CHAPTER 10

Helping Others

OUTLINE

I. Evolutionary and Motivational Factors: Why Do People Help?
   A. Evolutionary Factors in Helping
   B. Rewards for Helping: Helping Others to Help Oneself
   C. Altruism or Egoism: The Great Debate
   D. Distinguishing Among the Motivations to Help: Why Does It Matter?

II. Situational Influences: When Do People Help?
   A. The Unhelpful Crowd
   B. Time Pressure
   C. Location and Culture
   D. Moods and Helping
   E. Role Models and Social Norms: A Helpful Standard

III. Personal Influences: Who is Likely to Help?
   A. Are Some People More Helpful than Others?
   B. What is the Altruistic Personality?

IV. Interpersonal Influences: Whom Do People Help?
   A. Perceived Characteristics of the Person in Need
   B. The Fit between Giver and Receiver
   C. Gender and Helping

V. Reactions to Receiving Help

VI. The Helping Connection

VII. Review

VIII. Key Terms

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: GUIDELINES FOR STUDY

You should be able to do each of the following by the conclusion of Chapter 10.

1. Discuss how evolutionary theory accounts for helping behavior. Explain kin selection and reciprocal altruism. (pp. 347-350)

2. Compare and contrast egoistic and altruistic motives for helping. Explain the empathy-altruism hypothesis and identify why a distinction between these two types of motives is important. (pp. 350-358)

3. Explain the bystander effect. Identify and explain the five steps in the helping process, discussing obstacles to each step. Consider how each of these obstacles contributes to the bystander effect. (pp. 359-366)

4. Describe the influence of other situational factors on helping behavior, such as time pressure, location, culture, mood, role models, and social norms. (pp. 366-374)

5. Explain how individual differences such as personality, moral reasoning, and family background may affect a person’s likelihood of helping others. (pp. 374-376)
6. Describe how characteristics of people in need (e.g., attractiveness, perceived responsibility, gender) influence the likelihood that others will help them. Consider the relationship between the characteristics of the help giver and receiver (i.e., similarity and closeness). (pp. 376-381)

7. Identify the factors that influence people’s different reactions to receiving help. (pp. 381-382)

**MAJOR CONCEPTS: THE BIG PICTURE**

Below are five basic issues or principles that organize Chapter 10. You should know these issues and principles well.

1. There are several motivational factors that affect why people help. Evolutionary factors may lead us to help those who are close relatives, those with whom we have reciprocal relationships, and those who are part of our group. Egoistic factors might also lead to helping because helping makes most people feel good. Helping may even reflect a desire to steal some of the limelight from a very competent other, as overhelping will reflect negatively on them. On the other hand, it seems that at times we help for altruistic motives. This is especially true when we have empathy for those we help. The debate between whether we help for altruistic or egoistic motives continues and is not resolved at the present time. Distinguishing among the motivations to help is important because different motives are likely to affect behavioral and emotional responses to helping, attribution for helping, and the role of rewards in helping.

2. The situation can also influence helping. For instance, research shows that the presence of others actually inhibits helping by making it harder to recognize the need for help, causing situations to be more ambiguous, and diffusing individual responsibility for helping. Other situations that inhibit helping include time pressure and living in a city. Situations can also influence helping by affecting our emotions. Positive moods, and, in some situations, negative moods can all lead to helping. Finally, role models and social norms can be powerful situational factors that lead individuals to help others.

3. Despite the strong situational influences on helping, some people are simply more likely to help than others. Indeed, there is some evidence that helping may have a genetic component. In addition, other personality characteristics, such as empathy and moral reasoning, appear to work together in promoting helping.

4. Some people are more likely to receive help than others. Attractive individuals, as well as those seen as innocent victims, are more likely to receive help. People are also more likely to help those who are similar to themselves. Men are more likely to help in situations that are somewhat dangerous, whereas women tend to help friends and relatives more often.

5. People exhibit varied reactions to receiving help. Sometimes they see help as supportive; at other times they see it as threatening. For instance, help received from a similar other on an important task is often seen as threatening rather than supportive. People also vary in the extent to which they seek help. People who have received supportive help often seek help in the future, whereas people who have received threatening help will seek help again only if they are pessimistic about their own abilities to control the future.
KEY TERM EXERCISE: THE CONCEPTS YOU SHOULD KNOW

Following are all of the key terms that appear in boldface in Chapter 10. To help you better understand these concepts, rather than just memorize them, write a definition for each term in your own words. After doing so, look at the next section where you’ll find a list of definitions from the textbook for each of the key terms presented in random order. For each of your definitions, find the corresponding textbook definition. Note how your definitions compare with those from the textbook.

Key Terms
1. prosocial behaviors
2. audience inhibition
3. norm of social responsibility
4. threat-to-self-esteem model
5. altruistic
6. empathy-altruism hypothesis
7. social norm
8. good mood effect
9. bystander effect
10. negative state relief model
11. pluralistic ignorance
12. diffusion of responsibility
13. kin selection
14. arousal: cost-reward model
15. egoistic

Textbook Definitions
a. The proposition that people react to emergency situations by acting in the most cost-effective way to reduce the arousal of shock and alarm.
b. The proposition that people help others in order to counteract their own feelings of sadness.
c. The theory that reactions to receiving assistance depend on whether help is perceived as supportive or threatening.
d. The effect whereby the presence of others inhibits helping.
e. Actions intended to benefit others
f. The belief that others will or should take the responsibility for providing assistance to a person in need.
g. Motivated by the desire to increase another’s welfare.
h. A moral standard emphasizing that people should help those who need assistance.
i. The proposition that empathic concern for a person in need produces an altruistic motive for helping.

j. Reluctance to help for fear of making a bad impression on observers.

k. A general rule of conduct reflecting standards of social approval and disapproval.

l. Motivated by the desire to increase one’s own welfare.

m. The effect whereby a good mood increases helping behavior.

n. The state in which people mistakenly believe that their own thoughts and feelings are different from those of others, even though everyone’s behavior is the same.

o. Preferential helping of genetic relatives so that genes held in common survive.
ANSWERS FOR KEY TERM EXERCISE

Answers for the key terms exercise are listed below.

1. e
2. j
3. h
4. c
5. g
6. i
7. k
8. m
9. d
10. b
11. n
12. f
13. o
14. a
15. l
PRACTICE QUIZ: TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE CHAPTER

Multiple-Choice Questions

1. Reciprocal helping and kin selection are two main kinds of helping, according to the
   a. arousal: cost-reward model.
   b. empathy-altruism hypothesis.
   c. negative state relief model.
   d. evolutionary perspective.

2. Beth wants to borrow notes for the class she skipped on Friday. If she tells a classmate that she
   needs the notes because she skipped class rather than offering a good excuse (e.g., she was home
   sick), the classmate will probably be
   a. less likely to help because Beth doesn’t deserve help.
   b. more likely to help because Beth was honest.
   c. more likely to help because Beth is so cool.
   d. no more or less likely to help.

3. Norm is in a bad mood because he broke his roommate’s stereo. He sees an elderly woman who
   needs help crossing the street. Because Norm is in a bad mood, he is
   a. less likely to help.
   b. more likely to help.
   c. no more or less likely to help.
   d. more likely to help but less likely to notice that the elderly woman needs help.

4. Bob has to drive his beat-up old Dodge Dart across the country. He knows that the car is likely to
   break down and that he may need help. According to research on bystander intervention, Bob
   would be best advised to
   a. take the rural route and avoid cities.
   b. make sure others know it was his decision to drive the car.
   c. drive through as many cities as possible.
   d. “dress down” so that if he does need help, others won’t find him intimidating.

5. Michelle feels sorry for homeless people. To ease their suffering, she organizes a campaign to find
   clothing, food, and shelter for them. Michelle’s actions illustrate
   a. reciprocity norms.
   b. good mood effects.
   c. empathic concern.
   d. kin selection.

6. When people are in a good mood, they are
   a. less likely to help.
   b. more likely to help.
   c. no more or less likely to help.
   d. more likely to help but less likely to notice that others need help.

7. David and Lisa are both good friends of Ron, who has been in an accident. According to research
   concerning gender differences in helping, which of the two is more likely to stop by and help Ron
   with his daily chores when he comes home from the hospital?
   a. David is more likely to do so.
   b. Lisa is more likely to do so.
   c. David and Lisa are equally likely to stop by.
   d. It depends on the severity of Ron’s accident.
8. Bobby helps his classmates with their homework because he wants them to like him. Bobby’s behavior is
   a. cost-free.
   b. heroic.
   c. altruistic.
   d. egoistic.

9. According to research by Gilbert and Silvera (1996), people sometimes provide more help than another person truly needs. They argue that this help is motivated by
   a. altruism.
   b. the desire to maintain a positive mood.
   c. intentions to undermine the other person.
   d. the desire to look helpful.

10. Fred, a helpful person, is hurrying home to give his daughter a lecture on how she should be a helpful person. He is twenty minutes late, however. Research by Darley and Batson (1973), in which seminary students who were lecturing about the parable of the Good Samaritan encountered a person in apparent distress, would suggest that if Fred sees someone who needs help he is likely to
   a. help, because he is a helpful person.
   b. help, because he is thinking about lecturing his daughter on helpfulness.
   c. not help, because he doesn’t want to look foolish.
   d. not help, because he is late.

11. Although tennis is not important to Randy, he would still like to play better. His brother spends three weekends coaching Randy. Randy is likely to interpret his brother’s actions as a form of
   a. empathic concern.
   b. self-threatening help.
   c. supportive help.
   d. negative state relief.

12. Personal distress and perspective taking are two components of
   a. docility.
   b. empathy.
   c. pluralistic ignorance.
   d. audience inhibition.

13. Noticing incidents, interpreting situations, and taking responsibility for action are three steps specified by the
   a. just-world belief.
   b. self-evaluation maintenance model.
   c. empathy-altruism hypothesis.
   d. bystander intervention model.

14. A crowd of people has gathered at a bar. Suddenly smoke fills the whole room. The people are most likely to interpret the situation as an emergency if
   a. the crowd is very large.
   b. they are enjoying themselves.
   c. they know each other.
   d. they are mingling rather than staying in one place.

15. When a large group of people fails to help an innocent victim of a crime, the most likely cause is
   a. callousness of the people in the group.
   b. the tendency to blame the victim of the crime.
   c. diffusion of responsibility for helping.
   d. lack of empathy for the victim.
16. Isaac and Tina are making supper and run out of flour. Who is most likely to ask the neighbor for help?
   a. Isaac is most likely to do so.
   b. Tina is most likely to do so.
   c. Isaac and Tina are equally likely to ask for help.
   d. Whether Isaac or Tina asks for help depends on the gender of their neighbor.

17. Tasha has received threatening help in the past. How does this experience affect her desire to seek help?
   a. She is more likely to seek help later.
   b. She is less likely to seek help later.
   c. She is no more or less likely to seek help later.
   d. Whether she seeks help depends on her perceived control of the situation.

18. Molly thinks she’s a first-rate parent. A friend points out that Molly should teach her children self-control by setting standards for them. Molly is likely to see this advice as
   a. empathic concern.
   b. self-threatening help.
   c. supportive help.
   d. negative state relief.

19. The social norm that motivates us out of a sense of duty and obligation to help those who are dependent on us is the norm of
   a. reciprocity.
   b. equity.
   c. social responsibility.
   d. justice.

20. Feeling a sense of connection to other people should
   a. increase helping.
   b. decrease helping.
   c. neither increase nor decrease helping.
   d. sometimes increase helping and sometimes decrease helping.

21. I help you and somebody else helps me is an example of
   a. indirect reciprocity.
   b. altruistic behavior.
   c. bystander effect.
   d. cost-reward model.

22. Who best exhibits contemporary models of altruism?
   a. Bill Gates
   b. Bono
   c. Ted Turner
   d. All of the above are correct

23. Where hitchhiking is legal and relatively common, male and female confederates of “average attractiveness” hitchhiked along a road. What improved their chances of getting a ride?
   a. Smiling for women
   b. Smiling for men
   c. Waving for women
   d. Waving for men
Essay Questions

24. Describe how a person’s mood can affect the likelihood that he or she will help others. Analyze the effect of both positive and negative moods.

25. Discuss three ways in which the presence of others can affect the likelihood that people will help someone in need.

26. Explain why help from others may sometimes be perceived as threatening.

27. Discuss charitable giving and volunteerism in the United States in terms of individualism.
ANSWERS TO THE PRACTICE QUIZ

Multiple-Choice Questions: Correct Answers and Explanations

1. d. evolutionary perspective. According to the evolutionary perspective, people help others because doing so enhances the possibility that they will be able to pass on their genes. Kin selection is the helping of relatives, and, since relatives share genes, helping a relative increases the chance that one’s genes will be passed on. Reciprocal helping is helping someone who will help you in the future and thus can also increase the chances of passing on one’s genes. The arousal: cost-reward model, the empathy-altruism hypothesis, and the negative state relief model do not try to explain kin selection or reciprocal helping.

2. a. less likely to help because Beth doesn’t deserve help. Research shows that when people are blamed or judged to be responsible for their bad outcomes others are less likely to help them. If the classmate assumes Beth is to blame for skipping class, which seems likely, then the classmate will probably be less likely to help her.

3. b. more likely to help. Research shows that when adults are in a bad mood they are more likely to help others, perhaps as a way to improve their mood. There is no documentation regarding the effect of mood on noticing that others need help.

4. a. take the rural route and avoid cities. Research shows that people are more likely to help in rural areas than in cities, so Bob should take the rural routes because he is more likely to receive help there. If people knew it was his decision to drive this particular car, they might be less likely to help because they might infer that the breakdown was his responsibility. Finally, there is no clear evidence that “dressing down” will increase Bob’s chances of being helped.

5. c. empathic concern. Empathic concern involves other-oriented feelings, which Michelle demonstrates. Research shows that such feelings often lead to helping. It is unlikely that Michelle’s actions result from a reciprocity norm, as it seems unlikely that she was previously helped by these homeless people. It is also unlikely that her actions are the result of good mood effects, because her empathic concern for the homeless is really more likely to put her in a bad mood. Finally, it is unlikely that her actions result from kin selection, as the homeless people she is trying to help do not appear to be her relatives.

6. b. more likely to help. Research shows that when people are in a good mood they are more likely to help others, perhaps as a way to maintain their good mood. There is no documentation regarding the effect of mood on noticing that others need help.

7. b. Lisa is more likely to do so. Research shows that women are more likely than men to provide supportive and caring help, especially to friends and family members. The seriousness of the accident is unlikely to affect the gender difference in helping, although when helping could be dangerous or embarrassing, men are more likely to help than women.

8. d. egoistic. Bobby seems to be helping because of what he can get out of doing so. This kind of helping is called egoistic helping. There is no indication that the helping is cost-free; he does have to expend some time and energy helping his classmates. And his helping surely isn’t altruistic or heroic if he is helping solely for his own sake.

9. c. intentions to undermine the other person. Research by Gilbert and Silvera (1996) shows that people sometimes overhelp other people out of a desire to hurt the other person. Help given to a competent person can take away the credit that they would have received if they had completed a task on their own. This type of helping is definitely not altruistic, and there is no evidence that mood or the desire to look helpful play any role in this behavior.
10. d. **not help, because he is late.** Darley and Batson’s (1973) classic study showed that even seminary students who were late for an appointment to give a speech on the Good Samaritan parable (which teaches the importance of helping others) were unlikely to help a person coughing and groaning in a doorway. This study suggests then that Fred will be unlikely to help, regardless of whether he is a helpful person or is planning to lecture his daughter on the need to be helpful. There is no reason to believe that fear of looking foolish would undermine Fred’s helpfulness in this situation.

11. c. **supportive help.** Because tennis is not important to Randy, it is unlikely that his brother’s help will be perceived as self-threatening. Self-threatening help occurs when the help challenges an important area of one’s self-concept. Empathic concern and negative state relief help have not been documented as ways in which people perceive help that they are receiving; therefore, it is difficult to say whether Randy would interpret his brother’s help as empathic concern or negative state relief help.

12. b. **empathy.** When people feel empathy, they take the other person’s perspective and experience personal distress. Docility is a sense of withdrawal and thus has little to do with perspective taking or personal distress. Pluralistic ignorance is the mistaken belief that one’s thoughts and feelings are different from others’, and audience inhibition is the reluctance to help stemming from fear of making a bad impression. Both of these concepts are unrelated to perspective taking.

13. d. **bystander intervention model.** The bystander intervention model proposes that people help when they notice an incident, interpret the situation as one in which help is needed, and take responsibility for helping. Just-world beliefs do not involve noticing incidents or interpreting situations, and the self-evaluation maintenance model and empathy-altruism hypothesis do not involve noticing incidents.

14. c. **they know each other.** The people are most likely to interpret the situation as an emergency if they know each other because they will have an easier time reading each other’s reactions; these reactions will be less ambiguous. A large crowd would tend to be more distracting, making it harder for people to recognize the situation as an emergency. And there is no clear evidence that people who are mingling or enjoying themselves would have an easier or harder time recognizing an emergency.

15. c. **diffusion of responsibility for helping.** The bystander intervention model was developed to help explain why large groups of people do not help in such instances. One of the important factors in this model is diffusion of responsibility, which describes the tendency for groups of people to be less likely to help than individuals would be. In a group, people tend to believe that other people will help and thus everyone is less likely to help. There is no clear evidence that groups who do not help are especially callous, are especially likely to blame the victim of a crime, or lack empathy for the victim.

16. b. **Tina is most likely to do so.** Research has shown that women are more likely than men to ask for help, especially in cases of simple requests. There is no clear evidence that the gender of the helper affects this basic finding.

17. d. **Whether she seeks help depends on her perceived control of the situation.** Research shows that people who receive threatening help will seek help only if they think they have little control of the situation. Therefore, they are likely to seek help in some situations but not in others.

18. b. **self-threatening help.** Self-threatening help is help that challenges an important aspect of one’s self-concept. For Molly, being a good parent seems to be an important part of her self-concept, and her friend’s advice seems to be challenging her belief that she is a first-rate parent; so the help her friend is giving is likely to be perceived as self-threatening. For the same reason, it
is unlikely that Molly will see the help as supportive. In addition, there is no evidence that the help is based on empathic concern or negative state relief.

19. c. **social responsibility.** The norm of social responsibility is a moral standard emphasizing that we should help those in need, thus motivating us to help out of a sense of duty or obligation. The norm of reciprocity is the sense that we should help others who have helped us, and the norm of equity prescribes that those who have the most should help those who have the least. These two norms have less to do with helping people out of a sense of duty because they are dependent. Finally all of these norms describe different notions of justice, but there is no specific norm of justice.

20. a. **increase helping.** Feelings of interdependence and connection with other people usually lead to greater helping of those people. At present, there is no indication that feelings of connection to other people lead to decreased helping.

21. a. **indirect reciprocity.** Scholars recently have examined indirect reciprocity, which can be described as: “I help you and somebody else helps me.” This more complex system of altruism may play a role in group selection. The idea behind group selection is that groups with altruistic members may be less likely to become extinct than groups with only selfish individuals (Caporael, 2004; Henrich, 2004; Sober & Wilson, 1998).

22. d. **All of the above are correct.** When discussing contemporary models of altruism, consider these people: Bill Gates, a computer geek who co-founded Microsoft and became the richest man in the world; Bono, the extraverted Irishman rock star; Ted Turner, an eccentric American from the South who started the first 24-hour news cable station (CNN); Dikembe Mutombo, a 7-foot, 2-inch professional basketball player originally from the Congo; Mother Teresa, a Roman Catholic nun from Macedonia. These well-known figures seem quite different from each other in overall personality—except for their concern with helping others. Gates and his wife Melinda have pledged billions of dollars to charity, much of it to target health issues around the world. Bono has worked tirelessly to raise money and awareness about the plight of poor African nations. Turner pledged a personal donation of one billion dollars to the United Nations. Mutombo has raised millions of dollars for and overseen the construction of hospitals in the Congo. Mother Teresa devoted her life to the poor in India.

23. a. **Smiling for women.** In one rather original field experiment conducted in France (Guéguen & Fischer-Lokou, 2005), where hitchhiking is legal and relatively common, male and female confederates of “average attractiveness” hitchhiked along a road, signaling to a total of 800 motorists. The confederates varied whether or not they smiled. Smiling worked—at least for the female confederates. Drivers were much more likely to stop for smiling women than women not smiling. Smiling did not, however, improve the male confederates’ chances of getting picked up.

**Answers to Essay Questions: Sample Essays**

24. Both a good mood and a bad mood can increase the likelihood that people will help others. When people are in a good mood, positive thoughts are primed, thus leading to helping behavior. Alternatively, people may help others when they are in a good mood because they want to stay in a good mood. Adults in a bad mood are also more likely to help others, partly in order to dispel their bad mood. Children are less likely to help when they are in a bad mood; only at a later developmental stage will helping others lead to a more positive mood. However, negative moods don’t always lead to more helping among adults. Negative moods are less likely to promote helping if one blames an individual for his or her bad mood. Also, negative moods are less likely to increase helping if they cause one to become very self-focused.
25. When a group of people that do not know each other are faced with an emergency, each individual in the group is less likely to help than if they faced the emergency alone. The presence of others can lead to a decrease in helping in three ways. First, when other people are around, everyone is likely to be distracted and thus less likely to notice the emergency. Second, when other people are around, the ambiguous actions of others are often taken as cues that the situation may not be an emergency. Each person may believe that he or she is the only one who thinks it is an emergency, even though everyone thinks it is an emergency—a state called pluralistic ignorance. This state can make it difficult for people to interpret the situation as an emergency. Third, when people are around, individuals are less likely to take responsibility for helping in an emergency—a phenomenon called diffusion of responsibility. In this situation, everyone seems to say, “Someone else will do it.”

26. Although help is usually thought of as a positive thing to receive from others, at times it can be seen as threatening. For example, when people receive help in domains in which they feel competent, or in domains important to them, then the help may be perceived as self-threatening. This sort of help can seem to be an insult or a challenge to the competence of the person receiving help. Self-threatening help has been shown to lower self-esteem, especially if it is given by a similar other. Also, when the help seems to be assumptive help—help that the recipient neither asked for nor provided any evidence of needing—the recipient might feel threatened, especially if the recipient has reason to believe that the person offering help has prejudged him or her as inferior or needy based on a stereotype.

27. Using data from random samples drawn from 40 of the 50 states in the U.S., Markus Kemmelmeier and others (2006) examined the relationship between the degree of individualism associated with each state and the amount of helping the individuals from within those states offered to strangers in the form of donations and volunteering. The states’ degree of individualism was determined in a previous study by Vandello and Cohen (1999) using a number of variables, such as the percentage of people living alone, the percentage of people with no religious affiliation, and the percentage of people self-employed. In general, states in the Mountain West and Great Plains were the most individualistic, followed by the Northeast and Midwest. The least individualistic states tended to be in the South and Southwest. Kemmelmeier and colleagues found that people from the more individualistic states tended to exhibit greater charitable giving and volunteering than people from the more collectivistic states, particularly for donations and volunteering that were not specific to one’s ingroup affiliations. The authors propose that when helping involves this more abstract kind of giving—as opposed to, for example, helping someone from within one’s ingroup—individualism may be associated with greater helping.