

up red-faced; your sister-in-law shoots you an angry look; and your niece bursts into tears. Next year's Thanksgiving celebration, it seems, may be a frozen dinner in front of the television set.

WHAT'S GOING ON here? Why does an offer for direct payment put such a damper on the party? As Margaret Clark, Judson Mills, and Alan Fiske suggested a long time ago, the answer is that we live simultaneously in two different worlds—one where social norms prevail, and the other where market norms make the rules. The social norms include the friendly requests that people make of one another. Could you help me move this couch? Could you help me change this tire? Social norms are wrapped up in our social nature and our need for community. They are usually warm and fuzzy. Instant paybacks are not required: you may help move your neighbor's couch, but this doesn't mean he has to come right over and move yours. It's like opening a door for someone: it provides pleasure for both of you, and reciprocity is not immediately required.

The second world, the one governed by market norms, is very different. There's nothing warm and fuzzy about it. The exchanges are sharp-edged: wages, prices, rents, interest, and costs-and-benefits. Such market relationships are not necessarily evil or mean—in fact, they also include self-reliance, inventiveness, and individualism—but they do imply comparable benefits and prompt payments. When you are in the domain of market norms, you get what you pay for—that's just the way it is.

When we keep social norms and market norms on their separate paths, life hums along pretty well. Take sex, for in-