

Prosocial Behavior

Altruism

- Binti, a 7-year old gorilla, at the Brookfield Zoo near Chicago
- Deletha Word & Martell Welch, Jr.

Motivational Factors in Helping

- **Genetic Approaches to Helping:** a biological push to help others
- Evolutionary biologist J.B.S. Hilda once wrote in jest, "I'd give up my life for two brothers or eight cousins."
- *Why?*
- On average we share half our genes with siblings, and 1/8 of our genes with first cousins.

Motivational Factors in Helping

- Sociobiologist David Barash (1979): "**Real, honest to God altruism simply doesn't occur in nature.**"
- *Why?*
- *Our goal is to pass our genes on.*

Motivational Factors in Helping

- **Kin Selection and Self-Sacrifice:**
- Situations in which we will lay down our own lives for others.
- **Who are those others?**

Motivational Factors in Helping

- Those who are closely related to us.
- *why parents will sacrifice for their offspring (i.e., kids have a much better opportunity to pass on genes)*

Motivational Factors in Helping

- Les Greenberg (1979) conducted studies that looked at the kinship selection behaviors of bees.
- Released bees near a nest protected by guard bees
- *Guard bees more likely to let in close relatives.*

Motivational Factors in Helping

- **But what about people risking their lives to save relative strangers?**
- People who aren't blood relatives. How does that lead to a continuance of the gene pool?
- These behaviors can be accounted for by what is called *group selection*.

Motivational Factors in Helping

- Critics: the evolutionary perspective is so flexible, that it can be used to explain anything.

Motivational Factors in Helping

- We have something that ants and bees and even other primates don't have:
 - We have a complex sense of self, complete with attitudes, beliefs, and values transmitted by culture.

Motivational Factors in Helping

- Social psychologists tend to focus on the psychological motivations and situational factors that lead to helping behaviors.
- Two basic motivations are discussed: *altruism* and *egoism* (or *hedonism*).

Motivational Factors in Helping

- Altruism is selfless action that is done with no expectation of reward for the self. A desire to increase another's welfare.
- Egoism is selfish action that is done with the expectation of benefiting the self.

Motivational Factors in Helping

- Altruism: *ultimate motive*, sought as an end in itself.
- Egoism: *instrumental motive*, sought as a means to an end.

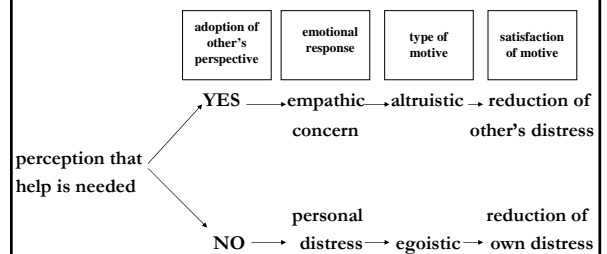
Motivational Factors in Helping

- A positive consequence of altruism is called an *unintended consequence*.
- **The Debate:**
 - *is there really such a thing as a truly altruistic motive?*

Motivational Factors in Helping

- Daniel Batson: there **is** an altruistic motive.
- empathy-altruism hypothesis
 - empathic concern produces altruistic motive
 - perspective taking
 - self-oriented concern produces egoistic motive
 - focus on your own feelings

Motivational Factors in Helping



Motivational Factors in Helping

- How do we know?
- By examining how easy or difficult it is to escape from the helping situation.

Motivational Factors in Helping

- Batson's empathy-altruism hypothesis
 - Batson et al., 1981
 - confederate receives shocks, Ps observe
 - IV: similarity to other (empathic concern) and ease of escape (watch remaining 8 trials, leave now)
 - DV: willing to trade places with confederate

Motivational Factors in Helping

- Batson's empathy-altruism hypothesis
 - Batson et al., 1981
 - High empathic concern: 80% were willing to trade place, regardless of ease of escape
 - Low empathic concern: only 20% in the easy escape condition were willing to trade places

Criticisms

- Empathy may create feelings of guilt/or a negative mood and the self is motivated to reduce these feelings.
- There is no clear divide between self and the other. Helping a similar other may be seen as helping oneself.

Normative Influences on helping

- **Social Norms:** some of the most powerful situational factors that lead people to help

Normative Influences on helping

- **Norm of reciprocity:**
 - we help because we have been helped in the past.
 - we expect to be helped in the future.

Normative Influences on helping

- **Norm of social responsibility:**
 - we should help those less fortunate than ourselves

Normative Influences on helping

- Barnes, Ickes, & Kidd (1979)
 - "Tony Freedman" called psych students asking for help in preparing for an upcoming exam
 - Poor note taking ability
 - Poor note taking motivation
 - Ps were more likely to help Tony the unable note taker

Normative Influences on helping

- **norm of social justice:**
 - we should help others when they *deserve* it

Normative Influences on helping

- Bickman & Kamzan (1973)
 - Female confederates begged for money to buy things at a grocery store
 - Money for milk
 - Money for chilled cookie dough
 - Milk money beggars more likely to receive money

Normative Influences on helping

- **Mind your own business (Shotland & Straw, 1976)**
 - staged an attack of a woman by a man in a public setting.
 - In one condition the woman yelled: "I don't know you"
 - In the other she yelled: "I don't know why I married you"

Normative Influences on helping

- In the "I don't know you" condition:
 - 65% intervened
- In the "I don't know why I married you condition":
 - 19% intervened

What Factors Inhibit Helping?

- Latane & Darley were not convinced that the media's reasons accounted for what happened to Kitty Genovese.

What Factors Inhibit Helping?

- When Ps thought they were the only one around to help the person having the seizure:
 - much more likely to help the person (85%) than when they were 1 of 5 people (31%).
- The conclusions: the more bystanders, the *less* likely the victim will be helped --- *bystander effect*
- *Why?*

What Factors Inhibit Helping?

- Time constraints
 - Darley & Batson (1973)

Factors that Inhibit Helping

- Costs to the helper
 - Social exchange theory -- help when perceived benefits outweigh the costs
 - Costs of helping may be quite high
 - e.g., Kitty Genovese

Helping Process

- 1. notice that something is happening
 - Lots of people or other distractions
 - Norm of minding your own business

Helping Process

- 2. interpret the situation as an emergency
 - Pluralistic ignorance
 - e.g., smoked filled room

Helping Process

- 3. take responsibility for providing help
 - Diffusion of responsibility

Helping Process

- 4. decide how to help
 - Direct or indirect aid

Helping Process

- 5. provide help
 - Audience inhibition
 - Confusion of responsibility

How Can We Increase Helping Behavior?

- Reduce the ambiguity- make the need clear
- Enhance feelings of personal responsibility
- Teach norms supporting helpful behavior