* In this chapter, at the request of interviewees, I've disguised the identities of several key characters. Lillian Bauer is a pseudonym, as are Brad and Rich in Peter Audet's story, and Sameer Jain, a man you'll meet later.

* This raises a broader question: are women more likely to be givers than men? Northwestern University psychologist Alice Eagly and her colleagues have systematically analyzed hundreds of studies on giving behaviors such as helping, sharing, comforting, guiding, rescuing, and defending others. It turns out that when we study their behaviors, men and women are equally likely to be givers. They just give in different ways. On the one hand, in close relationships, women tend to be more giving than men. On average, women are more likely than men to donate organs to family members, assist coworkers, and mentor subordinates, and female physicians tend to give greater emotional support to patients than male physicians. On the other hand, when it comes to strangers, men are more likely to act like givers. On average, men are more likely than women to help in emergencies and risk their lives to save strangers.

* Although there's consistent evidence that a lack of assertiveness is one reason for the giver pay disadvantage, there's a second factor at play. Givers often choose lower-paying careers: they're willing to make less of a living in order to make more of a difference. One recent study replicated the basic finding that givers earn lower incomes even after accounting for the occupations in which they work, but this reduced the disadvantage—suggesting that part of the difference is due to givers' accepting lower-paying jobs. To illustrate, Cornell economist Robert Frank found that employees in the most socially responsible occupations earned annual salaries of approximately 30 percent less than those in the middle and 44 percent less than those at the bottom of the social responsibility spectrum. Private-sector employees earned annual salaries averaging 21 percent higher than government employees, who in turn were 32 percent above nonprofit employees. Guess who's more likely to end up in government and nonprofit jobs? The givers. In one amusing study, Frank asked economics students to consider doing the exact same job in two different organizations: one with strong giver values and one . . . less so. The students reported that they would accept 50 percent lower salaries to work as an advertising copywriter for the American Cancer Society than for Camel cigarettes, 17 percent lower salaries to work as an accountant at an art museum than at a petrochemical company or as a recruiter at the Peace Corps than Exxon Mobil, and 33 percent lower salaries as a lawyer for the Sierra Club than for the National Rifle Association. Interestingly, men were less willing to sacrifice their salaries than women. Of course, whether the participants would show these preferences in their actual behavior is another matter—but I'm willing to bet that selfless givers are more likely to do so than otherish givers.

* Only later did I learn that my manager hired me because my predecessor had quit three weeks into the job, and she was desperate to find a replacement. The position had been open for twenty-two days, and I was the sole candidate.

* Many Craigslist pages do have a section for giving away free items, but its popularity is dwarfed by that of the buying and selling pages.

* When he wore the T-shirt of a rival soccer team, Liverpool FC, 30 percent helped, which raises the question of whether it's possible to get people to help a rival. Before the staged emergency, the fans had written about why Manchester United was their favorite team, how long they had supported the team, how often they watched the team play, and how they felt when the team won and lost. The fans were thinking about themselves as Manchester United fans, so the vast majority of them didn't want to help their enemy. But the psychologists had a trick up their sleeves. In another version of the study, instead of writing about why they loved Manchester United, the fans wrote about why they were soccer fans, what it meant to them, and what they had in common with other fans. When the runner twisted his ankle, the fans were still much more likely to help if he was wearing a Manchester United T-shirt (80 percent) than a plain T-shirt (22 percent). But when he was wearing the T-shirt of their rival, Liverpool FC, 70 percent helped. When we look at a rival as a fellow soccer fan, rather than as an enemy, we can identify with him. Oftentimes, we fail to identify with people because we're thinking about ourselves—or them—in terms that are too specific and narrow. If we look more broadly at commonalities between us, it becomes much easier to see giving as otherish.

* There are plenty of alternative explanations for many of these findings. Wharton professor Uri Simonsohn has scrutinized the data, and although he believes that name similarity *can* influence our decisions, he argues persuasively that many of the existing studies have been biased by other factors. For example, he finds that people named Dennis are overrepresented among lawyers, not only dentists. But this doesn't explain why randomized, controlled experiments show that people help others with similar names, buy products that match their initials, and are attracted to dates who share their initials—and it doesn't account for some recent studies on how names can sabotage success. Psychologists have found that on average, people whose names start with *A* and *B* get better grades and are accepted to higher-ranked law schools than people whose names start with *C* and *D*—and that professional baseball players whose names start with *K*, the symbol for strikeouts, strike out 9 percent more often than their peers. The speculation here is that people are more comfortable with negative outcomes that subtly remind them of themselves. Other evidence lends tentative support to this idea: athletes, doctors, and lawyers whose first names start with *D* die sooner than those with other initials. Professional baseball players with positive initials (A.C.E., J.O.Y., W.O.W.) live an average of thirteen years longer than players with negative initials (B.U.M., P.I.G., D.U.D.). And in California between 1969 and 1995, compared with neutral initials, women with positive initials lived an average of 3.4 years longer, men with positive initials lived an average of 4.5 years longer, and men with negative initials died an average of 2.8 years earlier. Consistent with the idea that initials affect how we take care of ourselves, people with positive initials have lower accident and suicide rates, which are higher for people with negative initials.

* Ironically, the message backfired for the people who were conserving energy in a giver fashion. Once they saw they were below the norm for electricity consumption, they felt licensed to take more, and actually increased their consumption by an average of 0.89 kilowatt-hours per day. The psychologists were able to prevent this unintended consequence by drawing a ☺ next to the information that households were consuming less than average. Apparently, this small signal of social approval was enough to motivate people to continue acting like givers.

* Interestingly, even though people of any reciprocity style can internalize a giving identity, there's still a difference between givers and takers. In one study at a *Fortune* 500 retail company with colleagues Jane Dutton and Brent Rosso, I found that when people gave to help coworkers, they were more likely to see themselves as helpful, generous, and caring people. This is the pattern that emerges for true givers: repeated acts of voluntary helping contribute to the development of a giver identity in general. For takers, though, the giver identity that develops may not translate to other roles or organizations. They might become a giver on Freecycle, but when they join another organization, they shift back to taking until they internalize that organization's identity. As we saw earlier, the more the organization provides a sense of optimal distinctiveness, the faster that identification tends to occur.