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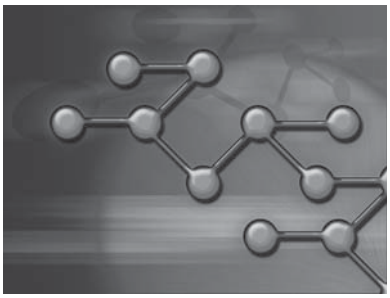
Prosocial Behavior and Altruism

11

Whoever destroys a single life is as guilty as though he had destroyed the entire world; and whoever rescues a single life earns as much merit as though he had rescued the entire world.

—The Talmud



When Irene Gut Opdyke was growing up in Poland during the 1930s, she could never have imagined the fate that the future had in store for her. Irene was born in a small village in Poland on May 5, 1922. Early in her life she decided to enter a profession that involved helping others, so she enrolled in nursing school. However, Irene had to flee her home when the Nazis invaded Poland in 1939. Irene eventually joined a Polish underground unit but was beaten and raped by a group of Russian soldiers who found her group in the woods.

Next, Irene decided to try to find her family and began making her way back home. She was captured in a church by the Germans and forced to work in a munitions plant. The work was physically demanding, and one day Irene collapsed under the burden of her work. Because of her youth, Aryan appearance, and good looks, Irene caught the eye of a German major named Eduard Rugemer. Rugemer arranged for Irene to work in a local hotel that catered to German army and SS officers. Her primary duties involved serving the officers their meals.

It was during her period of employment at the hotel that she first noticed what was happening to Jews. She saw firsthand the treatment the Jews endured in the ghetto behind the hotel. She saw a baby flung into the air and shot by a Nazi. She then decided that she had to do something. One of her first helping acts was to save table scraps and leave them for the starving dwellers of the ghetto. As the war progressed, the Germans were forced to move their munitions plant to Ternopol, Poland. Here Irene resumed her duties serving meals. Major Rugemer also put Irene in charge of the laundry where she met a family of Jews and befriended them. Irene started

Key Questions

As you read this chapter, find the answers to the following questions:

1. What is altruism and how is it different from helping behavior? Why is the difference important?
2. What are empathy and egoism, and how do they relate to altruism?
3. What about the idea that we may help to avoid guilt or shame?
4. What role does biology play in altruism?
5. How do social psychologists explain helping in an emergency situation?
6. What factors affect the decision to help?
7. If you need help, how can you increase your chances of receiving help?

8. Other than traditional helping in emergency situations, what other forms of helping are there?
9. How do personality characteristics relate to helping?
10. What situational and personality variables played a role in the decision to help Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe?
11. What factors contribute to a person's developing an altruistic personality?
12. What is the interactionist view of altruism?
13. How does long-term helping relate to models of emergency helping?
14. What factors influence a person's likelihood of seeking and receiving help?
15. What reactions do people show to receiving help?

helping them by giving them food and blankets. Around this time Major Rugemer also made Irene his personal housekeeper. One day while serving a meal to the German officers she overheard a conversation indicating that more and more Jews were to be rounded up and killed. Her friends in the laundry were clearly in danger. So, Irene made a momentous decision. She decided to hide the Jews to save them from extermination.

At first she hid the group behind a false wall in the laundry area. Then she hid them in a heating duct in Major Rugemer's apartment. When Major Rugemer moved to a large villa with servant's quarters in the cellar and a bunker beneath the house, Irene took her charges and hid them in the cellar of Major Rugemer's villa.

One day Irene was at the marketplace in town when the Gestapo herded everyone into the town center. There a Polish family was hanged along with the Jewish family they were hiding. Usually when Irene returned home, she locked the door and left the key turned in the lock so nobody could come in unexpectedly. Irene was so shaken by what she had witnessed that she locked the door, but pulled the key out of the lock. Two members of the Jewish family, Fanka Silberman and Ida Bauer, came out of the cellar to help Irene with her chores. The three were in the kitchen when Major Rugemer came home unexpectedly and found them. Irene had been caught and the Jews were in danger. Major Rugemer, visibly angry, retreated to his study. Irene followed him and made a plea for her Jewish friends. Major Rugemer agreed to let the Jews stay, but at a cost. Irene would have to become his mistress.

Eventually, Ternopol was liberated by the advancing Russian army. Irene and her charges fled into the woods to await liberation. Irene Opdyke's courageous acts were directly responsible for saving Fanka Silberman, Henry Weinbaum, Moses Steiner, Marian Wilner, Joseph Weiss, Alex Rosen, David Rosen, Lazar Haller, Clara Bauer, Thomas Bauer, Abram Klinger, Miriam Morris, Hermann Morris, Herschel Morris, and Pola Morris. Without Irene's help they all surely would have ended up in labor and/or death camps. After the war Irene's story was verified and she was designated a righteous rescuer by the state of Israel.

What motivated Irene Opdyke? Why did she risk her relatively secure position with Major Rugemer for people she had only recently befriended? And, what about Major Rugemer's decision to allow Irene to continue hiding the Jews at his villa? Was his action altruistic, or did he have another reason for his behavior? Why do we care about the fate of other people? Indeed, do we care at all? These are fundamental questions about human nature. Theologians, philosophers, evolutionary biologists, and novelists all have suggested answers. Social psychologists have suggested answers, too, contributing their empirical findings to the discussion.

Irene Opdyke's behavior was clearly out of the ordinary. Very few Poles were willing to risk their lives to save Jews. A notable aspect of Irene's behavior was that she expected nothing in return, neither material nor psychological rewards. In fact, rescuers such as Irene Opdyke typically shy away from the hero status awarded them. In her mind, she did what had to be done—end of story. Regardless, her actions were purely altruistic. So Irene was an unusual human being—but not unique. Others, albeit few, have performed equally selfless acts.

In this chapter we consider why people help others, when they help, and what kinds of people help. We ask, what lies behind behavior such as Irene Opdyke's? Does it spring from compassion for her fellow human beings? Does it come from

a need to be able to sleep at night, to live with ourselves? Or is there some other motivation? What circumstances led Opdyke to offer the help she did, and what process did she go through to arrive at this decision? Or was her decision more a function of her character, her personal traits? Was she perhaps an example of an altruistic personality? And what about the people Irene Opdyke saved? How did receiving her help affect them? What factors determined how they responded to that help? These are some of the questions addressed in this chapter.

Why Do People Help?

There are two types of motives for behaviors such as Irene Opdyke's. Sometimes we help because we want to relieve a person's suffering. Behavior motivated by the desire to relieve a victim's suffering is called **altruism.** Other times we help because we hope to gain something from it for ourselves. We may give to a charity to get a tax deduction, for example, or we may give because we think it makes us look good. Often, we experience personal satisfaction and increased self-esteem after helping. When we give help with an eye on the reward we will get, our behavior is not really altruistic. It falls into the category of behaviors known simply as *helping behavior*.

altruism Helping behavior motivated purely by the desire to relieve a victim's suffering and not by the anticipation of reward.

Notice that the distinction between altruism and helping behavior lies in the motivation for performing the behavior, not the outcome. A person who is motivated purely by the need to relieve the suffering of the victim may receive a reward for his or her actions. However, he or she didn't perform the actions with the expectation of receiving that reward. This marks the behavior as altruistic.

The distinction between altruism and helping behavior may seem artificial because the outcome in both cases is that someone in need receives help. Does it matter what motivates the behavior? Yes, it does. The quality of the help given may vary according to the motivation behind the behavior. For example, there were others besides Irene Opdyke who helped rescue Jews, but some of them were paid for their efforts. The Jews who paid their helpers were not necessarily treated very well. In fact, Christians in Nazi-occupied Europe who helped hide Jews for pay did not extend the same level of care as those who were not paid. Jews hidden by "paid helpers" were more likely to be mistreated, abused, and turned in than were those hidden by the more altruistic "rescuers" (Tec, 1986).

The question posed by social psychologists about all of these acts is, What motivates people to help? Is there really such a thing as altruism, or are people always hoping for some personal reward when they help others? Researchers have proposed a number of hypotheses to answer this question.

Empathy: Helping in Order to Relieve Another's Suffering

Social psychologist C. Daniel Batson (1987, 1990a, 1990b) suggested that we may help others because we truly care about them and their suffering. This caring occurs because humans have strong feelings of *empathy*—compassionate understanding of how the person in need feels. Feelings of empathy encompass sympathy, pity, and sorrow (Eisenberg & Miller, 1987).

What cognitive and/or emotional experience underlies empathy? Batson, Early, and Salvarani (1997) suggested that *perspective taking* is at the heart of helping acts. According to Batson and colleagues, there are two perspectives that are relevant to

helping situations: *imagine other* and *imagine self.* An imagine-other perspective operates when you think about how the person in need of help perceives the helping situation and the feelings that are aroused in that situation. An imagine-self perspective operates when you imagine how you would think and feel if you were in the victim's situation. Batson and colleagues predicted that the perspective taken affects the arousal of empathy or personal distress.

Batson and colleagues (1997) conducted an experiment in which participants were told to adopt one of three perspectives while listening to a story about a person in need (Katie). In the *objective-perspective* condition, participants were instructed to be as objective as possible and not to imagine what the person had been through. In the *imagine-other* condition, participants were instructed to try to imagine how the person in need felt about what had happened. In the *imagine-self* condition, participants were told to imagine how they themselves would feel in the situation. Batson and colleagues measured the extent to which the manipulation produced feelings of empathy or personal distress.

Batson and colleagues (1997) found that participants in both imagine conditions felt more empathy for Katie than did those in the objective condition. Furthermore, they found that participants in the imagine-other condition felt more empathy than did those in the imagine-self condition. Participants in the imagine-self condition were more likely to experience personal distress than empathy. Thus, two emotional experiences were produced depending on which perspective a person took.

How does empathy relate to altruism? Although attempts to answer this question have been somewhat controversial, it appears that empathy, once aroused, increases the likelihood of an altruistic act. This is exactly what is predicted from Batson and colleagues' (1997) **empathy-altruism hypothesis**. Psychologists, however, have never been comfortable with the idea that people may do selfless acts. The idea of a truly altruistic act runs contrary to the behaviorist tradition in psychology. According to this view, behavior is under control of overt reinforcers and punishers. Behavior develops and is maintained if it is reinforced. Thus, the very idea of a selfless, nonrewarded act seems farfetched.

empathy–altruism hypothesis An explanation suggesting that the arousal of empathy leads to altruistic acts.

Empathy and Egoism: Two Paths to Helping

When we see or hear about someone in need, we often experience personal distress. Now, distress is an unpleasant emotion, and we try to avoid it. After all, most of us do not like to see others suffer. Therefore, we may give help not out of feelings of empathy for victims but in order to relieve our own personal distress. This motive for helping is called *egoism*. For example, if you saw the suffering after Hurricane Katrina and thought, "If I don't do something, I'll feel terrible all day," you would be focused on your own distress rather than on the distress of the victims. Generally, egoistic motives are more self-centered and selfish than empathic motives (Batson, Fultz, & Schoenrade, 1987). Thus, there are different paths to helping, one involving empathy and the other personal distress. These two competing explanations of helping are shown in Figure 11.1.

How can we know which of these two paths better explains helping behavior? Note that when the motivation is to reduce personal distress, helping is only one solution. Another is to remove ourselves from the situation. But when the motivation is altruistic, only one solution is effective: helping the victim. The egoist, motivated by reducing personal distress, is more likely to respond to someone in need by escaping the situation if possible. The altruist, motivated by empathy for the victim, is not.

Batson designed some experiments to test the relative merits of the personal distress versus the empathy-altruism explanations by varying the ease with which subjects

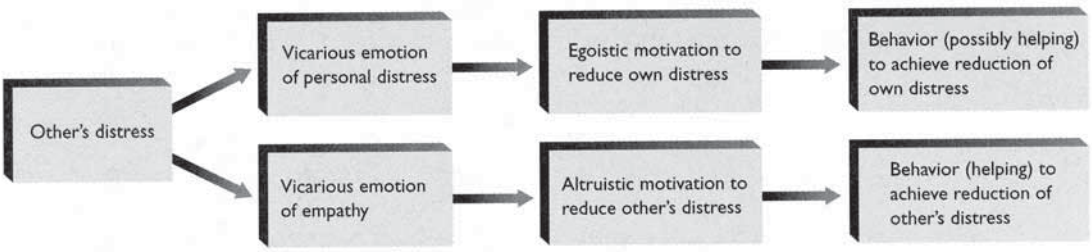


Figure 11.1 Helping as a function of ease of escape and empathy. Participants high in empathy are likely to help a person in need, even if escape is easy. Participants low in empathy help only if escape is difficult.

From. Batson, Fultz, and Schoenrade (1987).

could avoid contact with the person in need. In one study, subjects watched someone (apparently) experiencing pain in response to a series of electric shocks (Batson, 1990a). Some subjects were told that they would see more of the shock series—the difficult-escape condition. Others were told that they would see no more of the shock series, although the victim would still get shocked—the easy-escape condition.

The personal distress reduction explanation predicts that everyone will behave the same in this situation. When escape is easy, everyone will avoid helping—we all want to relieve our feelings of personal distress. When escape is difficult, everyone will help—again, we all want to relieve our feelings of personal distress. The empathy-altruism explanation, on the other hand, predicts that people will behave differently, depending on their motivation. This will be particularly apparent when it is easy to escape. Under these conditions, those motivated by egoistic concerns will escape. Those motivated by empathy will help even though they easily could have escaped.

Batson's research confirmed the empathy hypothesis, which predicts that empathic feelings matter very much. Some people chose to help even when escape was easy, indicating that it was their caring about the victim, not their own discomfort, that drove their behavior (Figure 11.2). In a recent replication of Batson's original experiment employing all female participants the same pattern of results was found (Bierhoff & Rohmann, 2004). When escape was easy empathic individuals were more likely to help than egoistic individuals. No such difference emerged for the difficult escape condition. Other research shows that it is the helper's empathic feelings for the person in need that are the prime motivators for helping (Dovidio, Allen, & Schroeder, 1990).

In a different test of the empathy-altruism hypothesis, Batson and Weeks (1996) reasoned that if a person aroused to empathy tries to help a person in distress and fails, there should be a substantial change in the helper's state of mind to a negative mood. They reasoned further that less negative mood change would result when little or no empathy was aroused. The results of their experiment confirmed this. Participants in the high-empathy condition experienced greater negative mood shifts after failed help than participants in the low-empathy condition.

Interestingly, empathy does not always lead to an increase in altruism. Batson and colleagues (1999) demonstrated that both egoism and empathy can lead to reduced helping or, what they called a "threat to the common good." Batson and colleagues gave participants the opportunity to divide resources among a group or keep them for themselves (egoism). In one group-allocation condition, one of the group members aroused the empathy of the participants. In a second group-allocation condition, there was no group member who aroused empathy. In both group conditions, participants could choose to allocate resources to the group as a whole or to an individual member of the group. Batson and colleagues found that when a participant's allocation scheme

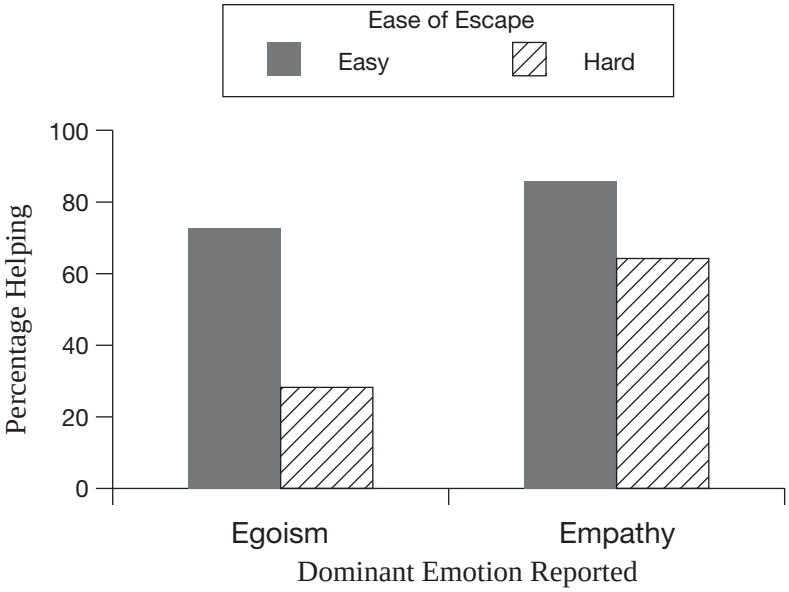


Figure 11.2. The relationship between the emotion experienced, ease of escape and helping.

Based on data from Batson, et al. (1988)

was private, he or she allocated fewer resources to the group than the self. This was true regardless of whether the empathy-arousing victim was present. Conversely, when allocation strategies were public, participants allocated fewer resources to the group as a whole only when the empathy-arousing victim was present. The research from Batson and colleagues suggests that both egoism and empathy can threaten the common good. However, potential evaluation by others (the public condition) strongly inhibits those motivated by egoism but not empathy.

Empathy appears to be a powerful emotion that can lead to helping even when the altruistic individual has been treated badly by another. In an imaginative experiment by Batson and Ahmad (2001), female participants took part in a game involving an exchange of raffle tickets. The participant was given three tickets worth +5, +5 and –5. The participant was told that her partner in the game (there was no partner; the partner's behavior was determined by the experimenter) had the same tickets (+5, +5, and –5). Batson and Ahmad aroused high empathy for the partner for some participants and low empathy for others. On the first exchange the "partner" gave the participant the –5 raffle ticket, meaning that the partner was in effect trying to keep as many tickets as possible. The measure of altruism was the number of participants who would give a +5 ticket to the partner. The empathy-altruism hypothesis predicts that participants experiencing high empathy for the partner should be willing to give the partner positive raffle tickets, despite the defection by the partner. The results were consistent with this prediction: 45% of the high-empathy participants gave the defecting partner the +5 ticket, whereas only 10% of the low-empathy participants gave the +5 card.

Finally, empathy is an emotion that is not directed equally to all individuals in need. Empathy has been found to be a stronger predictor of helping when an in-group member needs help than if an out-group member needs help (Sturmer, Snyder, & Omoto, 2005).

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Challenging the Empathy-Altruism Hypothesis

Everett Sanderson was standing on a subway platform one day when a woman fell onto the tracks. Sanderson leapt down onto the tracks and pulled the woman to safety just moments before a train rushed into the station. When asked why he went to a stranger's aid, he replied that he would not have been able to live with himself had he not helped.

Perhaps people help because not helping would violate their view of themselves as moral and altruistic and would make them feel guilty. Or, perhaps they are concerned with what others may think if they do not help, and they would experience shame. The notion that people may help because of the shame and guilt they will feel if they do not help—known as the **empathy-punishment hypothesis**—presents a challenge to the empathy-altruism hypothesis.

empathy–punishment hypothesis A hypothesis suggesting that helping occurs because individuals are motivated to avoid the guilt or shame brought about by failure to help.

Batson accepted the challenge of this hypothesis. He thought that people who help to avoid guilt or shame should help less when provided with a good justification for not helping. After all, if you can plausibly justify not helping to other people (avoid shame) and to yourself (avoid guilt), then no punishment occurs. If, however, your motive for helping is purely altruistic, then reduction of the victim's distress is the issue, not good rationalizations for not helping.

Batson and his colleagues (1988) designed research to pit the empathy-altruism hypothesis against the empathy-punishment explanation. There were two variables in this experiment: the subject's level of empathy for the victim (high or low) and the strength of the justification for not helping (strong or weak). Subjects listened to a simulated news interview in which a college senior (Katie) was interviewed about her parents' and sister's recent deaths in an automobile accident and her current role as sole supporter of her younger brother and sister. Empathy was manipulated by instructing subjects either to pay attention to the "technical aspects" of the news program (low empathy) or to "try to imagine how the person who is being interviewed feels" (Batson et al., 1988, p. 61).

After hearing the news program, the subjects read two letters left by the professor in charge of the experiment. The first letter thanked the subjects for participating and indicated that it occurred to him that some subjects might want to help Katie. The second letter was from Katie herself, outlining ways that the subjects could help her (e.g., babysitting, helping around the house, helping with fundraising projects). Subjects indicated their willingness to help on a response form that was used for the justification manipulation. The response form had eight spaces for individuals to indicate whether they would help Katie. In all cases, seven of the eight spaces were already filled in with fictitious names. In the low justification for not helping condition, five of the seven individuals on the list had agreed to help Katie. In the high justification for not helping condition, only two of the seven agreed to help.

The empathy-punishment explanation predicts that when there is a strong justification for not helping, the amount of empathy aroused won't matter. The empathy-altruism hypothesis predicts that empathic motivation matters most when justification for not helping and empathy are high. Only when people fail to empathize with the person in need does high justification for not helping have an effect on helping. The results of the research support the empathy-altruism hypothesis (Batson, 1990a; Batson et al., 1988). If a person has empathic feelings and truly cares about the person in need, rationalizations, however strong, do not stop him or her from helping.

Yet another challenge to the empathy-altruism hypothesis comes from research by Cialdini and his colleagues. Cialdini suggested that the data supporting the empathy-altruism hypothesis can be reinterpreted with changes in one's sense of self that occur in empathy situations. Cialdini and colleagues argued that in addition to

arousing empathic concern about a person in distress, helping situations also arouse a greater sense of self-other overlap. Specifically, the helper sees more of himself or herself in the person in need (Cialdini, Brown, Lewis, Luce, & Neuberg, 1997). When this occurs, the helper may engage in helping because of a greater sense of closeness with the victim than with the arousal of empathic concern alone.

Cialdini and colleagues (1997) conducted three experiments to test the self-other oneness hypothesis. They found that when the self-other-oneness dimension was considered along with empathy arousal, the relationship between empathy and altruism was weakened substantially. Furthermore, they found that empathy increases altruism only if it results in an increase in self-other oneness. According to Cialdini and colleagues, empathic concern for a victim serves as an emotional cue for the increase in self-other oneness. Additionally, as suggested by Neuberg and colleagues, because empathy is an emotion, it may only be important in deciding between not helping or providing minimal or superficial help (Newberg, Cialdini, Brown, Luce, & Sagarin, 1997).

However, the matter was not resolved, because Batson (1997) pointed out that the methods used by Cialdini and colleagues were questionable. In fact, Batson and colleagues (1997) found that when more careful procedures were used, there was little evidence that self-other oneness was critical in mediating the empathy-altruism link. As to whether empathy arousal leads only to superficial helping, Batson pointed out that the empathy-altruism hypothesis only states that empathy arousal is often associated with an altruistic act and does not specify the depth of the act. Batson, however, does acknowledge that there may be limits to the empathy-altruism relationship.

Where do we stand currently on these hypotheses about helping? Although the research of Batson and others supports the empathy-altruism hypothesis (Batson et al., 1988; Dovidio et al., 1990), other research does not. For example, a strong relationship has been found between feeling and giving help, a finding that does not support the empathy-altruism hypothesis (Cialdini & Fultz, 1990). If we give help when we feel sad, it seems more likely that we are helping to relieve personal distress than out of pure altruism.

It is apparent that the empathy-altruism hypothesis remains a point of controversy in social psychology. Batson (1997) suggested that the controversy exists mainly over whether there is enough clear evidence to justify acceptance of the empathy-altruism hypothesis. There is agreement, according to Batson, that empathy can be a factor in altruistic behavior. At this point, it is probably best to adopt a position between the competing hypotheses. People may be motivated by empathic altruism, but they seem to need to know that the victim benefited from their help (Smith, Keating, & Stotland, 1989). This allows them to experience *empathic joy* for helping the victim. Empathic joy simply means that helpers feel good about the fact that their efforts helped someone and that there was a positive outcome for that person. Helpers get a reward: the knowledge that someone they helped benefited. Additionally, helping situations may arouse a greater sense of closeness or oneness with the helper and the victim. In any event, empathy does appear to be an important emotion involved in altruism.

Biological Explanations: Helping in Order to Preserve Our Own Genes

As mentioned earlier, some psychologists have been skeptical about the existence of purely altruistic behavior, because they believe behavior is shaped and regulated by rewards and punishments. But there is another reason psychologists have been skeptical about the existence of pure altruism, and that reason is biological: People or animals

that carry altruism involving personal danger to its logical conclusion will sometimes die. Because self-preservation, or at least the preservation of one's genes (i.e., one's children or relatives), is a fundamental rule of evolutionary biology, pure altruism stands on some shaky grounds (Wilson, 1978). Self-sacrificing behavior is very rare. When it occurs, we reward it extravagantly. The Medal of Honor, for example, is given for extraordinary bravery, behavior that goes beyond the call of duty.

Evolutionary biologists find altruistic behavior fascinating, because it presents a biological paradox: In light of the principle of survival of the fittest, how can a behavior have evolved that puts the individual at risk and makes survival less likely (Wilson, 1975)? The principle of natural selection favors selfish behavior. Those animals that take care of themselves and do not expend energy on helping others are more likely to survive and reproduce their genes. The basic measure of biological fitness is the relative number of an individual's offspring that survive and reproduce (Wilson, 1975).

The evolutionary biologist's answer to the paradox is to suggest that there are no examples of purely altruistic, totally selfless behavior in nature. Instead, there is behavior that may have the effect of helping others but also serves some selfish purpose. For example, consider the white-fronted bee eater, a bird living in eastern and southern Africa (Goleman, 1991b). These birds live in complex colonies consisting of 15 to 25 extended families. Family units consist of about four overlapping generations. When breeding time arrives, some family members do not breed. Instead, they serve as helpers who devote themselves to constructing nests, feeding females, and defending the young. This helping is called *alloparenting*, or cooperative breeding.

How could such behavior have evolved? The bee eaters who do not breed lose the opportunity to pass on their genes to offspring. However, their behavior does help to ensure the survival of the whole colony and, specifically, the family members with whom they share genes. This conclusion is supported by the fact that the bee eater helpers provide cooperative help only to their closest relatives. Birds that could have provided help but do not turn out to be "in-laws"—birds that have no genetic connection with the mating pairs. Although the helping behavior does not further the survival of the individual's genes, it serves to preserve the individual's gene pool.

Do humans differ significantly from animals when it comes to altruism? According to sociobiologists, human social behavior is governed by the same rules that order all animal behavior. A central problem of sociobiology is to explain how altruism can exist even though such behavior endangers individual fitness and survival (Wilson, 1975, 1978). However, there is ample evidence that altruism among humans flourishes and endures.

One possible resolution to this apparent paradox lies in the idea that human survival, dating to the beginnings of human society, depends on cooperation. Human beings, smaller, slower, and weaker than many other animal species, needed to form cooperative groups to survive. In such groups *reciprocal altruism* may be more important than *kin altruism.* In reciprocal altruism, the costs of behaving altruistically are weighed against the benefits. If there is greater benefit than cost, an altruistic response will occur. Also, reciprocal altruism involves a kind of tit-for-tat mentality: You help me, and I'll help you.

Cooperation and reciprocal altruism (helping one another) would have been selected for, genetically, because they increase the survival of human beings (Hoffman, 1981). Unlike animals, humans do not restrict their helping to close genetic relatives. Instead, humans can maintain the gene pool by helping those who share common characteristics, even if they are not close kin (Glassman, Packel, & Brown, 1986**)**. Helping nonkin may help one preserve one's distinguishing characteristics in the gene pool in a manner analogous to helping kin.

Social psychologists acknowledge that biology plays a role in altruistic behavior. Altruism does not occur as often or as naturally as aggression, but it does occur. However, social psychology also points out that altruistic behavior in humans is determined by more than the biological dimension of our nature.

Helping in Emergencies: A Five-Stage Decision Model

Irene Opdyke's decision to help the Jews in Ternopol is an example of helping involving a long-term commitment to a course of action. We refer to this as *long-term helping*. Opdyke's help involved a commitment that was extended over a period of months and required a great investment of effort and resources. However, there are many other situations that require quick action involving a short-term commitment to helping. For example, if you saw a child fall into a pond, you probably would rescue that child. We refer to this type of helping as *situation-specific helping*. This helping, most likely in response to an emergency, does not require a long-term investment of effort and resources.

Emergency situations in which bystanders give help occur quite often. But there are also many instances in which bystanders remain passive and do not intervene. This is true even when a victim is in clear need of help. One such incident captured the attention not only of the public but also of social psychologists: the tragic death of Kitty Genovese on March 13, 1964.

Genovese, a 24-year-old waitress, was coming home from work in Queens, New York, late one night. As she walked to her apartment building, a man wielding a knife attacked her. She screamed for help; 38 of her neighbors took notice from their apartments. One yelled for the man to stop. The attacker ran off, only to return when it was obvious that nobody was coming to her aid. He stabbed Genovese repeatedly, eventually killing her. The attack lasted 40 minutes. When the police were called, they responded within 2 minutes. More than 40 years later, this tragedy continues to raise questions about why her neighbors did not respond to her cries for help.

The Genovese tragedy and similar incidents that occur all too frequently have raised many questions among the public and among social scientists. Dissatisfied with explanations that blamed life in the big city ("urban apathy"), social psychologists Darley and Latané began to devise some explanations about why the witnesses to Genovese's murder did nothing to intervene. Darley and Latané sketched out a social psychological model to explain the bystanders' behavior.

The model proposed that there are five stages a bystander must pass through, each representing an important decision, before he or she will help a person in need (Latané, & Darley, 1968). In their original formulation of the model, Latané and Darley (1968) suggested that a bystander must notice the situation, label the situation correctly as an emergency, and assume responsibility for helping. Darley and Latané proposed that there is a factor even beyond assuming responsibility: The individual must decide how to help. Help, according to these researchers, could take the form of direct intervention (Irene Opdyke's behavior) or indirect intervention (calling the police). The general model proposed by Latané and Darley (1968; Darley & Latané, 1968), along with an additional stage, is shown in Figure 11.3.

At each stage of the model, the individual must assess the situation and make a "yes" or "no" decision. At any point in the decision process, a "no" decision will lead to failure

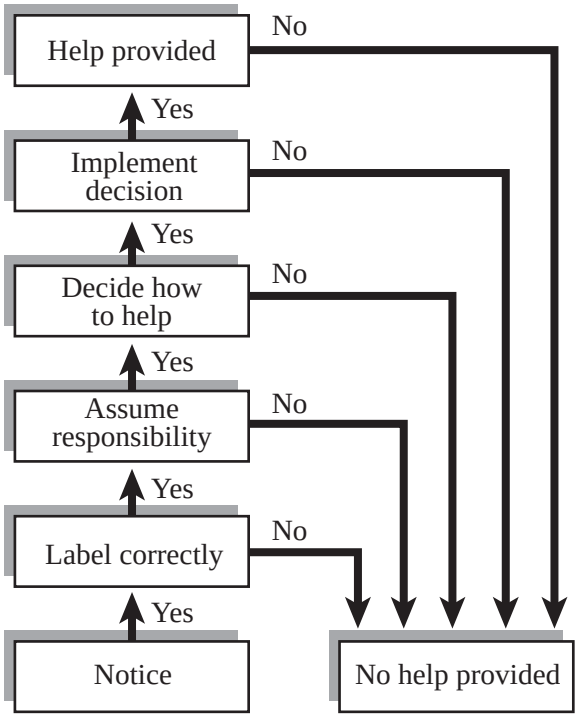


Figure 11.3 The five-stage model of helping. The path to helping begins with noticing an emergency situation. Next, a potential helper must label the situation correctly as an emergency and then assume responsibility for helping. A negative decision at any point will lead to nonhelping.

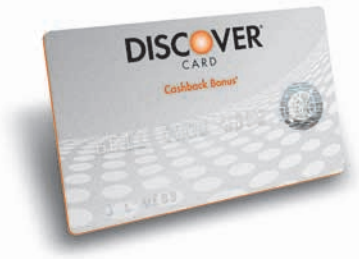
Based on Darley and Latané (1968) and Latané and Darley (1968).

to help. A "yes" decision itself does not guarantee intervention; it simply allows the person to move to the next stage of the model. According to the model, help will be given only if a "yes" decision is made at each stage. Let's consider each of the five stages.

Stage 1: Noticing the Situation

Before we can expect a person to intervene in a situation, that person must have noticed that an emergency exists. If, for example, an accident occurred 10 miles from where you are presently sitting, you would not be expected to help because you are unaware of the accident. Before you can act, you must be aware that something has occurred. For example, Kitty Genovese's neighbors were aware of what was happening to Kitty. Noticing was not a problem for the witnesses.

Noticing is purely a sensory/perceptual phenomenon. If the emergency situation catches our attention, we will notice the situation. As such, noticing involves the basic laws of perception, such as the figure-ground relationship. This fundamental relationship is manifested when a stimulus stands out against a background. For example, when you go to a museum and look at a painting hanging on the gallery wall, the painting is the figure and the gallery wall is the background. We pay most attention to the figure (so when you tell a friend about your trip to the museum, you will describe the painting and not the gallery wall). In general, we are particularly likely to notice a stimulus that is brightly colored, noisy, or somehow stands out against a background. This is also true when noticing an emergency. Our chances of noticing an emergency increase if it stands out against the background of everyday life. For example, we are more likely to notice an automobile accident if there is a loud crash than if there is little or no sound. Anything that makes the emergency more conspicuous will increase the probability that we will attend to it.



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Stage 2: Labeling the Situation as an Emergency

If a person notices the situation, the next step is to correctly label it as one that requires intervention. One very important factor at this stage is whether there is ambiguity or uncertainty about what has happened. For example, imagine that you look out the window of your second-floor apartment one day and notice immediately below the window a car with its driver's side door open and a person laying half in and half out of the car. Has the person collapsed, perhaps of a heart attack or a stroke? Or is the person changing a fuse under the dashboard or fixing the radio? If you decide on the latter explanation, you will turn away and not give it another thought. You have made a "no" decision in the labeling stage of the model.

Recognizing an emergency situation can be highly ambiguous because there is often more than one interpretation for a situation. Is the woman upstairs beating her child or merely disciplining her? Is the man staggering down the street sick or drunk? Is that person slumped in the doorway injured or a drunken derelict? These questions must be resolved if we are to correctly label a situation as an emergency requiring our intervention.

When two 10-year-old boys abducted a 2-year-old from a shopping center in Liverpool, England, in 1993 and subsequently killed him, they walked together for 2 miles along a busy road congested with traffic. Thirty-eight people remembered seeing the three children, and some said later that the toddler was being dragged or appeared to be crying. Apparently, the situation was ambiguous enough—were they his older brothers, trying to get him home for dinner?—that no one stopped. A driver of a dry-cleaning van said he saw one of the older boys aim a kick at the toddler, but it looked like a "persuading" kind of kick such as one might use on a 2-year-old (Morrison, 1994). The driver failed to label the situation correctly.

The Ambiguity of the Situation

Research confirms that situational ambiguity is an important factor in whether people help. In one study, subjects were seated in a room and asked to fill out a questionnaire (Yakimovich & Salz, 1971). Outside the room, a confederate of the experimenter was washing windows. When the experimenter signaled, the confederate knocked over his ladder and pail, fell to the pavement, and grabbed his ankle. In one condition (the verbalization condition), the confederate screamed and cried for help. In the other condition (the no-verbalization condition), the confederate moaned but didn't cry for help.

In both conditions, subjects jumped up and went to the window when they heard the sound of the crash. Therefore, all subjects noticed the emergency. In the verbalization condition, 81% (13 of 16) tried to help the victim. In the no-verbalization condition, however, only 29% (5 of 17) tried to help. The clear cry for help, then, increased the probability that people would help. Without it, it wasn't clear that the man needed help.

Note also that the potential helpers had all seen the victim before his accident. He was a real person to them. Recall in the Genovese case that the witnesses had not seen her before she was stabbed. Given this fact and that the murder took place in the fog of the early morning hours, ambiguity must have existed, at least for some witnesses.

The Presence of Others

The presence of other bystanders also may affect the labeling process. Reactions of other bystanders often determine the response to the situation. If bystanders show little concern over the emergency, individuals will be less likely to help. When we are placed in a social situation (especially an ambiguous one), we look around us to

see what others are doing (the process of social comparison). If others are not concerned, we may not define the situation as an emergency, and we probably will not offer to help.

In one study, increasing or decreasing the availability of cues from another bystander affected helping (Darley, Teger, & Lewis, 1973). Subjects were tested either alone or in groups of two. Those participating in groups were either facing each other across a table (face-to-face condition) or seated back-to-back (not-facing condition). An emergency was staged (a fall) while the subjects worked on their tasks. More subjects who were alone helped (90%) than subjects who were in groups. However, whether subjects were facing each other made a big difference. Subjects who were facing each other were significantly more likely to help (80%) than subjects not facing each other (20%). Consider what happens when you sit across from someone and you both hear a cry for help. You look at her, she looks at you. If she then goes back to her work, you probably will not define the situation as an emergency. If she says, "Did you hear that?" you are more likely to go investigate.

Generally, we rely on cues from other bystanders more and more as the ambiguity of the situation increases. Thus, in highly ambiguous emergency situations, we might expect the presence of others who are passive to suppress helping. The fact that the witnesses to Genovese's murder were in their separate apartments and did not know what others were doing and thinking operated to suppress intervention.

Stage 3: Assuming Responsibility to Help: The Bystander Effect

Noticing and correctly labeling a situation as an emergency are not enough to guarantee that a bystander will intervene. It is certain that the 38 witnesses to Genovese's murder noticed, to one degree or another, the incident and probably labeled it as an emergency. What they did not do is conclude that they had a responsibility to help. Darley and Latané (1968), puzzled by the lack of intervention on the part of the witnesses, thought that the presence of others might inhibit rather than increase helping. They designed a simple yet elegant experiment to test for the effects of multiple bystanders on helping. Their experiment demonstrated the power of the **bystander effect,** in which a person in need of help is less likely to receive help as the number of bystanders increases.

bystander effect The social phenomenon that helping behavior is less likely to occur as the number of witnesses to an emergency increases.

Subjects in this experiment were told it was a study of interpersonal communication. They were asked to participate in a group discussion of their current problems. To ensure anonymity, the discussion took place over intercoms. In reality, there was no group. The experimenter played a tape of a discussion to lead the subject to believe that other group members existed.

Darley and Latané (1968) varied the size of the group. In one condition, the subject was told that there was one other person in the group (so the group consisted of the subject and the victim); in a second condition, there were two other people (subject, victim, and four others). The discussion went along uneventfully until it was the victim's turn to speak. The actor who played the role of the victim on the tape simulated a seizure. Darley and Latané noted the number of subjects who tried to help and how long it took them to try to help.

The study produced two major findings. First, the size of the group had an effect on the percentage of subjects helping. When the subject believed that he or she was alone in the experiment with the victim, 85% of the subjects helped. The percentage of subjects offering help declined when the subject believed there was one other bystander (62%) or four other bystanders (31%). In other words, as the number of bystanders increased, the likelihood of the subject helping the victim decreased.

The second major finding was that the size of the group had an effect on time between the onset of the seizure and the offering of help. When the subject believed he or she was alone, help occurred more quickly than when the subject believed other bystanders were present. In essence, the subjects who believed they were members of a larger group became "frozen in time" by the presence of others. They had not decided to help or not to help. They were distressed but could not act.

Interestingly, the "other bystanders" need not be physically present in order for the bystander effect to occur. In one experiment conducted by Garcia, Weaver, Moskowitz, and Darley (2002), participants were asked to imagine that they had won a dinner for either themselves and 30 friends, 10 friends, or just for themselves (alone condition). Later participants were asked to indicate how much money they would be willing to donate to charity after they graduated college. Garcia et al. found that participants indicated the lowest level of donations in the 30 friends condition, and the most in the alone condition (the 10-friends condition fell between these two groups). This effect extends to computer chat rooms (Markey, 2000). Markey found that as the number of participants in a chat room increased, the time it took to receive requested help also increased. Interestingly, the chat room bystander effect was eliminated when the person making the request personalized the request by singling someone out by name.

Why Does the Bystander Effect Occur?

diffusion of responsibility
An explanation suggesting that each bystander assumes another person will take responsibility to help.

The best explanation offered for the bystander effect is **diffusion of responsibility** (Darley & Latané, 1968). According to this explanation, each bystander assumes that another bystander will take action. If all the bystanders think that way, no help will be offered. This explanation fits quite well with Darley and Latané's findings in which the bystanders could not see each other, as was the case in the Genovese killing. Under these conditions, it is easy to see how a bystander (unaware of how other bystanders are acting) might assume that someone else has already taken or will take action.

What about emergency situations in which bystanders can see one another? In this case, the bystanders could actually see that others were not helping. Diffusion of responsibility under these conditions may not explain bystander inaction (Latané & Darley, 1968). Another explanation has been offered for the bystander effect that centers on *pluralistic ignorance*, which occurs when a group of individuals acts in the same manner despite the fact that each person has different perceptions of an event (Miller & McFarland, 1987). In the bystander effect, pluralistic ignorance operates when the bystanders in an ambiguous emergency situation look around and see each other doing nothing; they assume that the others are thinking that the situation is not an emergency (Miller & McFarland, 1987). In essence, the collective inaction of the bystanders leads to a redefinition of the situation as a nonemergency.

Latané and Darley (1968) provided evidence for this explanation. Subjects filled out a questionnaire alone in a room, with two passive bystanders (confederates of the experimenter) or with two other actual subjects. While the subjects were filling out the questionnaire, smoke was introduced into the room through a vent. The results showed that when subjects were alone in the room, 75% of the subjects reported the smoke, many within 2 minutes of first noticing it. In the condition in which the subject was in the room with two passive bystanders, only 10% reported the smoke. In the last condition, in which the subject was with two other subjects, 38% reported the smoke. Thus, the presence of bystanders once again suppressed helping. This occurred despite the fact that subjects in the bystander conditions denied that the other people in the room had any effect on them.

In post-experimental interviews, Latané and Darley (1968) searched for the underlying cause for the observed results. They found that subjects who reported the smoke felt that the smoke was unusual enough to report, although they didn't feel that the smoke was dangerous. Subjects who failed to report the smoke, which was most likely to occur in the two-bystander condition, developed a set of creative reasons why the smoke should not be reported. For example, some subjects believed that the smoke was smog piped into the room to simulate an urban environment, or that the smoke was truth gas designed to make them answer the questionnaire truthfully. Whatever reasons these subjects came up with, the situation was redefined as a nonemergency.

Is diffusion of responsibility, dependent on the number of bystanders present, *always* the underlying cause for the bystander effect? Although diffusion of responsibility is the most widely accepted explanation, it is not the only explanation. Levine (1999) suggests that there are situations in which diffusion of responsibility based on the presence of bystanders cannot explain nonintervention. Instead, Levine suggests that if a bystander assumes that a **social category relationship** exists between parties in a potential helping situation, intervention is unlikely. A social category relationship is one in which bystanders assume that the parties involved belong together in some way. For example, a spousal relationship would fit this definition because the two individuals are seen as belonging together in the relationship. Levine argues that when we are confronted with a situation in which a social category relationship exists or is assumed, a social norm of nonintervention is activated. In short, we are socialized to keep our noses out of family matters. In fact, there is research that shows that bystanders are less willing to intervene in an emergency situation when a social category relationship exists (Shotland & Straw, 1976). Shotland and Straw, for example, found that 65% of participants were willing to intervene in an argument between a male and female who were strangers, but only 19% were willing to intervene when the male and female were said to be married.

social category relationship A relationship in which bystanders assume that the parties involved belong together in some way.

Levine (1999) provides further evidence for this effect. He analyzed the trial transcript of the trial of two 10-year-old boys who murdered a 2-year-old child in London in 1993 (we briefly described this crime earlier in this chapter). The two older boys, Jon Thompson and Robert Venables, abducted James Bulger and walked Bulger around London for over 2 hours. During this time, the trio of boys encountered 38 witnesses. Some witnesses were alone, whereas others were with other bystanders. In a situation reminiscent of the Kitty Genovese murder, none of the 38 witnesses intervened. Based on his analysis of the trial transcript, Levine concluded that the nonintervention had little or nothing to do with the number of bystanders present, or diffusion of responsibility. Instead, statements of witnesses during trial testimony indicated that the witnesses assumed (or were told by the older boys) that the older boys were Bulger's brothers taking him home. According to Levine, the assumption that a social category relationship existed among the boys was the best explanation for why the 38 witnesses did not intervene.

As a final note, we need to understand that category relationships can extend beyond social categories. We may assume that a relationship exists between people and objects. For example, imagine you are going to your car after work and see another car parked next to yours. You see that the hood is open and there is someone tinkering with something under the hood. What would you think is going on? Most likely you would assume that the person tinkering under the hood owns the car and is fixing something. You would then be surprised to learn the next day that the car was stolen and the man tinkering under the hood was a thief! Assuming that such relationships exist can be a powerful suppressant to intervention.

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Limits to the Bystander Effect

Increasing the number of bystanders does not always suppress helping; there are exceptions to the bystander effect. The bystander effect does not hold when intervention is required in a potentially dangerous situation (Fischer, Greitemeir, Pollozek, & Frey, 2006). In this experiment participants watched what they believed was a live interaction between a male and female (actually the participants viewed a prerecorded videotape). In the high-potential-danger condition, the male was shown to be a large, "thug-like" individual who made progressively more aggressive sexual advances toward the female, culminating in sexually aggressive touching of the female and the female crying for help. At that point the tape went blank. In the low-potential-danger condition, the male was shown as a thin, short male who engaged in the same sexually aggressive behavior with the same victim reactions. Half of the participants watched the interaction alone (no bystander) and the other half watched it in the presence of a confederate of the experimenter (bystander). The experimenters measured whether the participant tried to help the female in distress. As shown in Figure 11.4, the bystander effect was replicated in the low-danger situation: Fewer participants attempt to help when a bystander is present than when the participant is alone. In the high-danger situation, however, the bystander effect was not evident.

In another experiment, a reversal of the typical bystander effect was shown with a potentially dangerous helping situation. One group of researchers staged a rape on a college campus and measured how many subjects intervened (Harari, Harari, & White, 1985). The subjects had three options in the experimental situation: fleeing without helping, giving indirect help (alerting a police officer who is out of view of the rape), or giving direct help (intervening directly in the rape).

Male subjects were tested as they walked either alone or in groups. (The groups in this experiment were simply subjects who happened to be walking together and not interacting with one another.) As the subjects approached a certain point, two actors staged the rape. The woman screamed, "Help! Help! Please help me! You bastard! Rape! Rape!" (Harari et al., 1985, p. 656). The results of this experiment did not support the

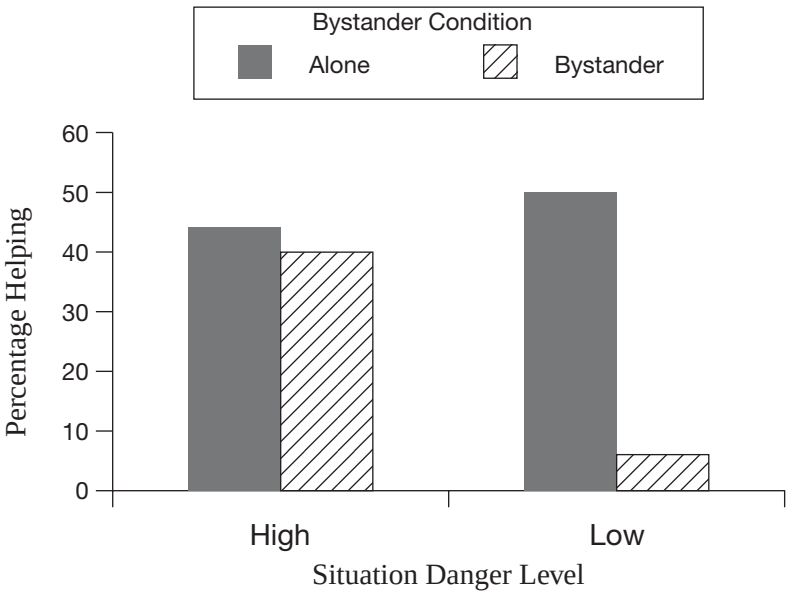

Figure 11.4 Bystanders who are alone are likely to help in high and low danger situations. The presence of another bystander increased helping in the high danger but not low danger situation; a clear reversal of the usual bystander effect.

Based on data from Fischer, et al. (2006).

bystander effect. Subjects walking in groups were more likely to help (85%) than subjects walking alone (65%). In this situation—a victim is clearly in need and the helping situation is dangerous—it seems that bystanders in groups are more likely to help than solitary bystanders (Clark & Word, 1974; Harari et al., 1985).

The bystander effect also seems to be influenced by the roles people take. In another study, some subjects were assigned to be the leaders of a group discussion and others to be assistants (Baumeister, Chesner, Senders, & Tice, 1988). When a seizure was staged, subjects assigned the role of leader were more likely to intervene (80%) than those assigned the role of assistant (35%). It appears that the responsibility inherent in the leadership role on a specific task generalizes to emergencies as well.

Finally, the bystander effect is less likely to occur when the helping situation confronting us involves a clear violation of a social norm that we personally care about. Imagine, for example, you see a person throw an empty bottle into the bushes at a public park. In such a situation you may engage in *social control* behaviors (e.g., confront the offender, complain to your partner). Contrast this with a situation where private property is involved (e.g., painting graffiti in an elevator in a building owned by a large corporation). You may be less likely to engage in social control behaviors. Chekroun and Brauer (2001) wondered if the bystander effect would operate differently in these two situations. They hypothesized that the bystander effect would hold for situations involving low personal implications (e.g., graffiti in the elevator), but not in situations involving high personal implications (e.g., littering in a public park). In the low-personal-implication condition a confederate of the experimenters entered an elevator in a shopping center parking lot. As soon as the door closed, the confederate began scrawling graffiti on the wall with a magic marker. This was done under two conditions: a participant alone in the elevator with the confederate (no bystanders) or two or three naïve individuals in the elevator with the confederate. In the high-personal-implications condition a confederate of the experimenters threw an empty plastic bottle into some bushes in a public park in front of one participant or a group of two or three participants. In both situations the reaction of the participant(s) was (were) recorded on a scale ranging from no social control to an audible negative comment. As you can see in Figure 11.5, social control was most

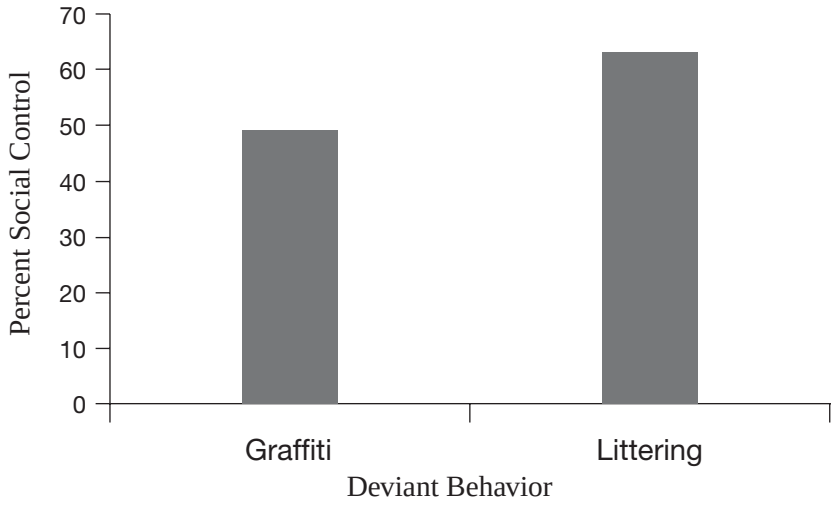

Figure 11.5 Social control behaviors are more likely if a behavior has high personal implications (littering in a public park) than if the behavior has low personal implications (graffiti in a privately-owned elevator).

Based on data from Checkroun and Brauer (2002).

likely to occur when other bystanders were present in the park-littering situation (high personal implications). Less social control was shown by the groups of participants in the graffiti situation (low personal implications).

Stage 4: Deciding How to Help

The fourth stage of the five-stage model of helping is deciding how to help. In the staged rape study, for example, subjects had a choice of directly intervening to stop the rape or aiding the victim by notifying the police (Harari, Harari, & White, 1985). What influences decisions like this?

There is considerable support for the notion that people who feel competent, who have the necessary skills, are more likely to help than those who feel they lack such competence. In a study in which subjects were exposed to a staged arterial bleeding emergency, the likelihood of providing effective help was determined only by the expertise of the subjects (some had Red Cross training; Shotland & Heinhold, 1985).

There are two reasons why greater competence may lead to more helping. First, feelings of competence increase confidence in one's ability to help and to know what ought to be done (Cramer, McMaster, Bartell, & Dragna, 1988). Second, feelings of competence increase sensitivity to the needs of others and empathy toward victims (Barnett, Thompson, & Pfiefer, 1985). People who feel like leaders are probably also more likely to help because they feel more confident about being able to help successfully.

Many emergencies, however, do not require any special training or competence. Irene Opdyke had no more competence in rescuing Jews than anyone else in Ternopol. In the Genovese case, a simple telephone call to the police was all that was needed. Clearly, no special competence was required.

Stage 5: Implementing the Decision to Help

Having passed through these four stages, a person may still choose not to intervene. To understand why, imagine that as you drive to campus, you see a fellow student standing next to his obviously disabled car. Do you stop and offer to help? Perhaps you are late for your next class and feel that you do not have the time. Perhaps you are not sure it is safe to stop on the side of the highway. Or perhaps the student strikes you as somehow undeserving of help (Bickman & Kamzan, 1973). Or perhaps the place where the help is needed is noisy (Moser, 1988). These and other considerations influence your decision whether to help.

Assessing Rewards and Costs for Helping

Social psychologists have found that people's evaluation of the rewards and costs involved in helping affect their decision to help or not to help. There are potential rewards for helping (gratitude from the victim, monetary reward, recognition by peers) and for not helping (avoiding potential danger, arriving for an appointment on time). Similarly, there are costs for helping (possible injury, embarrassment, inconvenience) and for not helping (loss of self-esteem). Generally, research indicates that the greater the cost of helping, the less likely people are to help (Batson, O'Quin, Fultz, & Vanderplas, 1983; Darley & Batson, 1973; Piliavin & Piliavin, 1972; Piliavin, Piliavin, & Rodin, 1975).

In a study of this relationship, Darley and Batson (1973) told seminarians taking part in an experiment at Princeton University that a high school group was visiting the campus and had requested a seminarian speaker. Half the subjects were told they had little time to get across campus to speak to the high school group, and the other half were told they had plenty of time. Additionally, some subjects were asked to speak

about the meaning of the parable of the Good Samaritan. The seminarians then left the building to give their talk, and lo and behold, while walking down a narrow lane, they saw a young man collapse in front of them. What did they do?

Now, do you recall the story of the Good Samaritan? A traveler is set on by robbers and left by the side of the road. A priest and a Levite, people holding important positions in the clergy of the time, walked by swiftly without helping. But a Samaritan, passing along the same road, stopped and helped. We might say that, for whatever reasons, helping was too costly for the priest and the Levite but not too costly for the Samaritan.

What about the seminarians? The "costly" condition in this experiment was the tight schedule: Stopping to help would make them late for their talk. Was helping too costly for them? Yes, it was. Subjects who were in a hurry, even if they were thinking about the story of the Good Samaritan, were less likely to stop and help than were subjects who were not in a hurry.

In an attempt to "capture" the effects of various costs for helping and nonhelping, Fritzsche, Finkelstein, and Penner (2000) had participants evaluate scenarios containing three costs for helping (time required to help, the discomfort involved in helping, and the urgency of the help) and three costs for not helping (victim responsibility, ability to diffuse responsibility, and victim deservingness). Participants read the scenarios in which these six variables were manipulated and were instructed to play the role of the individual receiving the request for help. For each scenario, the participant indicated his or her likelihood of helping the person making the request for help.

Fritzsche et al. (2000) found confirmation for the effects of cost on helping. In the scenarios where costs for helping were high, participants expressed lower willingness to help. Fritzsche et al. evaluated the importance of each of the six variables in determining willingness to give help. They found that the cues varied in importance with respect to helping. There was no significant gender difference in how the variables affected willingness to help. The following list shows the importance of the six variables (in order starting with the most important one):

1. Victim responsibility
2. Urgency of the help
3. Time required for help
4. Diffusion of responsibility
5. Discomfort involved in helping
6. Victim's deservingness

As is the case in decision-making research, there was a discrepancy between what participants believed would be important in determining helping and what actually turned out to be important. Participants believed that victim deservingness, time required to render help, and ability to diffuse responsibility would be the most important factors driving willingness to help. However, as you can see from the previous list, only one of those factors was near the top of the list (time required for help). Finally, there was a gender difference in this finding. Males were more accurate than females in identifying the importance of the variables.

The Effect of Mood on Helping

Likelihood of helping can even be affected by the bystander's mood. The research of Isen (1987) and her coworkers has shown that adults and children who are in a positive mood are more likely to help others than people who are not. People who had found a

dime in a phone booth in a shopping mall were more likely to pick up papers dropped by a stranger than people who had not found a coin. Students who had gotten free cookies in the library were more likely to volunteer to help someone and were less likely to volunteer to annoy somebody else when asked to do so as part of an experiment.

Although positive mood is related to an increase in helping, it does not lead to more helping if the person thinks that helping will destroy the good mood (Isen & Simmonds, 1978). Good moods seem to generate good thoughts about people, and this increases helping. People in good moods also are less concerned with themselves and more likely to be sensitive to other people, making them more aware of other people's needs and therefore more likely to help (Isen, 1987).

Music, it is said, can soothe the wild beast. Can it also make you more likely to help? North, Tarrent, and Hargreaves (2004) investigated this question. Participants in a gym were exposed to either soothing or annoying music during their workout periods. After the workout, participants were asked to help in a low-cost (sign a petition) or high-cost (help distribute leaflets) situation. North et al. found that when the soothing music had been played during the workout, participants were more likely to help in the high-cost situation than if the annoying music had been played. There was no difference between the two types of music for the low-cost helping situation.

Gratitude and Helping

Another factor that can affect helping is whether an individual received help when he or she needed help. Gratitude is an emotional state that has three functions relating to prosocial behavior (McCullough, Kilpatrick, Emmons, & Larson, 2001). First, gratitude acts as a sort of "moral barometer," indicating a change in one's state of mind after receiving help. Second, gratitude can function as a "moral motivator," impelling the recipient of help to reciprocate to his or her benefactor or strangers. Third, gratitude can serve as a "moral reinforcer." When someone expresses gratitude after receiving help, it increases the likelihood that the recipient of the gratitude will engage in prosocial behavior in the future. Taken together, these three functions suggest that gratitude will increase helping. But does it?

The answer to this question is yes. A feeling of gratitude tends to enhance helping (Bartlett & DeSteno, 2006; Tsang, 2006). In Bartlett and DeSteno's experiment, participants were led to believe that they would be performing a group task with another participant. Actually, the "other participant" was a confederate of the experimenter. The real participant and confederate performed tasks on separate computers. In the "gratitude" condition, after completing a task and while waiting for scores to be displayed, the confederate surreptitiously kicked the real participant's monitor plug out of a power strip. The confederate then "helped" the participant by finding and fixing the problem. In the "amusement" condition, participants watched a brief, amusing video clip (to induce positive affect unrelated to gratitude) after completing the task (the confederate did not kick out the plug nor offer help). In the "neutral" condition the confederate did not kick the plug out and only carried on a brief conversation with the real participant. Sometime later the confederate approached the participant and asked the participant to complete a long and tedious problem-solving survey. As shown in Figure 11.6, Bartlett and DeSteno found that participants were more willing to help in the gratitude condition than in either the amusement or neutral conditions. Thus, it was the gratitude itself and not just positive feelings that might be generated by receiving help that increased helping. Bartlett and DeSteno conducted some follow-up studies to determine if gratitude merely activates the norm of reciprocity (you should help those who help you),

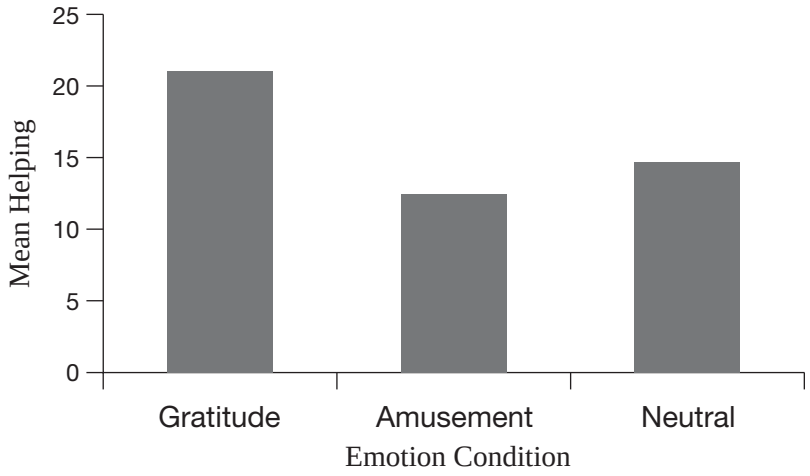

Figure 11.6 Gratitude and not just positive emotions increase helping. Gratitude seems to have special qualities that increase helping.

Based on data from Bartlett & DeSteno (2006)

thus leading to an increase in helping. Based on their results, Bartlett and DeSteno concluded that it was, in fact, the feeling of gratitude experienced by the real participants that increased helping, and not the norm of reciprocity.

Characteristics of the Victim

A decision to help (or not to help) also is affected by the victim's characteristics. For example, males are more likely to help females than to help other males (Eagly & Crowley, 1986; West, Whitney, & Schnedler, 1975). Females, on the other hand, are equally likely to help male and female victims (Early & Crowley, 1986). Physically attractive people are more likely to receive help than unattractive people (Benson, Karabenick, & Lerner, 1976). In one study, a pregnant woman, whether alone or with another woman, received more help than a nonpregnant woman or a facially disfigured woman (Walton et al., 1988).

Potential helpers also make judgments about whether a victim deserves help. If we perceive that a person got into a situation through his or her own negligence and is therefore responsible for his or her own fate, we tend to generate "just-world" thinking (Lerner & Simmons, 1966). According to the **just-world hypothesis,** people get what they deserve and deserve what they get. This type of thinking often leads us to devalue a person whom we think caused his or her own misfortune (Lerner & Simmons, 1966). Generally, we give less help to victims we perceive to have contributed to their own fate than to those we perceive as needy through no fault of their own (Berkowitz, 1969; Schopler & Matthews, 1965).

just-world hypothesis
A hypothesis that we believe people get what they deserve and deserve what they get.

However, we may relax this exacting standard if we perceive that the person in need is highly dependent on our help. In one experiment, subjects received telephone calls at home in which the caller mistook them for the owner of "Ralph's Garage" and told them that her car had broken down (Gruder, Romer, & Korth, 1978). The caller says either that she meant to have the car serviced but forgot (help needed due to victim's negligence) or that the car was just serviced (no negligence). In one condition, after the subject informs the caller that she has not reached Ralph's Garage, the caller says that she has no more change to make another call (high dependency). In another condition, no mention is made of being out of change. In all conditions the caller asks the subject to call Ralph's Garage for her. The researchers found that subjects were more likely

to help the negligent victim who had no more change than the negligent victim who presumably had other ways to get help (Figure 11.7). It seems that high dependence mediates just-world thinking. Regardless of whether the victim deserves what she gets, we can't help but take pity on her.

Just-world thinking also comes into play when we consider the degree to which a victim contributed to his or her own predicament. If you, as a helper, attribute a victim's suffering to his or her own actions (i.e., make an internal attribution), you will be less likely to help than if you attribute the suffering to some external cause (Schmidt & Weiner, 1988). When making judgments about individuals in need of help, we take into account the degree to which the victim had control over his or her fate (Schmidt & Weiner, 1988). For example, Greg Schmidt and Bernard Weiner (1988) found that subjects expressed less willingness to help a student in need of class notes if he needed the notes because he went to the beach instead of class (a controllable situation) than if he had medically related vision problems that prevented him from taking notes (uncontrollable situation).

Why do perceptions of controllability matter? Schmidt and Weiner (1988) reported that the emotions aroused are important factors in one's reaction to a person in need. If a victim's situation arouses anger, as in the controllable situation, we are less likely to give help than if the victim's situation arouses sympathy (as in the uncontrollable situation). Apparently, we are quite harsh when it comes to a victim whom we perceive as having contributed to his or her own plight. We reserve our sympathy for those victims who had little or no control over their own fates.

In an interesting application of this effect, Weiner and his colleagues (Graham, Weiner, Giuliano, & Williams, 1993; Weiner, 1993; Weiner, Perry, & Magnusson, 1988) applied this analysis to victims of various illnesses. Subjects tended to react with pity (and less anger) toward victims of conditions over which the victims had little control (Alzheimer's disease, cancer). Conversely, subjects tended to react with anger (and

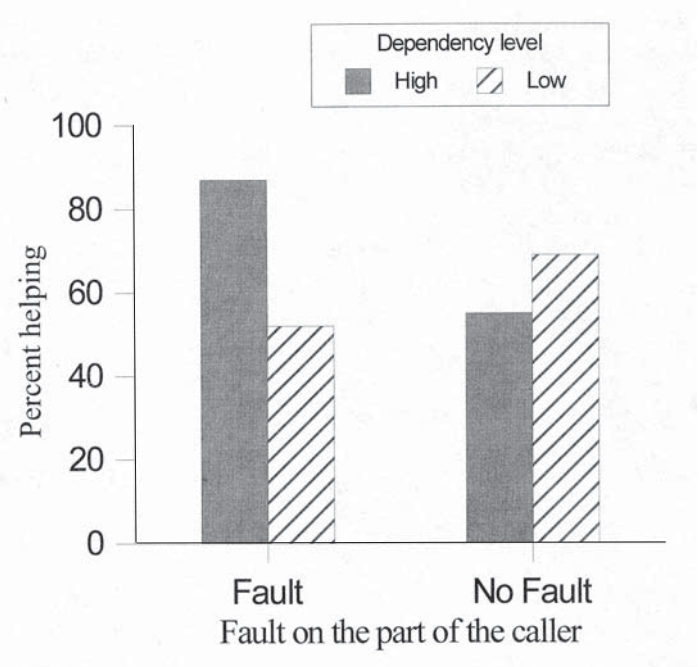

Figure 11.7 The effect of dependency and victim fault on helping. In Gruder's "Ralph's Garage" experiment, participants were more likely to help a victim high in dependency who was at fault for his predicament.

Based on data from Gruder, Romer, and Kroth (1974).

less pity) for victims of supposedly controllable conditions (AIDS, obesity; Weiner, 1993; Weiner et al., 1988). The emotion tied to the victim's situation (pity versus anger) mediated willingness to help. Subjects indicated less willingness to help victims with controllable problems than those with uncontrollable problems (Weiner et al., 1988). Additionally, subjects assigned greater responsibility to a person with a disease (AIDS) if the victim's behavior was perceived to have contributed to his or her disease than if the victim's behavior was not perceived to have contributed. For example, if a person with AIDS contracted the disease via a blood transfusion, less responsibility is assigned to the victim than if the person contracted the disease via a sexual route (Graham et al., 1993).

Does this concept of the deserving versus the nondeserving victim hold across cultures? In an interesting study conducted by Mullen and Stitka (2000), U.S. and Ukranian participants were compared. Participants read profiles about individuals who needed organ transplants. Half the individuals were portrayed as having contributed to their own problems (practicing poor health behaviors), whereas the other half were said to have their condition because of a genetic disorder. Two other variables were manipulated. One was the degree to which the individual needing the transplant contributed to society (high or low), and the other was the degree of need for the new organ (i.e., 95% versus 80% chance of dying if a transplant was not performed). Mullen and Stitka found clear evidence for a cultural difference in the variables that mediate helping. U.S. participants mainly based their helping decisions on the degree to which an individual contributed to his or her own problems. That is, less help is likely to be given to the person who practiced poor health habits than to the person who suffers from a genetic disorder. Ukranian participants, on the other hand, placed more weight on one's contributions to society than on the other factors. However, both American and Ukranian participants were influenced by the other variables. U.S. participants were influenced by contribution to society and need, in that order, following personal responsibility. Ukranian participants also were influenced by personal responsibility and need, in that order, after contributions to society.

There is evidence that characteristics of the helper may interact with perceived controllability in determining affective responses to victims and helping behavior. In an analysis of reactions to individuals living in poverty, Zucker and Weiner (1993) found that politically conservative individuals were likely to blame the victim for being in poverty, attributing poverty to characteristics of the victim. Consequently, these individuals tend to react with anger and are less willing to help. On the other hand, more liberal individuals see poverty as driven by societal forces, not under control of the victim, and react with pity and are more willing to help.

Finally, social categorization also affects one's decision to help (Levine & Thompson, 2004; Levine, Cassidy, Brazier, & Reicher, 2002; Levine, Prosser, Evans, & Reicher, 2005; Sturmer, Snyder, & Omoto, 2005). That is, we are more likely to help someone in need who is from our "in-group" as opposed to someone from an "out-group." In one study that demonstrated this effect, Levine and Thompson (2004) had participants read two scenarios depicting natural disasters (a flood and an earthquake). The scenarios depicted disasters of equal severity and elicited similar helping responses. Each disaster was said to have occurred either in Europe or South America. Participants were British students enrolled at Lancaster University in England. Levine and Thompson manipulated the "social identity" of the participants. Some participants were induced into adopting a "British social identity" and others a more general "European social identity." After reading the scenarios, participants were asked the extent to which they would be willing to help the victims of the natural disasters.

Consistent with the notion that we are more likely to help members of an in-group, participants who were induced into a European social identity expressed a greater willingness to help European victims of either disaster than those who adopted the British social identity. Less help was extended to victims of a South American disaster, regardless of the identity induced. Thus, members of an out-group were least likely to be helped. In another experiment Levine et al. (2005) found that soccer fans were more likely to help someone in need who was wearing their team's jersey than someone wearing a rival team's jersey.

Race and Helping Behavior

Another characteristic of the victim investigated by social psychologists is race. Are blacks more or less likely than whites to receive help when they need it? If you base your answer on stories on television and in the newspapers, you might think that blacks and whites in our society never help each other. But this is simply not true. Many blacks risked their lives to save whites during the Los Angeles riots in 1992. A group of African American residents of South Central Los Angeles helped get Reginald Denny to the hospital, saving his life. Interracial helping does occur. What does the social psychological research say about this issue?

A meta-analysis of the literature in this area (Saucier, Miller, & Doucet, 2005) found that race and helping present a rather complex picture. According to Saucier et al., the meta-analysis did not show any overall, universal bias against black victims in need of help. Black and white victims, given the same helping situation, are equally likely to receive help. However, racial bias did emerge when specific variables were examined. Most specifically, variables relating to aversive racism (see Chapter 4) did show bias. Saucier et al. found that blacks are less likely to receive help than whites under the following conditions:

1. When the help required longer commitments of time
2. When the help was more risky
3. When the help was more difficult
4. When the distance between the helper and victim increased
5. When a white helper could rationalize away nonhelp

In terms of specific studies, there have been numerous studies conducted to investigate aspects of interracial helping (Benson, Karabenick, & Lerner, 1976; Dovidio & Gaertner, 1981; Gaertner, Dovidio, & Johnson, 1982). In one, for example, white subjects, assessed as either high or low in prejudice, were given an opportunity to help either a black or a white victim (Gaertner et al., 1982). The subjects were either alone (subject and victim) or with four others (three bystanders and the victim). The researchers recorded the amount of time subjects took to give the victim aid. Their results showed that white victims were helped more quickly than black victims, especially by prejudiced subjects, when bystanders were present. Blacks and whites were helped equally quickly when no bystanders were present. Thus, the bystander effect is stronger for black than for white victims (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1977; Gaertner et al., 1982).

Given the opportunity to diffuse responsibility, bystanders will avail themselves of the opportunity more with black than with white victims (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1977) This may occur because when multiple bystanders are present, a black victim is seen as less severely injured than a white victim (Gaertner, 1975). When there is a single bystander, there is no such differential assessment of injury severity (Gaertner, 1975).

Other factors also influence the help given to black versus white victims. In another study, white subjects were given an opportunity to help either a black or white male (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1981). This person was introduced as the subject's "supervisor" or "subordinate" and was said to be of either higher or lower cognitive ability than the subject. When given an opportunity to help, white subjects helped the black subordinate (lower status) more than the black supervisor (higher status), regardless of the ability level. However, African American subjects gave help based more on ability than on status. According to this study, status is relevant in whites' decision to help blacks, with more help given to lower-status blacks (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1981). Ability is more relevant in blacks' decision to help whites, with more help given to high-ability than low-ability whites.

The relationship between race and helping behavior is complex and involves numerous situational factors as well as racial attitudes. A review of the literature by Crosby, Bromley, and Saxe (1980) found mixed results. These researchers drew three conclusions:

1. Bias exists against African American victims, but the bias is not extreme. Clear discrimination against African American victims was reported in 44% of the studies reviewed; 56% showed no discrimination or reverse discrimination.
2. Whites and blacks discriminate against the opposite race at about the same level.
3. Whites discriminate against black victims more under remote conditions (over the telephone) than in face-to-face situations.

In another study, researchers investigated race differences in the level of help given to elderly individuals who lived at home (Morrow-Howell, Lott, & Ozawa, 1990). They analyzed a program in which volunteers were assigned to help elderly clients shop and provide them with transportation, counseling, and telephone social support. This study found very few differences between black and white volunteers. For example, both black and white volunteers attended training sessions at equal rates and were evaluated equally by their supervisors.

There was, however, one interesting difference between black and white volunteers when the race of the client was considered. According to client reports, volunteers who were of a different race than the client spent less time with clients than did volunteers of the same race. Additionally, when the volunteer and client were of the same race, the client reported that there were more home visits and that the volunteer was more helpful than if the volunteer and client differed in race.

A few cautions are in order here, however. There was no independent measure of the amount of time volunteers spent with clients or the quality of service rendered. The data on the volunteers' performance were based on client reports. It could be that same-race clients were simply more inclined to rate their volunteers positively than were different-race clients. Nevertheless, the study documented a program of helping in which altruistic tendencies transcended racial barriers.

Sexual Orientation and Helping

The sexual orientation of a person in need influences willingness to help (Gore, Tobiasen, & Kayson, 1997; Shaw, Bourough, & Fink, 1994). For example, Gore and colleagues (1997) had either a male or female victim make a telephone call to participants. When the participant answered, the victim made it clear that he or she had dialed the wrong number. Implied sexual orientation was manipulated by having the victim tell the participant that he or she was trying to reach his or her boyfriend or girlfriend. They also

told the participant that they had either used their last quarter (high urgency) or had no more change (low urgency). Participants were asked to call a number to report the emergency (which was actually the experimenter's number). The proportion of participants who returned the victim's call to the experimenter within 60 seconds was the measure of helping. The results showed that heterosexuals were more likely to get help (80%) than homosexuals (48%). Additionally, even when homosexuals were helped, it took longer for the participants to call back than when the victim was heterosexual.

Increasing the Chances of Receiving Help

We have been looking at helping behavior from the point of view of the potential helper. But what about the person in need of help? Is there anything a victim can do to increase the chances of being helped? Given all the obstacles along the path of helping, it may seem a small miracle that anyone ever receives any help. If you are in a position of needing help, however, there are some things you can do.

First, make your plea for help as loud as possible. Yelling and waving your arms increase the likelihood that others will notice your plight. Make your plea as clear as possible. You do not want to leave any room for doubt that you need help. This will help bystanders correctly label the situation as an emergency.

Next, you want to increase the chances that a bystander will assume responsibility for helping you. Don't count on this happening by itself. Anything you can do to increase a bystander's personal responsibility for helping will increase your chances of getting help. Making eye contact is one way to do this; making a direct request is another.

The effectiveness of the direct-request approach was graphically illustrated in a field experiment in which a confederate of the experimenter approached subjects on a beach (Moriarty, 1975). In one condition, the confederate asked the subject to watch his things (a blanket and a radio) while the confederate went to the boardwalk for a minute (the subject is given responsibility for helping). In another condition, the confederate simply asked the subject for a match (social contact, but no responsibility). A short time after the confederate left, a second confederate came along and took the radio and ran off. More subjects helped in the personal-responsibility condition (some actually ran the second confederate down) than in the nonresponsibility condition. Thus, making someone personally responsible for helping increases helping.

Courageous Resistance and Heroism

A vast majority of research on altruism in social psychology has focused on helping in emergency situations. Typically, this type of help requires an immediate decision to a specific situation. However, not all helping falls into this category. There are helping situations that may involve nonemergencies (e.g., volunteering in a hospital) and may require a more deliberative decision than is required in an emergency situation. For example, if you are trying to decide whether to volunteer your time for a certain cause, you may take time to consider all aspects of your decision. One category of such helping is called **courageous resistance** (Shepela et al., 1999). According to Shepela et al., courageous resistance is "selfless behavior in which there is a high risk/cost to

courageous resistance Selfless behavior involving risk to a helper (and/or family) that is sustained over time, is a product of a deliberative process, and involves a moral calling.

the actor, and possibly to the actor's family or associates, where the behavior must be sustained over time, is most often deliberative, and often where the actor is responding to a moral calling" (p. 789).

Courageous resistors can be found in a wide range of situations. For example, William Lawless was put in charge of waste disposal at the Savannah River reactor, even though he had little experience in radioactive waste disposal. He became aware that liquid radioactive wastes were being dumped into shallow trenches. When he started asking questions, he was told to keep quiet about it. Instead, Lawless went public, and as a result, massive cleanup efforts were undertaken to remove radioactive waste disposed of improperly. From the political world is Nelson Mandela, founder of the African National Congress in South Africa. Mandela took a stand against apartheid (the system in South Africa that separated whites and blacks socially, economically, and linguistically). For his efforts he spent 28 years in prison. Eventually, he was released and went on to become the leader of that country.

Sometimes individuals arise as courageous resistors that surprise us. Two examples are John Rabe and Albert Goering. Rabe was a Nazi businessman in Nanking, China. After the Japanese invaded Nanking and began murdering Chinese civilians, Rabe used his Nazi credentials and connections to save nearly 250,000 Chinese by protecting them in a German compound, often facing down armed Japanese soldiers only with his Nazi credentials. Albert Goering, the half-brother of Hermann Goering (the second highest official in Nazi Germany), is credited with saving hundreds of persecuted Jews during World War II. He would forge his brother's name on transit documents and use his brother's influence if he got caught. Despite having grown up in the same house as his brother Hermann, Albert emerged as a much different person, dedicated to helping persecuted Jews escape those his brother sent to persecute them.

A concept closely related to courageous resistance is heroism. **Heroism** is any helping act that involves significant risk above what is normally expected and serves some socially valued goal (Becker & Eagly, 2004). The two elements of this definition require some elaboration. There are many jobs that require considerable risk such as police officer and firefighter. We expect individuals in these roles to accept a degree of risk. So, for example, we expect a firefighter to enter a burning building to save victims. Such behavior is not necessarily heroic because it is expected of firefighters. However, if a firefighter goes back several times into a building on the verge of collapse to rescue victims, that would qualify as heroic. The second requirement of a heroic act is that it serves some valued goal. Saving lives is certainly a valued goal, as is putting one's job on the line to expose a wrong.

heroism Helping that involves significant risk above what is normally expected and serves some socially valued goal.

As you can see, heroism and courageous resistance have common elements. They have one important difference: A heroic act need not involve an extended commitment. A heroic act can be a one-shot occurrence involving a quick decision made on the spot. For example, Rick Rescorla (head of security for a firm at the World Trade Center), who reentered the World Trade Center to help stragglers get out and died when one of the towers collapsed, would be considered heroic. His behavior clearly involved risk and served the higher goal. It did not, however, involve the deliberative process over time and the long-term commitment to a course of action. So, one can be heroic without being a courageous resistor.

Finally, a heroic act need not always be motivated by empathy for a victim or altruism. There can be a number of motives for a heroic act. For example, a firefighter might act in a heroic way to gain recognition and secure a promotion. His or her egoistic motivations do not diminish the heroic nature of any act he or she performs.

In this section of the chapter we shall focus on one particular example of courageous resistance and heroism: Ordinary people who, under extraordinary circumstances, helped rescue Jews from the Nazis during World War II. You should keep in mind that what these individuals did was exceedingly dangerous. Anyone caught helping Jews was dealt with harshly, including being sent to death camps or summarily hanged. Because of prevailing anti-Jewish attitudes and the threat of punishment, engaging in rescue activity was relatively rare, especially in Eastern Europe. However, there were those who risked their lives to help others, in some cases for years.

Before we begin our discussion of rescuers, it is important to note that the relationship between altruism and courageous resistance may, at times, be tenuous. Not all altruistic individuals are courageous. For example, undoubtedly there were many Christians who deplored what the Nazis were doing to Jews and felt empathy for the Jews. However, because of fear of being caught and executed, many of these individuals did not translate their empathic concern into tangible action to help. Likewise, not all courageous people are altruistic. For example, Tec (1986) reports that some people who helped the Jews were "paid helpers" who helped Jews primarily for the money. These individuals were not motivated by empathy or altruism. As a result, the quality of care received by Jews helped by paid helpers was far lower than those helped by rescuers (Tec, 1986).

Explaining Courageous Resistance and Heroism: The Role of Personality

Much of the research on helping behavior that we have discussed suggests that whether people help depends on situational factors. For example, research shows that the costs of helping, the degree of responsibility for helping, the assumed characteristics of the victim, and the dangerousness of the situation all affect helping behavior. None of these factors are under the control of the potential helper; they are part of the situation.

Situational factors seem to be crucial in situations that require spontaneous helping (Clary & Orenstein, 1991). The situations created in the laboratory, or for that matter in the field, are analogous to looking at a single frame in a motion picture. Recall the seminarians. They were in a hurry, and although thinking of the parable of the Good Samaritan, they practically leapt over the slumped body of a person in need of their help. Is this unexpected event a fair and representative sample of their behavior? It was for that particular situation. But, unless we look at what comes before and after, we cannot make judgments about how they would behave in other situations. Looking at these single-frame glimpses of helping can lead us to overlook personality variables.

Although personality factors come into play in all forms of altruism, they may be more likely to come to the fore in long-term helping situations. Helping on a long-term basis, whether it involves volunteering at a hospital or Albert Goering helping Jews, requires a degree of planning. This planning might take place before the help begins. Or it may occur after help begins. For example, rescuers of Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe often did not plan their initial helping acts (Tec, 1986). However, their continued helping required thought and planning. During planning, helpers assess risks, costs, and priorities, and they match personal morals and abilities with victims' needs.

History teaches us that in times of great need, a select few individuals emerge to offer long-term help. What is it about these people that sets them apart from others who remain on the sidelines? Midlarsky, Fagin Jones, and Corley (2005) compared rescuers and nonrescuers on a number of personality dimensions. They found that the rescuers possessed a cluster of personality characteristics that distinguished them from nonrescuers. These characteristics were: "locus of control, autonomy, risk taking, social responsibility, empathic, concern, and altruistic moral reasoning" (p. 918). Rescuers, compared to

nonrescuers, were more internally motivated, were more independent, were more likely to take risks, showed higher levels of social responsibility, had more empathic concern for others, and were more likely to be driven by internal moral/altruistic values. Further, they found that altruistic moral reasoning was the strongest correlate of rescue activity.

So, there is evidence for an **altruistic personality,** or a cluster of personality traits, including empathy, that predisposes them to great acts of altruism. However, we also must remain mindful that situational forces still may be important, even in long-term helping situations. In the sections that follow, we explore how situational factors and personality factors combine to influence altruism. We begin by considering the factors that influenced a relatively small number of individuals to help rescue Jews from the Nazis during their World War II occupation of Europe.

altruistic personality
A cluster of personality traits that predisposes a person to acts of altruism.

Righteous Rescuers in Nazi-Occupied Europe

As Hitler's final solution (the systematic extermination of European Jews) progressed, life for Jews in Europe became harder and more dangerous. Although most of Eastern Europe's and many of Western Europe's Jews were murdered, some did survive. Some survived on their own by passing as Christians or leaving their homes ahead of the Nazis. Many, however, survived with the help of non-Jews who risked their lives to help them. The state of Israel recognizes a select group of those who helped Jews for their heroism and designates them as **righteous rescuers** (Tec, 1986).

righteous rescuer
The designation bestowed by Israel on non-Jews who helped save Jews from the Nazis during World War II.

Sadly, not as many individuals emerged as rescuers as one might wish. The number of rescuers is estimated to have been between 50,000 and 500,000, a small percentage of those living under Nazi rule (Oliner & Oliner, 1988). In short, only a minority of people were willing to risk their lives to help others.

It should not be too surprising that the majority did not help the Jews. Those caught helping Jews, even in the smallest way, were subjected to punishment, death in an extermination camp, or summary execution. In other cases, especially in Poland, rescuing Jews amounted to flying in the face of centuries of anti-Semitic attitudes and religious doctrine that identified Jews as the killers of Jesus Christ (Oliner & Oliner, 1988; Tec, 1986). The special problems facing Polish rescuers are illustrated in the following quotation from one: "My husband hated Jews. . . . Anti-Semitism was ingrained in him. Not only was he willing to burn every Jew but even the earth on which they stood. Many Poles feel the way he did. I had to be careful of the Poles" (Tec, 1986, p. 54).

Because Polish rescuers violated such powerful social norms, some social psychologists have suggested that their behavior is an example of **autonomous altruism,** selfless help that society does not reinforce (Tec, 1986). In fact, such altruism may be discouraged by society. Rescuers in countries outside Poland may have been operating from a different motive. Most rescuers in Western Europe, although acting out of empathy for the Jews, may have had a *normocentric motivation* for their first act of helping (Oliner & Oliner, 1988). A normocentric motivation for helping is oriented more toward a group (perhaps society) with whom an individual identifies than toward the individual in need. In small towns in southern France, for example, rescuing Jews became normative, the accepted and expected thing to do. This type of altruism is known as normative altruism, altruism that society supports and encourages (Tec, 1986).

autonomous altruism
Selfless altruism that society does not support or might even discourage.

Finally, it is important to understand that not only were general attitudes throughout Europe related to the frequency and type of rescue activity, but so were specific cultural and social forces within specific regions of Europe. For example, Buckser (2001) points out that the large-scale rescue of Danish Jews is best understood within the cultural context of Denmark and its relationship to its Jewish population. Buckser points out that in many areas the Danish population did not resist German occupation. However, when it came to

the Jewish population, Danes came together to save all but a few Danish Jews. Buckser believes that Danes rose up to help the Jews because of *Grundtvigian Nationalism*, which essentially placed Danish national and cultural identity above differences among people. In Denmark, Jews had successfully assimilated into the larger Danish culture. So, when the Germans invaded and tried to portray the Jews as threatening outsiders, it didn't work well. Instead, the German characterization of the Jews activated the unique Danish Nationalism, and Danes who otherwise acquiesced to the Germans actively took part in the large-scale evacuation of Danish Jews to Sweden.

The Oliners and the Altruistic Personality Project

One family victimized by the Nazis in Poland was that of Samuel Oliner. One day in 1942, when Samuel was 12 years old and living in the village of Bobawa, he was roused by the sound of soldiers' boots cracking the predawn silence. He escaped to the roof and hid there in his pajamas until they left. When he dared to come down from his rooftop perch, the Jews of Bobawa lay buried in a mass grave. The village was empty.

Two years earlier, Samuel's entire family had been killed by the Nazis. Now he gathered some clothes and walked for 48 hours until he reached the farm of Balwina Piecuch, a peasant woman who had been friendly to his family in the past. The 12-year-old orphan knocked at her door. When Piecuch saw Samuel, she gathered him into her house. There she harbored him against the Nazis, teaching him what he needed to know of the Christian religion to pass as a Polish stable boy.

Oliner survived the war, immigrated to the United States, and went on to teach at Humboldt State University in Arcata, California. One of his courses was on the Holocaust. In it, he examined the fate of the millions of Jews, Gypsies, and other Europeans who were systematically murdered by the Nazis between 1939 and 1945. In 1978, one of his students, a German woman, became distraught, saying she couldn't bear the guilt over what her people had done.

At this point, Oliner realized that the history of the war, a story of murder, mayhem, and sadism, had left out a small but important aspect: the accomplishments of the many altruistic people who acted to help Jews and did so without expectation of external rewards (Goldman, 1988; Oliner & Oliner, 1988). Oliner and his wife, Pearl, established the Altruistic Personality Project to study the character and motivations of those altruists, whom the Oliners rightly call heroes.

Situational Factors Involved in Becoming a Rescuer

Oliner and Oliner (1988) and Tec (1986) investigated the situational forces that influence individuals to become rescuers. These situational factors can be captured in the five questions for which the Oliners wanted to find answers:

1. Did rescuers know more about the difficulties the Jews faced than nonrescuers?
2. Were rescuers better off financially and therefore better able to help?
3. Did rescuers have social support for their efforts?
4. Did rescuers adequately evaluate the risks, the costs of helping?
5. Were rescuers asked to help, or did they initiate helping on their own?

The Oliners interviewed rescuers and a matched sample of nonrescuers over the course of a 5-year study and compared the two groups. The Oliners used a 66-page questionnaire, translated into Polish, German, French, Dutch, Italian, and Norwegian and

used 28 bilingual interviews. Results indicate that the situational differences between rescuers and nonrescuers were not as significant as expected. For example, rescuers were not wealthier than nonrescuers. Tec (1986) reported that the greatest number of Polish helpers came from the peasant class, not the upper class of Poles. Additionally, rescuers and nonrescuers alike knew about the persecution of the Jews and knew the risks involved in going to their aid (Oliner & Oliner, 1988).

Only two situational variables were relevant to the decision to rescue. First, family support was important for the rescue effort (Tec, 1986). Sixty percent of the rescuers in Tec's sample reported that their families supported the rescue effort, compared to only 12% who said that their families opposed rescue efforts, a finding mirrored in Oliner and Oliner's study. Evidence suggests that rescue was made more likely by the rescuers' being affiliated with a group that supported the rescue effort (Baron, 1986). We can conclude that support from some outside agency, be it the family or another support group, made rescue more likely.

The second situational factor was how the rescuer first began his or her efforts. In most cases (68%), rescuers helped in response to a specific request to help; only 32% initiated help on their own (Oliner & Oliner, 1988). Tec reported a similar result. For most rescuers the first act of help was unplanned. But once a rescuer agreed to help that first time, he or she was likely to help again. Help was refused in a minority of instances (about 15%), but such refusal was related to specific risks involved in giving help. Most rescuers (61%) helped for 6 months or more (Tec, 1986). And 90% of the people rescuers helped were strangers (Goldman, 1988).

These situational factors—the costs of helping, a request for help, and the support of other bystanders in a group of which the rescuer was a member—also have been identified in research as important in influencing the decision to help.

Personality Factors Involved in Becoming a Rescuer

The results of the work by Oliner and Oliner (1988) suggest that rescuers and nonrescuers differed from each other less by circumstances than by their upbringing and personalities. The Oliners found that rescuers exhibited a strong feeling of personal responsibility for the welfare of other people and a compelling need to act on that felt responsibility. They were moved by the pain of the innocent victims, by their sadness, helplessness, and desperation. Empathy for the victim was an important factor driving this form of altruism. Interestingly, rescuers and nonrescuers did not differ significantly on general measures of empathy. However, they did differ on a particular type of empathy called *emotional empathy,* which centers on one's sensitivity to the pain and suffering of others (Oliner & Oliner, 1988). According to the Oliners, this empathy, coupled with a sense of social responsibility, increased the likelihood that an individual would make and keep a commitment to help.

Beyond empathy, rescuers shared several other characteristics (Tec, 1986). First, they showed an inability to blend in with others in the environment. That is, they tended to be socially marginal, not fitting in very well with others. Second, rescuers exhibited a high level of independence and self-reliance. They were likely to pursue their personal goals even if those goals conflicted with social norms. Third, rescuers had an enduring commitment to helping those in need long before the war began. The war did not make these people altruists; rather, it allowed these individuals to remain altruists in a new situation.

Fourth, rescuers had (and still have) a matter-of-fact attitude about their rescue efforts. During and after the war, rescuers denied that they were heroes, instead saying that they did the only thing they could do. Finally, rescuers had a universalistic view of the needy. That is, rescuers were able to put aside the religion or other characteris-

tics of those they helped. Interestingly, some rescuers harbored anti-Semitic attitudes (Tec, 1986). But they were able to put those prejudices aside and help a person in need. These characteristics, along with high levels of empathy, contributed to the rescuers' decision to help the Jews.

The research on rescuers clearly shows that they differed in significant ways from those who were nonrescuers (Oliner & Oliner, 1988) or paid helpers (Tec, 1986). How can we account for these differences? To answer this question, we must look at the family environments in which rescuers were socialized.

Altruism as a Function of Childrearing Style

In Chapter 10, we established that inept parenting contributes to the development of antisocial behaviors such as aggression. Oliner and Oliner (1988) found that the childrearing styles used by parents of rescuers contributed to the development of prosocial attitudes and behaviors. The techniques used by parents of rescuers fostered empathy in the rescuers.

Research shows that a parental or adult model who behaves altruistically is more likely to influence children to help than are verbal exhortations to be generous (Bryan & Walbek, 1970). Additionally, verbal reinforcement has a different effect on children's helping, depending on whether a model behaves in a charitable or selfish manner (Midlarsky, Bryan, & Brickman, 1973). Verbal social approval from a selfish model does not increase children's donations. However, social approval from a charitable model does.

Models obviously have a powerful effect on both aggressive and prosocial behaviors. Why, however, do you think that a prosocial model has more effect on younger children than older children? What factors can you think of to explain the fact that a model's behavior is more important than what the model says? Based on what you know about the effect of prosocial models on children's altruism, if you were given the opportunity to design a television character to communicate prosocial ideals, what would that character be like? What would the character say and do to foster prosocial behavior in children? Similarly, what types of models should we be exposing adults to in order to increase helping? Parents of rescuers provided role models for their children that allowed them to develop the positive qualities needed to become rescuers later in life. For example, rescuers (more than nonrescuers) came from families that stressed the universal similarity of all people, despite superficial differences among them (Oliner & Oliner, 1988). Families stressed the aspect of religion that encouraged caring for those in need. Additionally, families of rescuers did not discuss negative stereotypes of Jews, which was more common among families of nonrescuers. As children, then, rescuers were exposed to role models that instilled in them many positive qualities.

It is not enough for parents simply to embrace altruistic values and provide positive role models (Staub, 1985); they must also exert firm control over their children. Parents who raise altruistic children coach them to be helpful and firmly teach them how to be helpful (Goleman, 1991a; Stab, 1985). Parents who are warm and nurturing and use reasoning with the child as a discipline technique are more likely to produce an altruistic child than cold, uncaring, punitive parents (Eisenberg & Mussen, 1989). This was certainly true of families of rescuers. Parents of rescuers tended to avoid using physical punishment, using an inductive style that focused on verbal reasoning and explanation.

As important as the family is in the socialization of altruism, it cannot alone account for a child growing up to be an altruistic individual. Recall that Albert and Hermann Goering grew up in the same household yet went down very different paths in adulthood. The child's cognitive development, or his or her capacity to understand the world, also plays a role.

Altruism as a Function of Cognitive Development

As children grow, their ability to think about and understand other people and the world changes. The cognitive perspective focuses on how altruistic behavior develops as a result of changes in the child's thinking skills. To study altruism from this perspective, Nancy Eisenberg presented children with several moral dilemmas that pit one person's welfare against another person's welfare. Here is one example: Bob, a young man who was very good at swimming, was asked to help young crippled children who could not walk to learn to swim so that they could strengthen their legs for walking. Bob was the only one in his town who could do this job well, because only he had both life-saving and teaching experiences. But helping crippled children took much of Bob's free time left after work and school, and Bob wanted to practice hard as often as possible for an upcoming series of important swimming contests. If Bob did not practice swimming in all his free time, his chances of winning the contests and receiving a paid college education or sum of money would be greatly lessened (Eisenberg & Mussen, 1989, p. 124).

The dilemma pits Bob's needs against those of other people. The children in Eisenberg's study were asked several questions about what Bob should do. For example, "Should Bob agree to teach the crippled children? Why?" Based on their responses, children were classified according to Eisenberg's levels of prosocial reasoning. Eisenberg's findings show that as children get older, they are more likely to understand the needs of other people and are less focused on their own selfish concerns. The research suggests that this is a continual process and that people's altruistic thinking and behavior can change throughout life.

The idea that the development of altruism is a lifelong process is supported by the fact that rescuers did not magically become caring and empathic at the outset of the war. Instead, the ethic of caring grew out of their personalities and interpersonal styles, which had developed over the course of their lives. Rescuers were altruistic long before the war (Huneke, 1986; Oliner & Oliner, 1988; Tec, 1986) and tended to remain more altruistic than nonrescuers after the war (Oliner & Oliner, 1988).

Becoming an Altruistic Person

Altruism requires something more than empathy and compassionate values (Staub, 1985). It requires the psychological and practical competence to carry those intentions into action (Goleman, 1991). Goodness, like evil, begins slowly, in small steps. Recall from the Chapter 7 discussion on social influence that we are often eased into behaviors in small steps (i.e., through the foot-in-the-door technique). In a similar manner, many rescuers gradually eased themselves into their roles as rescuers. People responded to a first request for help and hid someone for a day or two. Once they took that first step, they began to see themselves differently, as the kind of people who rescued the desperate. Altruistic actions changed their self-concept: Because I helped, I must be an altruistic person. As we saw in Chapter 2, one way we gain self-knowledge is through observation of our own behavior. We then apply that knowledge to our self-concept.

This is how Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg got involved in rescuing Hungarian Jews during World War II (Staub, 1985). The first person he rescued was a business partner who happened to be a Hungarian Jew. Wallenberg then became more involved and more daring. He began to manufacture passes for Jews, saying that they were citizens of Sweden. He even handed out passes to Jews who were being put in the cattle cars that would take them to the death camps. Wallenberg disappeared soon after, and his fate is still unknown. Apparently, there is a unique type of person who is likely to take that very first step to help and to continue helping until the end (Goleman, 1991). Wallenberg and the other rescuers were such people.

Gender and Rescue

Research suggests that a small majority of the rescuers were women (Becker & Eagly, 2004). For example, in Poland 57% of rescuers were women. In France 55.6% were women. And in the Netherlands, 52.5% were women (Becker & Eagly, 2004). Becker and Eagly report that women rescuers who were not part of a couple (e.g., husband-wife team) significantly exceeded the number of such women in the general population. Further, the motivation underlying male and female rescue differed. Women were more likely to be motivated by interpersonal caring and a relationship orientation than men (Anderson, 1993).

Anderson (1993) content analyzed the questionnaire and interview data collected by Sam and Pearl Oliner (1988). Anderson evaluated information on socialization experiences, the family histories, and self-concepts of male and female rescuers. Anderson found very different socialization experiences for male and female rescuers. She found that men tended to be socialized toward civic life, had at least a high school education, and were socialized to be autonomous. Women were more likely to be socialized to be family oriented, were less likely to have had an education, and were socialized for altruism. Anderson points out that these different socialization experiences related to different forms of rescue activity for men and women. Men, reflecting their socialization toward autonomy, were more likely to work alone, rescuing large numbers of people, one at a time. Male rescue was also more likely to be brief and repetitive (e.g., smuggling people out of dangerous areas). Female rescuers, on the other hand, were more likely to work with others in helping networks and help the same people over a longer period of time. Anderson also found that women tended to be motivated by guilt and expressed depression and doubts about their ability to help. Men were more motivated to protect the innocent and were less socially connected than women.

A Synthesis: Situational and Personality Factors in Altruism

We have seen that both situational and personality factors influence the development and course of altruism. How do these factors work together to produce altruistic behavior? Two approaches provide some answers: the interactionist view and the application of the five-stage decision model to long-term helping situations.

The Interactionist View

interactionist view of altruism The view that an individual's altruistic or selfish internal motives interact with situational factors to determine whether a person will help.

The **interactionist view of altruism** argues that an individual's internal motives (whether altruistic or selfish) interact with situational factors to determine if a person will help (Callero, 1986). Romer and his colleagues (Romer, Gruder, & Lizzadro, 1986) identified four altruistic orientations based on the individual's degree of nurturance (the need to give help) and of succorance (the need to receive help):

1. *Altruistic*—Those who are motivated to help others but not to receive help in return
2. *Receptive giving*—Those who help to obtain something in return
3. *Selfish*—Those who are primarily motivated to receive help but not give it
4. *Inner-sustaining*—Those who are not motivated to give or receive help

In their study, Romer and colleagues (1986) led people to believe that they either would or would not be compensated for their help. On the basis of the four orientations just described, these researchers predicted that individuals with an altruistic orientation would help even if compensation was not expected; receptive givers would be willing to help only if they stood to gain something in return; selfish people would not be oriented toward helping, regardless of compensation; and those described as inner-sustaining would neither give nor receive, no matter what the compensation.

Romer's (1986) results confirmed this hypothesis. Figure 11.8 shows the results on two indexes of helping: the percentage of subjects who agree to help and the number of hours volunteered. Notice that altruistic people were less likely to help when compensation was offered. This is in keeping with the reverse-incentive effect described in Chapter 6. When people are internally motivated to do something, giving them an external reward decreases their motivation and their liking for the activity. There is also evidence that personality and the situation interact in a way that can reduce the bystander effect. In one study, researchers categorized subjects as either "esteem oriented" or "safety oriented" (Wilson, 1976). Esteem-oriented individuals are motivated by a strong sense of personal competency rather than by what others do. Safety-oriented individuals are more dependent on what others do. Subjects were exposed to a staged emergency (a simulated explosion that supposedly hurt the experimenter), either while alone, in the presence of a passive bystander (who makes no effort to help), or in the presence of a helping bystander (who goes to the aid of the experimenter).

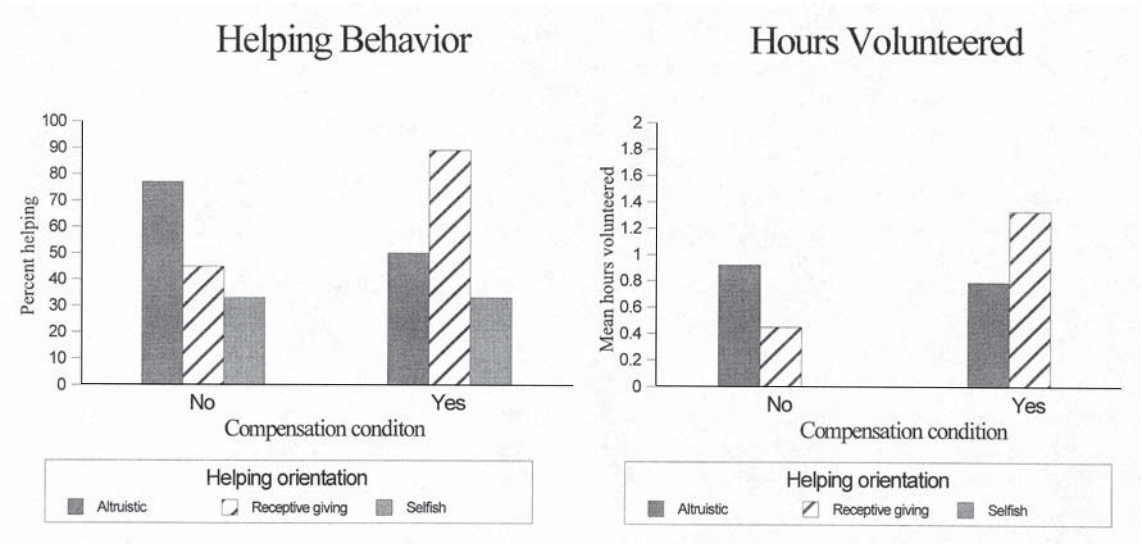

Figure 11.8 Helping behavior and hours volunteered as a function of helping orientation and compensation. Participants whose orientation was receptive giving were more likely to help when they received compensation. Altruistic participants were willing to help regardless of whether they were compensated.

From Romer, Gruder, and Lizzadro (1986).

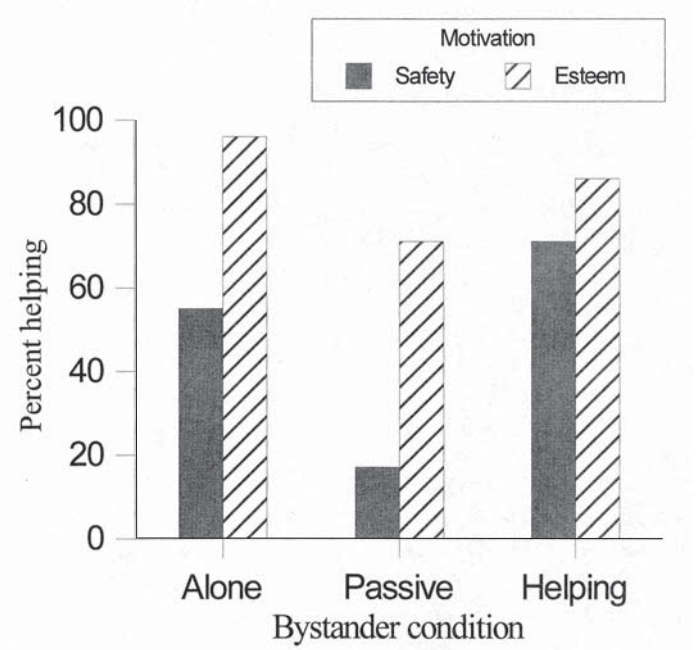

Figure 11.9
The relationship between personality characteristics, presence, and type of bystander on the likelihood of helping. Esteem-oriented participants were most likely to help, regardless of bystander condition. Safety-oriented participants were most likely to help if they were alone or if there was a helping bystander present.

Based on data from Wilson (1976).

The study showed that esteem-oriented subjects were more likely to help than safety-oriented subjects in all cases (Figure 11.9). Of most interest, however, is the fact that the esteem-oriented subjects were more likely to help when a passive bystander was present than were the safety-oriented subjects. Thus, subjects who are motivated internally (esteem oriented) are not just more likely to help than those who are externally motivated (safety oriented); they are also less likely to fall prey to the influence of a passive bystander. This suggests that individuals who helped in the classic experiments on the bystander effect may possess personality characteristics that allow them to overcome the help-depressing effects of bystanders.

We might also expect that the individual's personality will interact with the costs of giving help. Some individuals help even though the cost of helping is high. For example, some subjects in Batson's (1990a) research described earlier in this chapter helped by offering to change places with someone receiving electric shocks even though they could have escaped the situation easily. And rescuers helped despite the fact that getting caught helping Jews meant death. In contrast, there are those who will not help even if helping requires minimal effort.

The degree to which the personality of the helper affects helping may depend on the perceived costs involved in giving aid. In relatively low-cost situations, personality will be less important than the situation. However, in high-cost situations, personality will be more important than the situation. As the perceived cost of helping increases, personality exerts a stronger effect on the decision to help. This is represented in Figure 11.10. The base of the triangle represents very low-cost behaviors. As you move up the triangle, the cost of helping increases. The relative size of each division of the triangle represents the number of people who would be willing to help another in distress.

An extremely low-cost request (e.g., giving a stranger directions to the campus library) would result in most people's helping. People's personalities matter little when it costs almost nothing to help. In fact, probably more effort is spent on saying no than

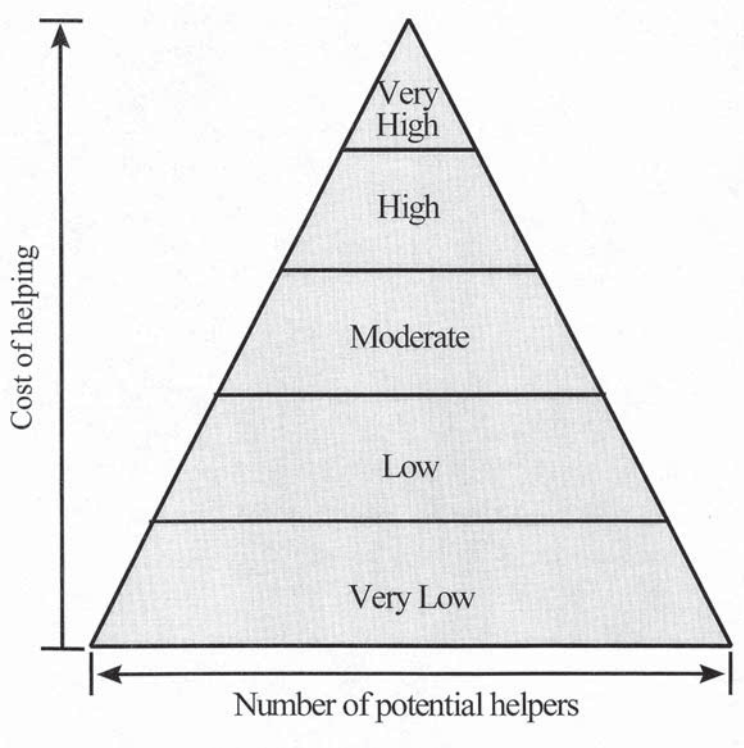

Figure 11.10
The relationship between personality and likeliness of helping in different helping situations. Nearly everyone would help if cost were very low. As the cost of the helping act increases, fewer and fewer individuals are expected to help. Only the most altruistic individuals are expected to help in very high cost situations.

on directing the passerby to the library. When the cost of helping becomes high, even prohibitive, as in the case of rescuing Jews from the Nazis, fewer people help. However, there are those who successfully overcome the situational forces working against helping, perhaps due to their altruistic personalities, and offer help.

Applying the Five-Stage Decision Model to Long-Term Helping

Earlier in this chapter we described a five-stage decision model of helping. That model has been applied exclusively to the description and explanation of helping in spontaneous emergencies. Now that we have explored some other aspects of helping, we can consider whether that model may be applied to long-term and situation-specific spontaneous helping. Let's consider how each stage applies to the actions of those who rescued Jews from the Nazis.

Noticing the Situation

For many rescuers, seeing the Nazis taking Jews away provoked awareness. One rescuer, Irene Opdyke, first became aware of the plight of the Jews when she happened to look through a hotel window and saw Jews being rounded up and taken away (Opdyke & Elliot, 1992). Oliner and Oliner (1988) reported that rescuers were

motivated to action when they witnessed some external event such as the one Opdyke witnessed. Of course, however, many nonrescuers also saw the same events yet did not help.

Labeling the Situation as an Emergency

A critical factor in the decision to rescue Jews was to label the situation as one serious enough to require intervention. Here, the differences between rescuers and nonrescuers became important. Apparently, rescuers were more likely to see the persecution of the Jews as something serious that required intervention. The persecutions appeared to insult the sensibilities of the rescuers. Nonrescuers often decided that Jews must truly have done something to deserve their awful fate. They tended to blame the victim and by so doing relieved themselves of any responsibility for helping.

Rescuers also had social support to help because they belonged to groups that valued such action. This is consistent with the notion that encouragement from others may make it easier to label a situation as one requiring intervention (Dozier & Miceli, 1985).

Assuming Responsibility to Help

The next step in the process is for the rescuer to assume responsibility to help. For rescuers, the universalistic view of the needy, ethics of justice and caring, and generally high levels of empathy made assuming responsibility probable. In fact, many rescuers suggested that after they noticed the persecution of Jews, they had to do something. Their upbringing and view of the world made assumption of responsibility almost a given rather than a decision. The main difference between the rescuers and the nonrescuers who witnessed the same events was that the rescuers interpreted the events as a call to action (Oliner & Oliner, 1988). For the rescuers, the witnessed event connected with their principles of caring (Oliner & Oliner, 1988) and led them to assume responsibility.

Another factor may have come into play when the rescuers (or a bystander to an emergency situation) assumed responsibility. Witnessing maltreatment of the Jews may have activated the *norm of social responsibility* in these individuals. This norm involves the notion that we should help others without regard to receiving help or a reward in exchange (Berkowitz, 1972; Schwartz, 1975).

Deciding How to Help

Rescuers helped in a variety of ways (Oliner & Oliner, 1988). They had to assess the alternatives available and decide which was most appropriate. Alternatives included donating money to help Jews, providing false papers, and hiding Jews. It appears that, at least sometimes, perceived costs were not an issue. For example, Opdyke hid several Jews in the basement of a German major's house in which she was the housekeeper, even after she witnessed a Polish family and the family of Jews they were hiding hanged by the Nazis in the town marketplace.

Implementing the Decision to Help

The final stage, implementing the decision to help, includes assessing rewards and costs for helping and potential outcomes of helping versus not helping. When Everett Sanderson rescued someone who had fallen onto the subway tracks, he said he could not have lived with himself if he had not helped. This is an assessment of outcomes. For Sanderson, the cost for not helping outweighed the cost for helping, despite the risks.

It is quite probable that the altruistic personalities we have been studying made similar assessments. Because of their upbringing and the events of their lives that defined them as altruistic people, they decided that helping was less costly to them than not helping. Most of them engaged in long-term helping. This suggests that they assessed the outcome of their initial decision to help and decided that it was correct. This was certainly true of Balwina Piecuch. It was also true of the Polish woman in the following example, which illustrates the interactionist nature of helping—the interplay of situational and personality factors and the combination of spontaneous and long-term events:

A woman and her child were being led through Cracow, Poland, with other Jews to a concentration station. The woman ran up to a bystander and pleaded, "Please, please save my child." A Polish woman took the young boy to her apartment, where neighbors became suspicious of this sudden appearance of a child and called the police. The captain of the police department asked the woman if she knew the penalty for harboring a Jewish child. The young woman said, with some heat, "You call yourself a Pole, a gentleman, a man of the human race?" She continued her persuasive act, claiming that one of the police in the room had actually fathered the child "and stooped so low as to be willing to have the child killed" (Goldman, 1988, p. 8). Both the woman and the young boy survived the war.

Altruistic Behavior from the Perspective of the Recipient

Our discussion of altruism to this point has centered on the helper. But helping situations, of course, involve another person: the recipient. Social psychologists have asked two broad questions that relate to the recipient of helping behavior: What influences an individual's decision to seek help? What reactions do individuals have to receiving help?

Seeking Help from Others

The earlier discussion of helping in emergencies may have suggested that helping behavior occurs when someone happens to stumble across a situation in which help is needed. Although this does happen, there are also many situations in which an individual actively seeks out help from another. Many Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe approached potential helpers and asked for help. And today, we see many examples of people seeking help: refugees seeking entrance to other countries, the homeless seeking shelter, the uninsured seeking health care.

Seeking help has both positive and negative aspects. On the positive side, the help a person needs will often be forthcoming. For example, medical care may be given for a life-threatening condition. On the negative side, a person may feel threatened or suffer loss of self-esteem by asking for help (Fisher, Nadler, & Whitcher-Algana, 1982). In Western society, a great premium is placed on being self-sufficient and taking care of oneself. There is a social stigma attached to seeking help, along with potential feelings of failure. Generally, seeking help generates costs, as does helping (DePaulo & Fisher, 1980).

A Decision Model for Seeking Help

Researchers have suggested that a person deciding whether to seek help may go through a series of decisions, much like the helper does in Darley and Latané's five-stage decision model. According to Gross and McMullen (1982, p. 308), a person asks three questions before seeking help:

1. Do I have a problem that help will alleviate?
2. Should I seek help?
3. Who is most capable of providing the kind of help I need?

Gross and McMullen (1982) developed a model to describe the process of help seeking. The model works in the following way: Imagine that you have begun to have trouble falling asleep at night. Before you will seek help, you must first become aware that there is a problem. If you had trouble falling asleep only a few times, you probably will not identify it as a problem, and you will not seek help. But if you have trouble falling asleep for a few weeks, you may identify it as a problem and move to the next stage of help seeking.

Now you must decide if the situation is one that requires help. If you decide that it is not (the problem will go away by itself), you will not seek help. If you decide that it is, you move on to the next stage, deciding on the best way to alleviate the problem. Here you can opt for self-help (go to the drugstore and buy some over-the-counter drug) or help from an outside party (a physician or psychologist). If you choose self-help and it is successful, the problem is solved and no further help is sought. If the self-help is unsuccessful, you could then seek help from others or resign yourself to the problem and seek no further help.

The likelihood that you may ask for and receive help may also depend on the nature of the groups (and society) to which you belong. Members of groups often behave altruistically toward one another (Clark, Mills, & Powell, 1986) and are often governed by communal relationships. Members benefit one another in response to each other's needs (Williamson & Clark, 1989). These relationships are in contrast to exchange relationships, in which people benefit one another in response to, or with the expectation of, receiving a benefit in return. Communal relationships are characterized by helping even when people cannot reciprocate each other's help (Clark, Mills, & Powell, 1986).

Factors Influencing the Decision to Seek Help

Clearly, the decision to seek help is just as complex as the decision to give help. What factors come into play when a person is deciding whether to seek help?

For one, individuals may be more likely to ask for help when their need is low than when it is high (Krishan, 1988). This could be related to the perceived "power" relationship between the helper and the recipient. When need is low, people may perceive themselves to be on more common footing with the helper. Additionally, when need is low, there is less cost to the helper. People may be less likely to seek help if the cost to the helper is high (DePaulo & Fisher, 1980).

Another variable in this decision-making process is the person from whom the help is sought. Are people more willing to seek help from a friend or from a stranger? In one study, the relationship between the helper and the recipient (friends or strangers) and the cost to the helper (high or low) were manipulated (Shapiro, 1980). Generally, subjects were more likely to seek help from a friend than from a stranger (Figure 11.11). When help was sought from a friend, the potential cost to the helper was not important. When the helper was a stranger, subjects were reluctant to ask when the cost was high.

There are several possible reasons for this. First, people may feel more comfortable and less threatened asking a friend rather than a stranger for costly help. Second, the norm of reciprocity (see Chapter 7) may come into play in a more meaningful way with friends (Gouldner, 1960). People may reason that they would do it for their friends if they

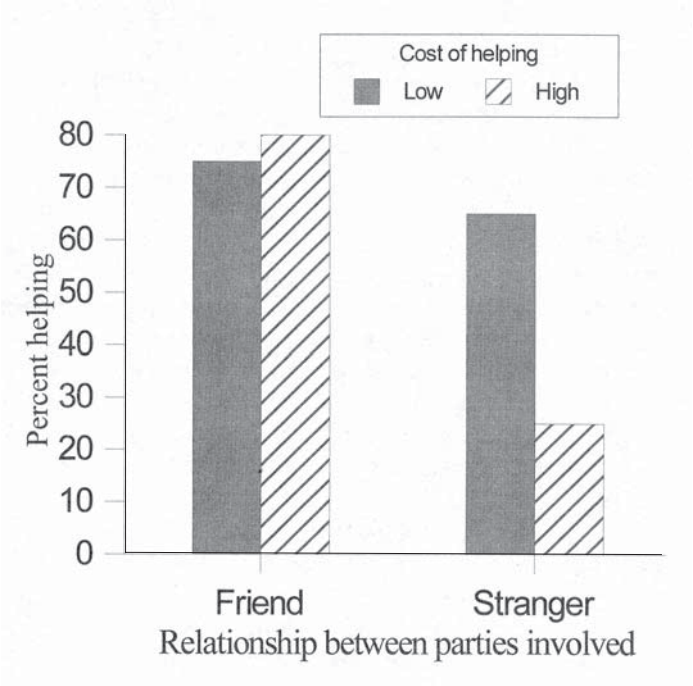

Figure 11.11 Help seeking as a function of the cost of help and the nature of the potential helper. Participants were likely to seek help from a friend in both low-cost and high-cost helping situations. However, help was more likely to be sought from a stranger if the cost of help were low.

Based on data from Shapiro (1980).

needed it. Thus, the expectation of reciprocity may make it easier to ask for high-cost help from a friend. Third, people may perceive that they will have more opportunities to reciprocate a friend's help. They may never see a stranger again.

A final variable that comes into play in deciding to seek help is the type of task on which the help is needed. If someone is doing something easy (but needs help), the person is less likely to seek help than if the task is hard (DePaulo & Fisher, 1980). And if the task is something in which the person has ego involvement, he or she is also less likely to seek help. So, for example, accountants would be unlikely to seek help preparing their own taxes, even if they needed the help.

Reacting to Help When It Is Given

When we help someone, or we see someone receiving help, it is natural to expect that the person receiving the help will show gratitude. However, there are times when received help is not appreciated or when victims complain about the help that was received. After Hurricane Katrina, for example, many displaced New Orleans residents complained about the living accommodations and other support provided weeks after the hurricane struck. Why do people who receive help not always react positively toward that help? We shall explore this topic in this section.

Receiving help is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, people are grateful for receiving help. On the other hand, they may experience negative feelings when they are helped, feelings of guilt, lowered self-esteem, and indebtedness. Jews who were hidden by rescuers, for example, probably were concerned about the safety of their benefactors; they also may have been disturbed by the thought that they could never reciprocate the help they received.

Generally, there are four potentially negative outcomes of receiving help. First, an inequitable relationship may be created. Second, those who are helped may experience psychological reactance; that is, they may feel their freedom is threatened by receiving

help. Third, those who receive help may make negative attributions about the intent of those who have helped them. Fourth, those who receive help may suffer a loss of self-esteem (Fisher et al., 1982). Let's look at two of these outcomes: inequity and threats to self-esteem.

The Creation of an Inequitable Relationship

Recall from Chapter 9 that we strive to maintain equity in our relationships with others. When inequity occurs, we feel distress and are motivated to restore equity. Helping someone creates inequity in a relationship (Fisher et al., 1982), because the recipient feels indebted to the helper (Leventhal, Allen, & Kemelgor, 1969). The higher the cost to the helper, the greater the inequity and the greater the negative feelings (Gergen, 1974).

Inequity can be reversed when the help is reciprocated. Generally, a recipient reacts more negatively to that help and likes the helper less if he or she does not have the ability to reciprocate (Castro, 1974). Recipients are also less likely to seek help in the future when they have not been able to reciprocate, especially if the cost to the helper was high.

The relationship between degree of indebtedness and need to reciprocate is a complex one. For example, if someone helps you voluntarily, you will reciprocate more than if someone is obliged to help you as part of a job (Goranson & Berkowitz, 1966). You also are likely to reciprocate when the cost to the donor is high (Pruitt, 1968). Interestingly, the absolute amount of help given is less important than the cost incurred by the helper (Aikwa, 1990; Pruitt, 1968). For example, if a person who makes $100,000 per year gave you $1,000 (1% of the income), you would feel less indebted to that person than if you received the same $1,000 from someone who makes $10,000 per year (10% of the income).

Finally, we need to distinguish between the obligation and sense of gratitude a person receiving help might experience and how that relates to reciprocity. Obligation is a feeling of "owing" someone something. So, if I help you with a difficult task, you might feel that you owe it to me to reciprocate the favor to restore equity. Gratitude is an expression of appreciation. So, if I help you with that difficult task, you may express your appreciation by reciprocating the favor. In an interesting study by Goei and Boster (2005), obligation and gratitude were found to be conceptually different and affected reciprocity differently. Goei and Boster found that doing a favor for someone, especially a high-cost favor, increased gratitude but not obligation. In response to increased gratitude, participants were then willing to comply with a request for help. So, it may be a response to a feeling of gratitude that drives the restoration of equity after receiving help.

Threats to Self-Esteem

Perhaps the strongest explanation for the negative impact of receiving help centers on threats to self-esteem. When people become dependent on others, especially in Western society, their self-esteem and self-worth come into question (Fisher et al., 1982). Under these conditions, receiving help may be a threatening experience.

threat to self-esteem model A model explaining the reactions of victims to receiving help, suggesting that they might refuse help because accepting it is a threat to their self-esteem.

There is considerable support for the **threat to self-esteem model.** In one study, subjects who received aid on an analogy task showed greater decrements in situational self-esteem (self-esteem tied to a specific situation) than subjects not receiving help (Balls & Eisenberg, 1986). In another study, researchers artificially manipulated subjects' situational self-esteem by providing them with either positive or negative information about themselves (Nadler, Altman, & Fisher, 1979). The researchers then created

a situation in which the individual either received or did not receive aid. Subjects who received self-enhancing information (positive self-information) showed more negative affect when aid was offered than when no aid was offered. Subjects who received negative self-information showed positive affect when they were helped.

Thus, subjects who had positive thoughts about themselves were more negatively affected by help than those who had negative thoughts about themselves. The offer of help was a greater threat to those with high self-esteem than to those with low self-esteem. In other words, not only does receiving help threaten self-esteem but also the higher a person's self-esteem is, the more threatened that person is by offers of help. For example, if you consider yourself the world's best brain surgeon, asking for assistance on a case would be more disturbing to you than if you saw yourself as an average brain surgeon.

When someone with high self-esteem fails at a task, that failure is inconsistent with his or her positive self-image (Nadler, Fisher, & Streufert, 1976). Help offered in this situation is perceived as threatening, especially if it comes from someone who is similar (Fisher & Nadler, 1974; Nadler et al., 1979). Receiving help from someone similar may be seen as a sign of relative inferiority and dependency (Nadler et al., 1979).

Conversely, when a person with high self-esteem receives help from a dissimilar person, he or she experiences an increase in situational self-esteem and self-confidence. When a person with low self-esteem receives help from a similar other, that help is more consistent with the individual's self-image. For these individuals, help from a similar other is seen as an expression of concern, and they respond positively (Nadler et al., 1979).

A model to explain the complex relationship between self-esteem and receiving help was developed by Nadler, Fisher, and Ben Itchak (1983). The model suggests that help from a friend is more psychologically significant than help from a stranger. This greater significance is translated into negative affect if failure occurs on something that is ego involving (e.g., losing a job). Here, help from a friend is seen as a threat to one's self-esteem, and a negative reaction follows.

Receiving help can be particularly threatening when it is unsolicited and imposed by someone (Deelstra et al., 2003). Deelstra et al. had participants work on a task that did not present a problem, a task that involved a solvable problem, and a task that presented an unsolvable problem. In each condition, a confederate either did or did not provide unsolicited help. The results showed that participants had the strongest negative reaction to the help imposed when they perceived that no problem existed or that a solvable problem existed. There was also a significant change in the participant's heart rate that paralleled this finding. Participants showed the most heart rate increase when help was imposed in the no-problem or solvable-problem conditions. Apparently, receiving unwanted help is not only psychologically threatening, but it is also physiologically arousing!

A study conducted in France investigated how a recipient's age (young, middle, or older adult) and degree of control over a situation affected reactions to receiving help (Raynaud-Maintier & Alaphillippe, 2001). Participants worked on an anagram task and received varying amounts of help. The researchers found that, consistent with the threat to self-esteem model, receiving help was threatening, especially when the help was offered by an older adult or a helper with high self-esteem. The more control participants had over the situation, the less threatening the help was and the older the participant, the lower the threat of receiving help.

There are also gender differences in how people react to receiving help. In one study, males and females were paired with fictitious partners of comparable, superior, or inferior ability and were offered help by that partner (Balls & Eisenberg, 1986).

Females paired with a partner of similar ability showed greater reductions in situational self-esteem than males paired with a similar partner. Thus, females perceived help as more threatening to self-esteem than did males. Females, however, were more satisfied than males with the help they received. Females were also more likely than males to express a need for help.

Reactions to receiving help, then, are influenced by several factors, including the ability to reciprocate, the similarity or dissimilarity of the helper, self-esteem, and gender. Other factors can play a role as well. For example, if the helper has positive attributes and is seen as having good motives, the person receiving help is more likely to feel positive about the experience. A positive outcome is also more likely if the help is offered rather than requested, if the help is given on an ego-relevant task, and if the help does not compromise the recipient's freedom (e.g., with a very high obligation to repay the helper). Overall, we see that an individual's reaction to receiving help is influenced by an interaction between situational variables (for example, the helper's characteristics) and personality variables (Fisher et al., 1982).

Irene Opdyke Revisited

Irene Opdyke offered help to people she hardly knew and put her life at great risk. Opdyke was undoubtedly an empathic person who felt the suffering of the Jews. In deciding to help, she almost surely went through something similar to the process described in this chapter. She noticed the situation requiring help when she heard about the liquidation of the ghetto. She labeled the situation as one that required help, and she assumed responsibility for helping. She knew what she had to do to help: find a place to hide the Jews. Finally, she implemented her decision to help. Irene Opdyke's behavior fits quite well with the five-stage decision model for helping.

Opdyke's decision was also similar to the decisions made by hundreds of other rescuers of Jews. Opdyke and the other rescuers put their lives on the line to save others. We know something about Irene Opdyke and her commitment to helping people. After all, she was studying to be a nurse before the war. It is obvious that Irene Opdyke had empathy for those in need and was able to translate that empathy into tangible action. Irene Opdyke provides us with an inspiring example of an altruistic person who put the welfare of others above her own.

Chapter Review

1. What is altruism and how is it different from helping behavior? Why is the difference important?

   Altruism is behavior that helps a person in need that is focused on the victim and is motivated purely by the desire to help the other person. Other, similar behaviors may be motivated by relieving one's personal distress or to gain some reward. These behaviors are categorized as helping behavior. The motivation underlying an act of help is important because it may affect the quality of the help given.

2. What are empathy and egoism, and how do they relate to altruism?

Empathy refers to compassionate understanding of how a person in need feels. Some acts of helping are focused on and motivated by our desire to relieve the suffering of the victim rather than our own discomfort. Empathy for a person in need is rooted in perspective taking. A person who focuses on how a person in distress feels is more likely to experience empathy. The empathy-altruism hypothesis proposes that arousal of empathy increases the likelihood of altruism. This hypothesis has received research support, but it remains controversial. In contrast, egoism refers to a motive for helping that is focused on relieving our own discomfort rather than on relieving the victim's suffering.

3. What about the idea that we may help to avoid guilt or shame?

This has been raised as a possibility in the empathy-punishment hypothesis, which states that people help to avoid the guilt and shame associated with not helping. Research pitting this hypothesis against the empathy-altruism hypothesis has fallen on the side of empathy-altruism. However, the book is still open on the validity of the empathy-altruism hypothesis.

4. What role does biology play in altruism?

There is evidence that helping has biological roots, as suggested by sociobiologists. According to this view, helping is biologically adaptive and helps a species survive. The focus of this explanation is on survival of the gene pool of a species rather than on survival of any one member of a species. According to evolutionary biologists, animals are more likely to help members of their own family through alloparenting. For humans, a similar effect occurs: We are more likely to help others who are like us and who thus share genetic material.

Although this idea has some merit, it cannot account for the complexity of animal or human altruism. We might have predicted, based on the biological explanation, that Irene Opdyke would not have been motivated to help the Jews in Ternopol because they were not related and were members of different ethnic and religious groups.

5. How do social psychologists explain helping in an emergency situation?

To explain helping (or nonhelping) in emergencies, social psychologists Darley and Latané developed a decision model with five stages: noticing the emergency, labeling the emergency correctly, assuming responsibility to help, knowing what to do, and implementing the decision to help. At each stage, many variables influence an individual's decision to help.

At the noticing stage, anything that makes the emergency stand out increases the likelihood of help being offered. However, interpreting a situation as an emergency can be ambiguous, and we may mislabel it, in which case we do not give help.

Next, we must assume personal responsibility for helping. This is known as the bystander effect. Three reasons for this failure to help when bystanders are present are diffusion of responsibility (assuming that someone else will help), pluralistic ignorance (responding to the inaction of others), and assuming a social category relationship (assuming that parties in a situation belong together). Although the bystander effect is a powerful, reliable phenomenon, there are exceptions to it. Research shows that when help requires potentially dangerous intervention, people are more likely to help when in groups than when alone. The bystander effect is less likely to occur when the helping situation confronting us involves a clear violation of a social norm that we personally care about.

Even if we assume responsibility, we may not help because we do not know what to do or lack skills, or we may think that someone else is more qualified to help. Finally, we may fail to help because the costs of helping are seen as too high. Costs are increased when we might be injured or otherwise inconvenienced by stopping to help.

6. What factors affect the decision to help?

Mood makes a difference. Bystanders who are in a positive (good) mood are more likely to help others. However, people may not help if they think helping will spoil their good mood. Characteristics of the victim also play a role. Females are more likely to be helped if the helper is male. Physically attractive people are more likely to be helped than unattractive people. We also take into account whether we feel that the victim deserves help. If we believe the victim contributed to his or her own problems, we are less likely to help than if we believe the victim did not contribute. This fits with the just-world hypothesis, the idea that people get what they deserve and deserve what they get. We may relax this standard if we believe the victim strongly needs our help.

7. If you need help, how can you increase your chances of receiving help?

You need to help people come to the right decision at each stage of the decision model. To ensure that you get noticed, make any plea for help as loud and as clear as possible. This will also help bystanders correctly label your situation as an emergency. To get someone to assume responsibility, make eye contact with a bystander. Better yet, make a direct request of a particular bystander for help. Research shows that making such a request increases a bystander's sense of responsibility for helping you and increases the likelihood of helping.

8. Other than traditional helping in emergency situations, what other forms of helping are there?

Although social psychologists have historically focused on helping in relatively benign emergency situations, there are other forms of help that involve risk. Courageous resistance is one such form of helping. Courageous resistance is a form of helping that involves significant risk to the helper (or the helper's family), requires a long-term commitment, and occurs after a deliberative process. Courageous resistors include whistleblowers, political activists, and rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust. Heroism is another form of helping that is closely related to courageous resistance. In both cases there is substantial risk to the helper. However, heroism need not involve a long-term commitment and may not require a deliberative process to decide to help.

9. How do personality characteristics relate to helping?

Although situational factors play an important role in helping, especially spontaneous helping, they may not give us a true picture of the helper and how he or she might behave across helping situations. Personality characteristics may become more relevant when nonspontaneous, long-term helping is considered. In this case, more planning and thought are required. Some individuals might possess an altruistic personality, or a cluster of traits, including empathy, that predisposes a person to helping.

Research on rescuers of Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe—who have been designated righteous rescuers by Israel—provides evidence for the existence of an altruistic personality. Rescuers from Eastern Europe (especially Poland) displayed autonomous altruism, altruism that is not supported by social norms. Rescuers from Western Europe were more likely to display normative altruism, altruism that society supports and recognizes.

10. What situational and personality variables played a role in the decision to help Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe?

Although situational factors did not exert as strong an influence on the decision to help as one might expect, two have been found to be significant: the presence of family or group support and the initiation of rescue efforts as a result of a specific request for help. After rescuers began helping, they were likely to continue helping.

There were also personality variables that related to the decision to become a rescuer. Compared to nonrescuers, rescuers were higher in emotional empathy (sensitivity to the suffering of others) and had a strong sense of social responsibility. Other characteristics of rescuers included an inability to blend with others, a high level of independence and self-reliance, a commitment to helping before the war, a matter-of-fact attitude about their helping, and a universalistic view of the needy.

11. What factors contribute to a person's developing an altruistic personality?

Oliner and Oliner found that families of rescuers of Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe and families of nonrescuers differed in their styles. Families of rescuers provided role models for helping and stressed the universal nature of all people. They emphasized aspects of religion that focus on caring for others, and they were less likely to discuss negative stereotypes of Jews. Parents of altruistic individuals tended to be warm and nurturing in their parenting style. Parents of rescuers used less physical punishment than parents of nonrescuers, relying instead on induction.

Cognitive development also contributes to the development of an altruistic personality. As children get older, they are more likely to understand the needs of others. This development is a lifelong process.

Rescuers did not magically become altruists when World War II broke out. Instead, they tended to be helpers long before the war. Becoming a rescuer involved a series of small steps. In many cases, rescuers started with a small act and then moved to larger ones.

12. What is the interactionist view of altruism?

According to the interactionist view of altruism, personality and situational factors interact to influence helping. Research has identified four altruistic orientations: altruistic (those who are motivated to help others but not to receive help in return), receptive giving (those who help to obtain something in return), selfish (those who are primarily motivated to receive help but not give it), and inner sustaining (those who are not motivated to give or receive help).

Research shows that individuals with an altruistic orientation are less likely to help if compensation is offered. There is also evidence that personality factors can help a person overcome the bystander effect. Esteem-oriented individuals (who are motivated internally) are more likely to help than safety-oriented individuals (who are externally motivated) when a passive bystander is present. Additionally, personality and cost of help might interact. For low-cost behaviors, we would expect personality factors to be less important than for high-cost behaviors.

13. How does long-term helping relate to models of emergency helping?

With slight modification, Latané and Darley's five-stage model applies to long-term helping. Noticing, labeling, accepting responsibility, deciding how to help, and implementing the decision to help are all relevant to acts of long-term help. Additionally, at the assuming responsibility stage, the norm of social responsibility may have been activated. This norm suggests that we should help those in need without regard to reward.

14. What factors influence a person's likelihood of seeking and receiving help?

Seeking help from others is a double-edged sword: The person in need is more likely to receive help but also incurs a cost. Helping also involves costs for the helper. A person in need of help weighs these costs when deciding whether to ask for help, progressing through a multistage process. A person is more likely to seek help when his or her needs are low, and to seek help from a friend, especially if the cost to the helper is high. A person is less likely to seek help with something easy than with something hard.

15. What reactions do people show to receiving help?

Receiving help is also a double-edged sword. The help relieves the situation but leads to negative side effects, including feelings of guilt, lowered self-esteem, and indebtedness to the helper. Generally, there are four negative reactions to receiving aid: the creation of inequity between the helper and the recipient, psychological reactance, negative attributions about the helper, and threats to one's self-esteem. There is considerable support for the threat to self-esteem model of reactions to receiving help. How much a person's self-esteem is threatened depends on several factors, including the type of task and the source of the help. Males and females differ in their responses to receiving help. Females react more negatively to receiving help but are more satisfied than males with the help they receive.

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