



Helping and Prosocial Behavior

[Yashpal Jogdand]

[HUL261]

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Today's Learning Objectives



1. Learn which situational and social factors affect when a bystander will help another in need.
2. Understand when and whom people are more likely to help?
3. Discover whether we help others out of a sense of altruistic concern for the victim, for more self-centered and egoistic motives, or both.

Warm up: Helping and Receiving Help

- Did you help anyone last week?
- Did you receive help from someone last week?
- Did you witness somebody asking for help or being helped last week?
- Share your experiences

Introduction

Prosocial Behavior

Any act performed with the goal of benefiting another person.



Altruism

The desire to help another person even if it involves a cost to the helper.



Introduction



- Would you offer to help in this situation?
- What are some obstacles to providing help?



Overview

- Introduction
- **When do People Help?**
- Whom are we likely to help?
- Why Help?
- Conclusion

Kitty Genovese



- Bibb Latané and John Darley (1970) are two social psychologists who taught at universities in New York at the time of Kitty Genovese's prolonged murder, when 38 witnesses failed to call police.
- Paradoxically, they thought, it might be that the greater the number of bystanders who observe an emergency, the less likely any one of them is to help.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BdpdUbW8vbw>

The Number of Bystanders: The Bystander Effect



Latané and Darley (1970) found that in terms of receiving help, there is no safety in numbers.

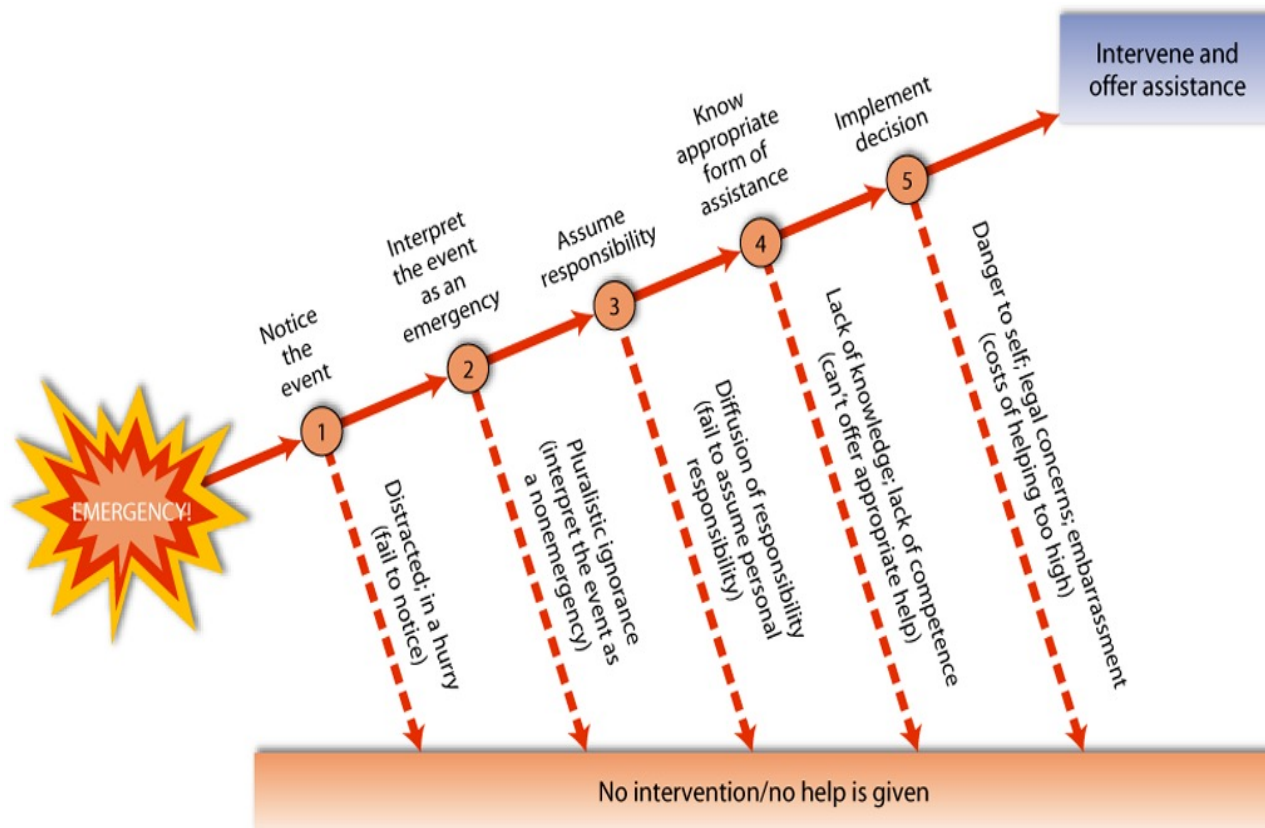
Dozens of other studies, conducted in the laboratory and in the field, have found what they found: The greater the number of bystanders who witness an emergency, the less likely any one of them is to help the victim.

This is known as the bystander effect.



Why is it that people are less likely to help when others are present?

Latané and Darley (1970) developed a step-by-step description of how people decide whether to intervene in an emergency. Part of this description is an explanation of how the number of bystanders can make a difference.



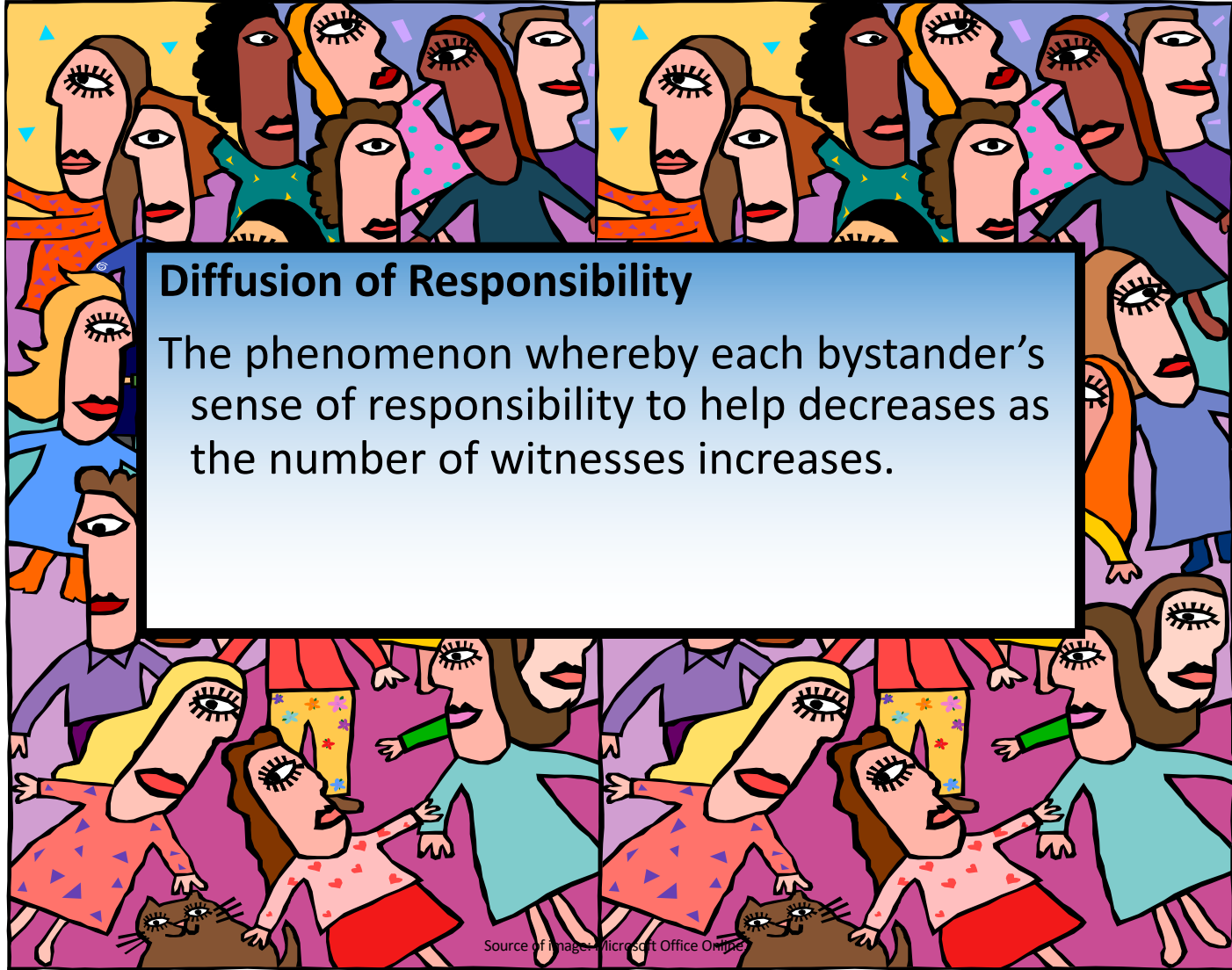
Interpreting the Event as an Emergency

- A key determinant of helping is whether the bystander interprets the event as an emergency—as a situation where help is needed.
- If people assume that nothing is wrong when an emergency is taking place, they will not help.
- When other bystanders are present, people are more likely to assume that an emergency is something innocuous.

Pluralistic Ignorance

Bystanders' assuming that nothing is wrong in an emergency because no one else looks concerned.

Assuming Responsibility



Deciding to Implement the Help

Even if you know exactly what kind of help is appropriate, there are still reasons why you might decide not to intervene:

- You might not be qualified to deliver the right kind of help.
- You might be afraid of:
 - Making a fool of yourself,
 - Doing the wrong thing, or
 - Placing yourself in danger

Costs and rewards

Critique of Bystander Effect Research



- Textbooks have got Kitty Genovese story wrong. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OBckLqe2c5Y> and this https://www.grignoux.be/dossiers/288/pdf/manning_et_alii.pdf
- As we learned in the last class, a focus on individual and interpersonal factors do not help in understanding helping across group boundaries



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Social Identity Approach to Helping

- Self-categorization theory (SCT: Turner et al., 1987):

Changes in self-concept are related to changes in immediate social context.

- SCT suggests that social identity changes as other groups or individuals enter (or leave) the relevant social context. What becomes important for explaining both perception and action is the particular **self-definition** that is **salient** at any given time.
- When the victim of an accident is described as an in-group rather than an out-group member, individuals are more likely to consider that the same fate might befall them.
- In the same way, perceiving self and victim as members of a shared category may increase levels of intragroup cooperation and thus increase the likelihood of emergency intervention (Stapel, Reicher, & Spears, 1994).

Identity and Emergency Intervention: How Social Group Membership and Inclusiveness of Group Boundaries Shape Helping Behavior (Levine et al, 2005)

Identity and Emergency Intervention: How Social Group Membership and Inclusiveness of Group Boundaries Shape Helping Behavior

Mark Levine
Amy Prosser
David Evans
Lancaster University

Stephen Reicher
St. Andrews University

Two experiments exploring the effects of social category membership on real-life helping behavior are reported. In Study 1, inter-group rivalries between soccer fans are used to examine the role of identity in emergency helping. An injured stranger wearing an in-group team shirt is more likely to be helped than when wearing a rival team shirt or an unbranded sports shirt. In Study 2, a more inclusive social categorization is made salient for potential helpers. Helping is extended to those who were previously identified as out-group members but not to those who do not display signs of group membership. Taken together, the studies show the importance of both shared identity between bystander and victim and the inclusiveness of salient identity for increasing the likelihood of emergency intervention.

Keywords: social identity; group membership; emergency intervention; helping

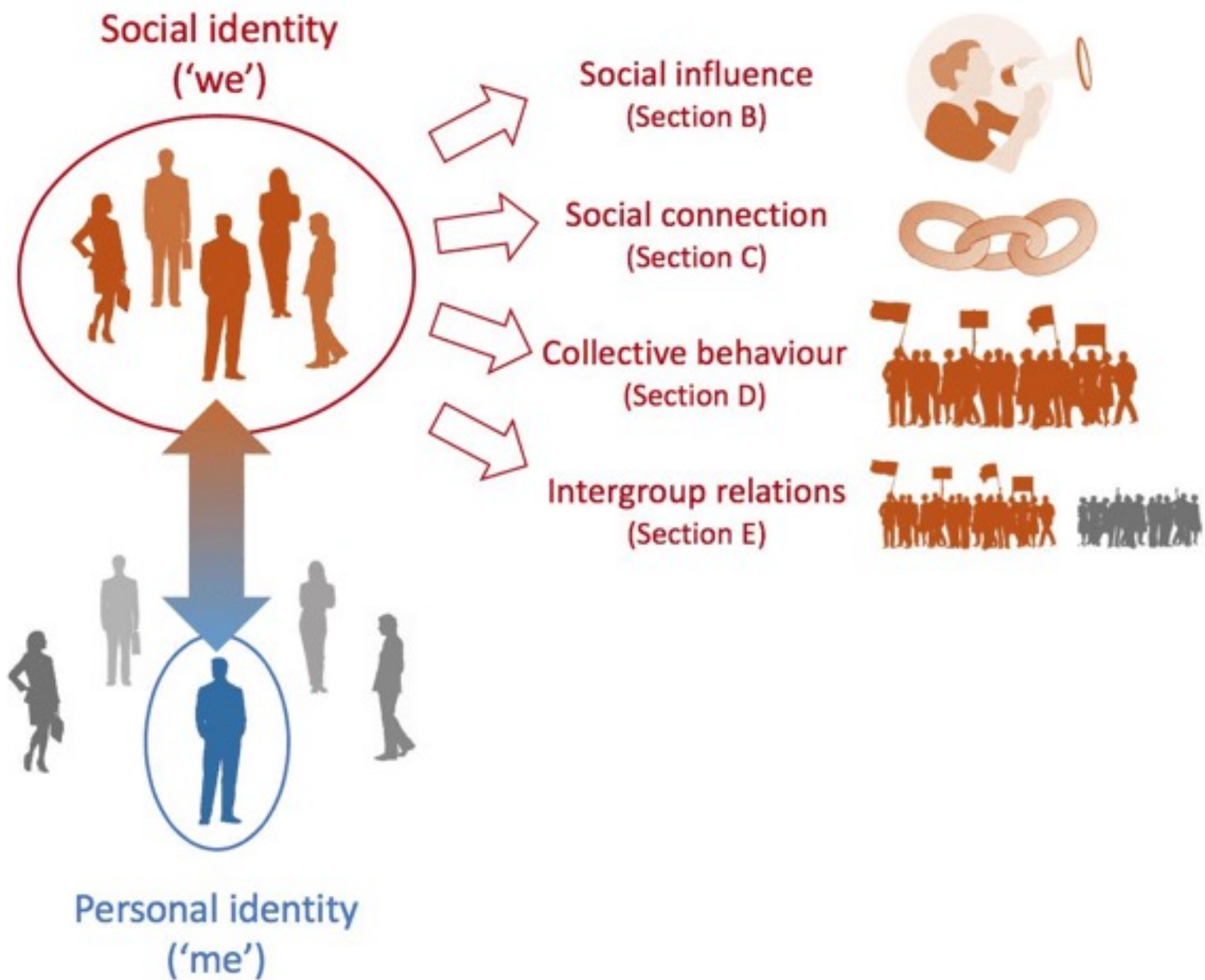
Over the past 40 years, social psychologists have identified a number of factors that shape the likelihood of help being offered in an emergency situation. These include the number of people present (Darley & Latané, 1968; Latané & Darley, 1970), the location of the incident (R. Levine, Martinez, Brase, & Sorenson, 1994; Milgram, 1970), and the costs of helping (J. Piliavin, Dovidio, Gaertner, & Clark, 1981). For the most part, psychological explanations for emergency intervention have tended to be subsumed within general theories of helping behavior (but see Latané, 1981, for an alternative account). For example, the arousal cost-reward model (Dovidio, Piliavin, Gaertner, Schroeder, & Clark, 1991; J. Piliavin et al., 1981; I. Piliavin, Rodin, & Piliavin,

1969) begins with the aversive arousal caused by the distress of others in need. In this model, it is the balance of cost-reward calculations made by an individual (as a means to reduce aversive arousal) that explains helping behavior. Batson's empathy-altruism model (Batson, 1987, 1991; Batson et al., 1989; Batson & Shaw, 1991) also focuses on the place of emotion in helping. The empathy-altruism model argues that helping is related to the empathetic concern an individual feels (defined as an emotional reaction characterized by feelings like compassion, tenderness, softheartedness, and sympathy) for others. Batson's primary aim is to argue that empathy-based helping provides evidence for genuine altruism or selflessness in the motivation to help others.

Recent work concerning both of these models has begun to move from a focus on individual and interpersonal factors to exploring the importance of group and intergroup processes in helping. What is at issue in these debates is the conceptual possibility of shared identities (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Tajfel & Turner, 1985; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). Arguments center on the degree to which the bystander and the victim can be said to share a common identity and the role this common identity

Authors' Note: This research was supported by Economic and Social Research Council Grant L133 25 1054 under its Violence Research Program. Address correspondence to Dr. Mark Levine, Department of Psychology, Lancaster University, Lancaster LA1 4YF, United Kingdom; e-mail: m.levine@lancaster.ac.uk

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Social Identity and Helping

- Social identity as you have learned is our idea of who we are derived from our belonging to a social group.
- Social identity is derived on the basis of group membership (a sense of 'us ness') is different from one's individual identity (a sense of 'I' or 'me').
- When the victim of an accident is described as an in-group rather than an out-group member, individuals are more likely to consider that the same fate might befall them.
- In the same way, perceiving self and victim as members of a shared category may increase levels of intragroup cooperation and thus increase the likelihood of emergency intervention (Stapel, Reicher, & Spears, 1994).

Experimental Set up

- Participants in the experiment are self-identified Manchester United fans who witness the accident while walking between buildings on the Lancaster University campus.
- The participants have already taken part in the first stage of a study in which their identity as Manchester United fans has been made salient.
- They are walking between buildings at the request of the experimenters who have asked them to go to a separate location to watch a video.
- The social category membership of the victim is manipulated by the clothing the confederate is wearing. He either wears a shirt that designates him as an in-group member (Manchester United shirt), an out-group member (Liverpool FC shirt), or that offers no social category information (plain, unbranded sports shirt).

Experimental Manipulation and Measurement

- As the participants travel between buildings, they see a confederate come jogging into view. The confederate runs down a bank that leads to a car park across which the participants are walking. The confederate trips and falls in line of sight (although not directly in the path) of the participants and about 15 feet away.
- The measures of intervention range on a 5- point scale from not noticing the victim to physically assisting the victim out of the experimental context.
- The behavior of the participants is assessed by three independent observers, and it is predicted that intervention levels will be highest when the victim is clearly identified as an in-group member and least likely when the victim is clearly identified as an out-group member.

Experiment 1



Frequencies for Helping by Shirt Condition

	Manchester United	Liverpool fc	Plain t-shirt
No Help	1	7	8
Help	12	3	4

Salient Social
Identity:



Manchester United fan identity

Experiment 2



Frequencies for Helping by Shirt Condition			
	Manchester United	Liverpool fc	Plain t-shirt
No Help	2	3	7
Help	8	7	2

Salient Social
Identity:



superordinate football fan identity

Summary

- Recognizing the signs of common group membership in a stranger leads to the increased likelihood that bystanders will intervene to help those in distress.
- However, group memberships are not fixed.
- When we define ingroup more inclusively, previous intergroup rivalries become submerged within a more inclusive or common categorization. Those who were previously identified as out-group members are now extended the benefits of group membership.
- **Social identity and group membership are important determinants of helping behavior.**



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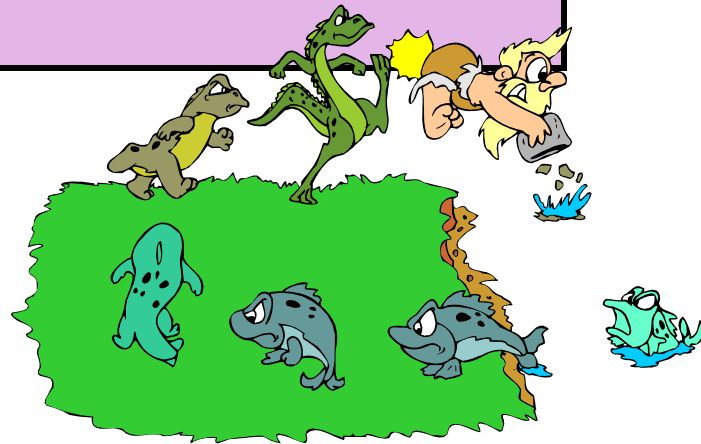
Evolutionary Psychology: Instincts and Genes

- Any gene that furthers our survival and increases the probability that we will produce offspring is likely to be passed on from generation to generation.
- Genes that lower our chances of survival, such as those causing life-threatening diseases, reduce the chances that we will produce offspring and thus are less likely to be passed on.

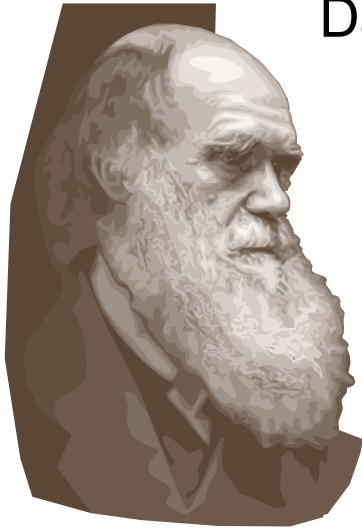
Evolutionary Psychology: Instincts and Genes

Evolutionary Psychology

The attempt to explain social behavior in terms of genetic factors that evolved over time according to the principles of natural selection.



Evolutionary Psychology: Instincts and Genes



Darwin realized early on that there was a problem with evolutionary theory:
How can it explain altruism?

- If people's overriding goal is to ensure their own survival, why would they ever help others at a cost to themselves?
- Genes promoting selfish behavior should be more likely to be passed on—or should they?

Evolutionary Psychology: Instincts and Genes

Kin Selection

The idea that behaviors that help a genetic relative are favored by natural selection.

- People can increase the chances their genes will be passed along not only by having children but also by ensuring that their genetic relatives have children.
- Because a person's blood relatives share some of his or her genes, the more that person ensures their survival, the greater the chance that his or her genes will flourish in future generations.
- Thus natural selection should favor altruistic acts directed toward genetic relatives.

Evolutionary Psychology: Instincts and Genes

- Survey research found that people reported that they would be more likely to help genetic relatives than nonrelatives in life-and-death situations, such as a house fire.
- Anecdotal evidence from real emergencies is consistent with these results.

The Reciprocity Norm

Norm of Reciprocity

The expectation that helping others will increase the likelihood that they will help us in the future.



Learning Social Norms

Herbert Simon (1990) argued that it is highly adaptive for individuals to learn social norms from other members of a society.

The best learners of a society's norms and customs have a survival advantage, because a culture learns things like which foods are poisonous and how best to cooperate.

The person who learns these rules is more likely to survive than the person who does not.

Consequently, the ability to learn social norms has become part of our genetic makeup.

Social Exchange: The Costs and Rewards of Helping

Social exchange theory argues that much of what we do stems from the desire to maximize our rewards and minimize our costs.



Social exchange assume that people in their relationships with others try to maximize the ratio of social rewards to social costs.



Social Exchange: The Costs and Rewards of Helping

Helping can be rewarding in a number of ways:

- The norm of reciprocity can increase the likelihood that someone will help us in return.
- Helping someone is an investment in the future, the social exchange being that someday, someone will help us when we need it.
- Helping can also relieve the personal distress of a bystander.
- By helping others, we can also gain such rewards as social approval from others and increased feelings of self-worth.

Social Exchange: The Costs and Rewards of Helping



The other side is that helping can be costly:

- Physical danger
- Pain
- Embarrassment
- Time

Basically, social exchange theory argues that true altruism, in which people help even when doing so is costly to themselves, does not exist. People help when the benefits outweigh the costs.

Empathy and Altruism: The Pure Motive for Helping

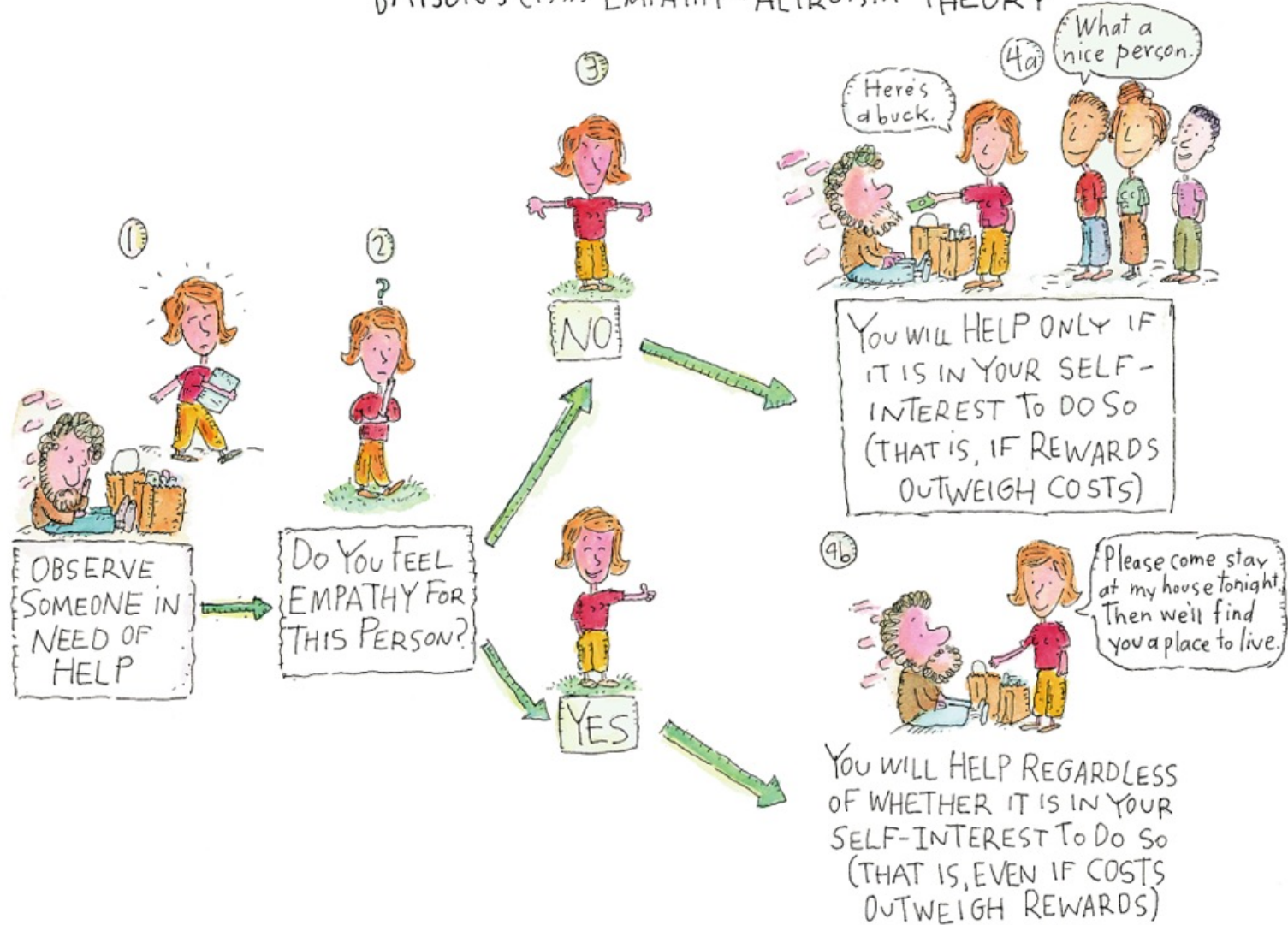
Empathy

The ability to put oneself in the shoes of another person and to experience events and emotions (e.g., joy and sadness) the way that person experiences them.

Empathy-Altruism Hypothesis

The idea that when we feel empathy for a person, we will attempt to help that person purely for altruistic reasons, regardless of what we have to gain.

BATSON'S (1991) EMPATHY-ALTRUISM THEORY





To sum up, we've identified three basic motives underlying prosocial behavior:

1. Helping is an instinctive reaction to promote the welfare of those genetically similar to us (evolutionary psychology).
2. The rewards of helping often outweigh the costs, so helping is in our self-interest (social exchange theory).
3. Under some conditions, powerful feelings of empathy and compassion for the victim prompt selfless giving (the empathy-altruism hypothesis).



Wrap Up: Conclusion

- The power of the situation that operates on potential helpers in real time needs to be considered.
- What might appear to be a split-second decision to help is actually the result of consideration of multiple situational factors (e.g., the helper's interpretation of the situation, the presence and ability of others to provide the help, social identity and group membership, the results of a cost-benefit analysis)
- A common categorization can extend helping across group boundaries. Previous intergroup rivalries become submerged within a more inclusive or common categorization.



End