggers, does gender have any influence on rates of hugging? How do people respond if they do not want a free hug vs. when they do want a free hug? How are the huggers made to feel when other people hug or do not hug them?

Have fun and spread the hugs!

www.youtube.com/watch?v=vr3x_RRjdd4

Research Activity

Turning the tables: Using the norm of reciprocity with customer service professionals

The next time you are dealing with a customer service agent over the phone, consider following the advice of Noah Goldstein (see the link to his article below) and unleashing the power of the norm of reciprocity. Before getting to the primary reason for your call, compliment the customer service agent on their friendliness, understanding (or whatever seems appropriate) and tell them that you would like their name and the name of their supervisor so that you can write a letter to the company thanking them for their help, after you hang up. Then, ask them to assist you with the original reason for your call. Because you have just offered to do them a favor, the customer service agent should feel compelled to help you with your request. As mentioned in Goldstein's (2008) article, as long as you follow through with your offer to write a letter or provide some other form of positive feedback on behalf of the customer service agent, then this is a completely ethical tactic to use. See if you can use the norm of reciprocity *for good* in other situations as well.

Reference

- Goldstein, N. (2008, August 15). Trouble with Customer Service Agents? How to get what you want—nicely. *Psychology Today*. Retrieved from: www.psychologytoday.com/blog/yes/200808

Research Activity

The low-ball technique

(a) Ask five people separately to help you to find a good article about the Milgram study on the internet. Additionally, make a second request to these same five people, asking them whether this could be done within an hour.

(b) Now ask five different people to help you to find a good article about the Milgram study within one hour, all in one request.

Compare how many people complied with the second request of procedure (a) as against the one request of procedure (b).

This exercise demonstrates the low-ball technique (SP p. 369).