

equally hard during the task, regardless of whether they got a small Snickers bar (these participants dragged on average 162 circles), the Godiva chocolates (these participants dragged on average 169 circles), or nothing at all (these participants dragged on average 168 circles). The conclusion: no one is offended by a small gift, because even small gifts keep us in the social exchange world and away from market norms.

BUT WHAT WOULD HAPPEN if we mixed the signals for the two types of norms? What would happen if we blended the market norm with the social norm? In other words, if we said that we would give them a “50-cent Snickers bar” or a “*five-dollar* box of Godiva chocolates,” what would the participants do? Would a “50-cent Snickers bar” make our participants work as hard as a “Snickers bar” made them work; or would it make them work halfheartedly, as the 50-cents made them work? Or would it be somewhere in the middle? The next experiment tested these ideas.

As it turned out, the participants were not motivated to work at all when they got the 50-cent Snickers bar, and in fact the effort they invested was the same as when they got a payment of 50 cents. They reacted to the explicitly priced gift in exactly the way they reacted to cash, and the gift no longer invoked social norms—by the mention of its cost, the gift had passed into the realm of market norms.

By the way, we replicated the setup later when we asked passersby whether they would help us unload a sofa from a truck. We found the same results. People are willing to work free, and they are willing to work for a reasonable wage; but offer them just a small payment and they will walk away. Gifts are also effective for sofas, and offering people a gift,