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EMPATHY-INDUCED ALTRUISTIC MOTIVATION

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About 30 years ago, I began conducting research on the motivational repertoire of humans. Specifically, I was interested in motivation for helping. I wanted to know whether when we help others, our motivation is always and exclusively self-interested—universal egoism—or whether we are capable of being altruistically motivated as well.

To be honest, I started with a clear bias. I thought altruism was a myth. In the words of the wise and witty Duke de La Rouchefoucauld: "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) put it even more graphically:

> 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. (p. 42)

Like La Rouchefoucauld and Mandeville, I assumed that everything we humans do, no matter how beneficial to others, is really directed toward the

http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/12061-001
Prosocial Motives, Emotions, and Behavior: The Better Angels of Our Nature,
edited by M. Mikulincer and P. R. Shaver

ultimate goal of one or more forms of self-benefit. But over the years, I have come to believe that this assumption is wrong.

What caused me to lose my faith in universal egoism was a series of experiments that colleagues and I conducted to test the *empathy–altruism hypothesis*—the hypothesis that empathic concern produces altruistic motive. Before I discuss that line of research, let me state explicitly what I mean by altruism. Depending on how altruism is defined, the question of its existence can be either profound or trivial. I hope my definition does not make the question trivial.

DEFINING ALTRUISM AND EGOISM

By *altruism* I mean a motivational state with the ultimate goal of increasing another's welfare. Altruism is juxtaposed to *egoism*, a motivational state with the ultimate goal of increasing one's own welfare. I use the term *ultimate* here to refer to means–end relations, not to a metaphysical first or final cause. An *ultimate goal* is an end in itself. In contrast, an *instrumental goal* is a stepping stone on the way to reaching an ultimate goal. If a barrier to reaching an instrumental goal arises, then alternative routes to the ultimate goal will be sought. Should the ultimate goal be reached while bypassing the instrumental goal, the motivational force will disappear. If a goal is ultimate, it cannot be bypassed in this way (Lewin, 1938). Both instrumental and ultimate goals should be distinguished from unintended consequences, results of an action—foreseen or unforeseen—that are not the goal of the action. Each ultimate goal defines a distinct goal-directed motive. Hence, altruism and egoism are distinct motives, even though they can co-occur.

Altruism and egoism, as defined, have much in common. Each refers to a motivational state; each is concerned with the ultimate goal of this motivational state; 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?

The term *altruism* has been used in the following three 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 has been common among developmental psychologists. It has also been common among evolutionary biologists, who have defined altruism as behavior that reduces an organism's reproductive fitness—the potential to put its genes in the next generation—relative to the reproductive

fitness of one or more other organisms. Using this definition, evolutionary biologists can speak of altruism across a very broad phylogenetic spectrum, ranging from social insects to humans (e.g., Dawkins, 1976; Hamilton, 1964; Trivers, 1971). However, as Sober and Wilson (1998) pointed out, it is important to distinguish between evolutionary altruism and psychological altruism. *Evolutionary altruism* is behavior that reduces one's reproductive fitness. *Psychological altruism* is motivation with the ultimate goal of increasing another's welfare. Sober and Wilson emphasized that there is no necessary connection between these two concepts. Evolutionary altruism is neither necessary nor sufficient to produce psychological altruism. I hope it is clear that my interest is in psychological altruism.

2. *As acting morally.* A second use of the term *altruism* focuses on a specific set of helpful acts—those that meet some standard of goodness or morality. The link between altruism and morality appears to be based on the juxtaposition of each to self-interest. Self-interest is often equated with selfishness, which is in turn often considered the epitome of immorality. Altruism involves other-interest rather than self-interest. It may seem that if self-interest is not moral, and altruism is not self-interest, then altruism is moral, but this logic is flawed. Apart from whether self-interest should be equated with immorality—Rawls (1971) and many others have challenged this equation—to say that A (altruism) is not B (self-interest) and B is not C (moral) does not imply that A is C. Altruistic motivation as I have defined it can produce behavior that, depending on the moral standard applied, is moral, amoral, or immoral. Similarly, egoistic motivation can produce behavior that is moral, amoral, or immoral.
3. *As helping in order to gain internal rather than external rewards.* A third use of altruism does consider the motivation for benefiting others. But rather than treating altruistic motivation as an alternative to egoistic motivation, the third use reduces altruism to a special form of egoism. This use, quite common among contemporary 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. According to this definition, if you help in order to gain a good feeling, to avoid guilt, or to reduce your aversive arousal caused by witnessing another's suffering, then your motivation is altruistic. By my definition, these ultimate goals simply define relatively subtle forms of egoism.

Why Worry About Motivation?

Having offered my definition of altruism, it is time to face a pragmatic question: As long as a person in need is helped, why worry about the nature of the underlying motivation? The answer depends on one's interest. If one is interested only in getting help for this person in this situation, the nature of the motivation may not matter. If, however, one is interested in knowing more generally when and where help can be expected, and how effective it is likely to be—perhaps with an eye to creating a more caring society, then understanding the underlying motivation is crucial. Behavior is highly variable. Occurrence of a particular behavior, including helping, depends on the strength of the motive or motives that might evoke that behavior, and on (a) the strength of competing motives, if any; (b) how the behavior relates to each of these motives; and (c) other behavioral options available in the situation at the time (see chap. 4, this volume). It also depends on whether the behavior promotes an instrumental or an ultimate goal. The more directly a 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 the causal association between the instrumental and ultimate goal changes or if behavioral pathways to the ultimate goal arise that bypass the instrumental goal. Lewin (1951) argued that invariance (and explanatory stability) is found not in behavior or consequences but in the link of a given motive to its ultimate goal.

A Failed Philosophical Finesse

It is also time for a little philosophical brush clearing. One frequently heard argument against the existence of altruism attempts to rule out its existence on logical rather than empirical grounds. The argument goes as follows: Even if it were possible for a person to have another's welfare as an ultimate goal, such a person would be interested in attaining this goal and would experience pleasure on doing so; therefore, even this apparent altruism would actually be a product of egoism.

Philosophers have shown that this argument, which invokes the general principle of psychological hedonism, fails because it confuses two different meanings of self and two different forms of hedonism (see MacIntyre, 1967). Concerning self, the meaning at issue for altruism is not self as agent (Who has the goal?) but self—and other—as object (Whose welfare is the goal?). Concerning hedonism, there are strong and weak forms. The strong form of psychological hedonism asserts that attainment of personal pleasure is always the goal of human action. The weak form asserts only that goal attainment always brings pleasure. The weak form is not inconsistent with the possibility that an ultimate goal of some action is to benefit another.

Pleasure obtained can be a consequence of reaching this goal without being the goal. The strong form of psychological hedonism is inconsistent with the possibility of altruism. But to affirm the strong form is simply to assert that altruistic motivation does not exist, not that it logically cannot exist. This affirmation is about empirical claims that may or may not be true. One can accept the weak form of psychological hedonism, as I do, and still entertain the existence of a motivational state with the ultimate goal of increasing another's welfare (i.e., altruistic motivation).

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Given my definitions of altruism and egoism, helping another person—even at great cost to self—may be altruistically motivated, egoistically motivated, or both (see chap. 5, this volume, for a conceptually similar typology of prosocial behavior). To know which it is, a person must determine whether benefit to the other is (a) an ultimate goal and any self-benefits are unintended consequences (altruism) or (b) an instrumental means to reach the ultimate goal of benefiting oneself (egoism).

If helping benefits both a person in need and the helper, as it often does, how are we to know which is the ultimate goal? This puzzle has led many scientists to give up on the question of the existence of altruism, concluding that it cannot be answered empirically—often adding that motivation does not really matter anyway (e.g., de Waal, 2008). I think their surrender is premature. I think that we can empirically discern people's ultimate goals. Indeed, we do it all the time. We do it when we infer whether a student is really interested or only seeking a better grade (e.g., What happens to the student's interest after the grades are turned in?), why a friend chooses one job over another, and whether politicians mean what they say or are only after votes. We also do it when someone does us a favor or is kind.

The following four principles are important when attempting to discern a person's ultimate goal:

1. We cannot trust self-reports. People often do not know—or will not tell—their ultimate goals.
2. We do not observe goals or intentions directly; we infer them from behavior.
3. If we observe a behavior that has two potential ultimate goals, the true ultimate goal cannot be discerned. It is like having one equation with two unknowns.
4. However, if we change the situation so that this behavior is no longer the best route to one of these goals, and we still observe the behavior, then that goal is not ultimate. We can cross it off the list of possible ultimate goals.

These principles suggest a strategy to test for the existence of altruistic motivation for helping. First, we need to identify a likely source of altruistic motivation to help. Second, we need to identify plausible egoistic ultimate goals of motivation from this source. Third, we need to vary the situation so that either the altruistic goal or one or more of the egoistic goals can be better reached without having to help. Finally, we need to see whether this variation reduces helping. If it does, this goal may be ultimate. If it does not, we can cross this goal off the list.

THE EMPATHY–ALTRUISM HYPOTHESIS AND ITS EGOISTIC ALTERNATIVES

Over the past 30 years, other social psychologists and I have used this general strategy to address the question of the existence of altruism in humans. The likely source of altruistic motivation that we have considered is empathic concern. By *empathic concern* I mean an other-oriented emotional response elicited by and congruent with the perceived welfare of someone in need. Empathic concern is other-oriented in that it involves feeling *for* the other. It includes feelings of sympathy, compassion, tenderness, and the like. This other-oriented emotion has been named as a source, if not *the* source, of altruism by Thomas Aquinas, David Hume, Adam Smith, Charles Darwin, Herbert Spencer, William McDougall, and several contemporary psychologists. Empathic concern should not be confused with the cognitive ability to correctly perceive another person's internal state—sometimes referred to as *empathic accuracy* (Ickes, 1993)—or with feeling *as* another person feels—referred to as *empathy*, *emotional contagion*, or *affective resonance* (de Waal, 2008; Hatfield, Cacciopo, & Rapson, 1994; chap. 6, this volume).

Considerable evidence supports the idea that empathic concern motivates helping directed toward reducing the empathy-inducing need (for extensive reviews, see Batson, 1991; chap. 7, this volume). However, evidence of increased motivation to help reveals nothing about the nature of that motivation. Relieving the other person's need could be (a) an ultimate goal producing self-benefits as unintended consequences, (b) an instrumental goal on the way to the ultimate goal of gaining one or more self-benefits, or (c) both. That is, the motivation could be altruistic, egoistic, or both.

The *empathy–altruism hypothesis* claims that empathic concern felt for a person in need produces altruistic motivation to relieve that need. But three possible self-benefits of empathy-induced helping have been identified, producing three egoistic alternatives: (a) *aversive-arousal reduction*—reducing the empathic concern caused by witnessing another in need; (b) *punishment avoidance*—avoiding empathy-specific material, social, and self-punishments; and (c) *reward seeking*—gaining empathy-specific material, social, and self-rewards. Advocates of the empathy–altruism hypothesis do not deny that relieving

the empathy-inducing need is likely to enable the helper to reduce aversive arousal, avoid punishments, and gain rewards. However, they claim that these benefits to self are not the ultimate goal of empathy-induced helping, only unintended consequences. Advocates of the egoistic alternatives disagree. They claim that one or more of these self-benefits is the ultimate goal of the motivation to help produced by empathic concern.

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGNS TO TEST THE EMPATHY–ALTRUISM HYPOTHESIS AGAINST THE EGOISTIC ALTERNATIVES

Pursuing the strategy outlined previously, colleagues and I have conducted a series of experiments to test the empathy–altruism hypothesis against one or more of these three egoistic alternatives. Typically, although not always, we provide research participants with an opportunity to help a person in need—for example, a chance to take electric shocks in the place of a same-sex peer who finds the shocks unusually uncomfortable, or a chance to spend time helping a young woman struggling to care for her younger brother and sister after her parents were killed in an auto accident. Participants are confronted with what they believe are real need situations and real opportunities to help, not hypothetical situations or scenarios. (To determine the nature of the motivation evoked by empathic concern, we must be certain that participants actually feel empathic concern, not imagine it.) We then manipulate both the level of empathic concern felt for the person in need and some cross-cutting variable that changes whether helping is the most effective means to reach (a) the altruistic ultimate goal of removing the other's need or (b) one or more of the possible egoistic ultimate goals. Table 1.1 lists the cross-cutting variables we have used. These variables do not change the goal(s); they change the attractiveness or availability of behavioral routes to the different goal(s). As a result, each variable listed in Table 1.1 allows us to make competing empirical predictions from the empathy–altruism hypothesis and at least one of the egoistic alternatives.

Because the three egoistic alternatives involve three quite different psychological processes, none of the proposed cross-cutting variables listed in Table 1.1 allows a clear test of the empathy–altruism hypothesis against all three. As a result, it is necessary either to conduct an experiment in which several cross-cutting variables are manipulated at once, which seems unwieldy and unwise, or to conduct a series of experiments in which the egoistic alternatives are tested 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 cumulative comparisons can be made. 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.

TABLE 1.1
Variables That Can Differentiate Altruistic and Egoistic Motives for Helping

Variable	Altruistic motive	Egoistic motive		
		Arousal reducing	Punishment avoiding	Reward seeking
Viability of escape: Can the goal be reached by escape without helping?	Escape not viable	Escape viable (from victim's distress)	Escape viable (from own shame, guilt)	Escape not viable
Necessity of one's help being effective: Must one's help be effective to reach the goal?	Necessary	Necessary	Not necessary (if ineffectiveness justified)	Not necessary (if ineffectiveness justified)
Acceptability of other helpers: Whose help can attain the goal?	Oneself; others	Oneself; others	Oneself; others	Only oneself
Need for rewards of helping: What is the effect of increased need for the rewards of helping?	No effect	No effect	No effect	Increased motivation
Salient cognitions: What cognitions are salient when deciding whether to help?	Victim's welfare; costs of helping	Unclear	Anticipated punishments; costs of helping	Anticipated rewards; costs of helping

Note. From "Prosocial motivation: Is it ever truly altruistic?" by C. D. Batson, 1987, in *Advances in experimental social psychology, 20,* p. 105. New York: Academic Press. Copyright 1987 by Elsevier. Adapted with permission.

It is also important to test any given alternative in multiple experiments using different need situations, different techniques for inducing empathic concern, and, if possible, different cross-cutting variables.

CURRENT STATUS OF THE EMPATHY–ALTRUISM HYPOTHESIS

Reports have been published of more than 30 experiments in which one of the cross-cutting variables in Table 1.1 has been manipulated and empathy for a person in need has been either manipulated, measured, or both (see Batson, 1991, for a review of over 20 experiments; Batson [in press] provides a more complete review). Cumulatively, these experiments have tested all of the competing predictions in Table 1.1. To cite but one example of research using each cross-cutting variable: (a) *viability of escape* was manipulated by Batson, Duncan, Ackerman, Buckley, and Birch (1981); (b) *necessity of one's help being effective* was manipulated by Batson and Weeks (1996); (c) *acceptability of other helpers* was manipulated by Batson et al. (1988; Study 1); (d) *need for rewards of helping* was manipulated by Batson et al. (1989); and (e) *salient cognitions* were measured by Batson et al. (1988, Study 5).

Overall, results of these experiments have consistently turned out as predicted by the empathy–altruism hypothesis; results have failed to support any of the egoistic alternatives. To the best of my knowledge, there is at present no plausible egoistic explanation of the cumulative evidence from these experiments. This evidence has led me to conclude—tentatively—that the empathy–altruism hypothesis is true, that is, that empathic concern produces altruistic motivation.

After reviewing the empathy–altruism research, as well as recent literature in sociology, economics, political science, and biology, Piliavin and Charng (1990) reached a similar conclusion:

> 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)

However, in apparent contradiction to this conclusion, Maner et al. (2002) claimed to provide evidence that once the effects of negative affect are removed, there is no longer a positive relation between empathic concern and motivation to help, altruistic or otherwise. But Maner et al. included only empathic emotions in their measure of negative affect (feeling sympathetic, compassionate, and soft-hearted, as well as sad, low-spirited, and heavy-hearted—sadness items that in response to the need situation they used likely tapped other-oriented sadness for the person in need). So, when controlling

for negative affect, Maner et al. actually removed the effect of empathic concern. It is not very surprising, and also not very informative, to find that once the effect of empathic concern on helping is removed, there is no longer an effect of empathic concern on helping.

Today, almost 20 years later, Piliavin and Charng's (1990) conclusion still seems correct. Pending new evidence or a plausible new egoistic explanation of the existing evidence, the empathy–altruism hypothesis appears to be true.

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS OF EMPATHY-INDUCED ALTRUISTIC MOTIVATION

If the empathy–altruism hypothesis is true, the theoretical implications are wide ranging. *Universal egoism*—the assumption that all human behavior is motivated by self-interest—has long dominated not only psychology but other social and behavioral sciences as well (see Mansbridge, 1990). If empathic concern produces motivation with the ultimate goal of increasing another's welfare, then the assumption of universal egoism must be replaced by a more complex view that allows for altruism as well as egoism. Such a shift in our view of the human motivational repertoire requires, in turn, a revision of our assumptions about human nature and human potential. It implies that we humans are more social than we have thought. Other people can be more to us than sources of information, stimulation, gratification, and reward as we each seek our own welfare. We have the potential to care about them for their sakes, not simply for our own.

Perception of Self and Other When Feeling Empathic Concern

There are more specific theoretical implications as well. The strong support for the empathy–altruism hypothesis begs for a better understanding of the perception of self and other when we feel empathic concern. Several representations have been proposed. Concern for another's welfare is a product of (a) a sense of we-ness based on cognitive unit formation or identification with the other's situation (e.g., Hornstein, 1982); (b) the self expanding to incorporate aspects of the other (Aron & Aron, 1986); (c) seeing aspects of the self in the other (Cialdini, Brown, Lewis, Luce, & Neuberg, 1997); or (d) valuing the welfare of the other, who remains distinct from self (e.g., Batson, Eklund, Chermok, Hoyt, & Ortiz, 2007; Batson & Shaw, 1991).

Clearly, not all these proposals can be true, at least not at the same time. On the basis of research to date, it appears that neither empathic concern nor its effect on helping is a product of any of the various forms of self–other merging or overlap—we-ness, self-expansion, or self-projection (Batson, Sager, et al., 1997; Cialdini et al., 1997). Recent neuroimaging research also

provides evidence that empathic concern involves self–other differentiation rather than merging (e.g., chap. 6, this volume; Jackson, Meltzoff, & Decety, 2005; Lamm, Batson, & Decety, 2007).

Evolutionary Origin of Empathic Concern

The support for the empathy–altruism hypothesis also forces us to face the question of the evolutionary origin of empathic concern (for an extensive discussion on evolutionary perspectives on prosocial behavior, see chap 2, this volume). What evolutionary function might this emotion serve? Speculating, I think the most plausible answer is that empathic concern evolved as part of the parental instinct among higher mammals, especially humans (also see de Waal, 1996; Zahn-Waxler & Radke-Yarrow, 1990). If mammalian parents were not intensely interested in the welfare of their very vulnerable progeny, these species would quickly die out. Humans have doubtless inherited key aspects of their parental instinct from ancestors they share with other higher mammalian species, but in humans this instinct has become considerably more flexible. 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 inferences about the desires and feelings of the child (e.g., "Is that a hungry cry or a wet cry?" "She won't like the fireworks; they'll be too loud."). It also includes goal-directed motives and appraisal-based emotions (Scherer, 1984).

Antonio Damasio (1999, 2003) has pointed out that one of the virtues of relying on goal-directed motives and appraisal-based emotions to guide action—rather than on hard-wired, automatic responses to environmental cues (his *regulatory mechanisms*)—is that goal-directed motives and their associated emotions can be adaptive under a wide range of environmental conditions, circumstances, and events (for a similar view of caregiving behavior, see chap. 4, this volume). Such flexibility seems highly desirable when caring for human offspring because complex, novel situations abound.

To illustrate the flexibility that appraisal-based 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 would call *anger*. Among humans, however, aggressive responses are stimulated, tempered, and generalized by feelings of anger that are a product of complex cognitive appraisal of the situation, including appraisal 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 in whatever way is needed in the particular situation. This flexibility includes anticipation of needs, even evolutionarily quite novel ones (e.g., the need to avoid sticking a pin in an electrical socket).

Of course, the human capacity for empathic concern extends well beyond one's own children. As long as there is no preexisting antipathy, people can feel empathic concern for a wide range of targets, including nonhumans (e.g., Batson, 1991; Batson, Lishner, Cook, & Sawyer, 2005). From an evolutionary perspective, this extension is usually attributed to cognitive generalization whereby one "adopts" the target, making it possible to evoke empathic concern and altruistic motivation when the target is in need (Batson, 1987). Such cognitive generalization may be facilitated by two factors: (a) human cognitive capacity (including symbolic thought) and (b) lack of evolutionary advantage in early human hunter–gatherer bands for strict limitation of empathic concern and parental nurturance to offspring. In these bands, those in need were often one's children or close kin, and survival of one's genes was tightly tied to the welfare even of those who were not close kin (Sober & Wilson, 1998). To the extent that the human nurturant impulse relies on appraisal-based other-oriented emotions such as empathic concern, it would be relatively easy to generalize. In contemporary society, the prospect of such generalization appears more plausible when one thinks of the emotional sensitivity and tender care typically provided by nannies and workers in day care centers to their young charges, by adoptive parents, and by pet owners.

Other Sources of Altruistic Motivation

Additionally, might there be sources of altruistic motivation other than empathic concern? Several have been proposed, including an altruistic personality (Oliner & Oliner, 1988; chap. 3, this volume), principled moral reasoning (Kohlberg, 1976), and internalized prosocial values (chap. 12, this volume). 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 this motivation is altruistic. It may be, or it may be an instrumental means to the egoistic ultimate goals of (a) maintaining a positive self-concept or (b) avoiding guilt (Batson, 1991; Batson, Bolen, Cross, & Neuringer-Benefiel, 1986; chap. 7, this volume). More research is needed to explore these possibilities.

Practical Implications of Empathy-Induced Altruism

The empathy–altruism hypothesis also has wide-ranging practical implications. For example, it implies that people may at times wish to suppress or avoid feeling empathic concern. Aware of the extreme effort involved in helping or of the impossibility of helping effectively, caseworkers in the helping professions, nurses caring for terminal patients, and pedestrians confronted by homeless persons may try to avoid empathic concern to be spared the resulting altruistic motivation (Maslach, 1982; Shaw, Batson, & Todd, 1994; Stotland, Mathews, Sherman, Hansson, & Richardson, 1978). That is, there

may be an egoistic motive to avoid altruistic motivation (for a discussion of ambivalent reactions to requests for help, see chap. 11, this volume).

More positively, empathic concern has been found to direct attention to the long-term welfare of those in need, producing more sensitive care (Sibicky, Schroeder, & Dovidio, 1995). Empathy-induced altruism has also been found to improve attitudes toward stigmatized outgroups. Empathy inductions have improved racial attitudes, as well as attitudes and action toward people with AIDS, homeless people, and even convicted murderers and drug dealers (Batson, Chang, Orr, & Rowland, 2002; Batson, Polycarpou, et al., 1997; Vescio, Sechrist, & Paolucci, 2003; chap. 20, this volume). Empathy-induced altruism also has been found to increase cooperation in a potentially competitive situation (a Prisoner's Dilemma)—even when one knows that the target of empathic concern has acted competitively toward oneself (Batson & Ahmad, 2001; Batson & Moran, 1999). In schools, empathy-based training has been used to increase mutual care among students (e.g., the Roots of Empathy project; Gordon, 2007). And, as Stephan and Finlay (1999) pointed out, the induction of empathic concern is often an explicit component of techniques used in conflict resolution workshops. Participants are encouraged to express their feelings, their hopes and fears, and to imagine the thoughts and feelings of those on the other side of the conflict (Kelman, 1990). These techniques affect perception of the other as in need and adoption of the other's perspective, two conditions that, in combination, have been used to produce empathic concern. (For a more extensive discussion of practical implications of empathy-induced altruism, see Batson, Ahmad, & Stocks, 2004.)

TWO OTHER FORMS OF PROSOCIAL MOTIVATION

Thinking more broadly, beyond the egoism–altruism debate that has been a focus of attention and contention for the past several decades, might there be other forms of prosocial motivation, forms in which the ultimate goal is neither to benefit self nor to benefit another individual? Two seem worthy of consideration: collectivism and principlism.

Collectivism

Collectivism is motivation to benefit a particular group as a whole. The ultimate goal is not one's own welfare or the welfare of specific others who are benefited; the ultimate goal is the welfare of the group. Dawes, van de Kragt, and Orbell (1988) put it succinctly: "Not me or thee but we" (p. 83). They suggested that collectivist motivation is a product of group identity (Turner, 1987).

As with altruism, what looks like collectivism may actually be a subtle form of egoism. Perhaps attention to group welfare is simply an expression of enlightened self-interest. Dawes, van de Kragt, and Orbell (1990) have conducted some research to address this question of the underlying motivation. More research is needed.

Principlism

Not only have most moral philosophers argued for the importance of a prosocial motive other than egoism, but most since Kant have also shunned altruism and collectivism. They reject appeals to altruism, especially empathy-induced altruism, because feelings of empathy, sympathy, and compassion are too fickle and too circumscribed. Empathic concern is not felt for everyone in need, at least not to the same degree. They reject appeals to collectivism because group interest is bound by the limits of the group; it not only permits but may even encourage doing harm to those outside the group. Given these problems with altruism and collectivism, moral philosophers have typically advocated prosocial motivation with an ultimate goal of upholding a universal and impartial moral principle, such as justice (Rawls, 1971). To add another "ism," I call this moral motivation *principlism*.

Is acting with an ultimate goal of upholding a moral principle really possible? When Kant (1788/1889) briefly shifted from his analysis of what ought to be to what is, he admitted that the concern we show for others that appears to be prompted by duty to principle may actually be prompted by self-love. Upholding moral principle may be only an instrumental goal pursued as a means to reach the social and self-rewards associated with being—or appearing—moral (or at least not immoral). If this is true, then principle-based motivation is actually egoistic. Once again, we need to know the nature of the motive (i.e., the ultimate goal). Experimental designs similar to those used to test the empathy–altruism hypothesis can help us find out.

ORCHESTRATING PROSOCIAL MOTIVES

Recognizing the existence of altruism, and possibly also collectivism and principlism, makes available more resources to those seeking to produce a more humane, caring society. Said crassly, there are more motivational buttons one can push. At the same time, this availability complicates matters. Different motives do not always work in harmony; they can undercut and compete with one another.

Well-intentioned appeals to self-interest can backfire by undermining other prosocial motives. Providing money or other incentives for showing concern may lead people to interpret their motivation as egoistic even when it is not (e.g., Batson, Coke, Jasnoski, & Hanson, 1978; Stukas, Snyder, &

Clary, 1999). In this way, the assumption that there is only one answer to the question of why people act for the common good—egoism—may become a self-fulfilling prophecy (Batson, Fultz, Schoenrade, & Paduano, 1987). It may create a self-perpetuating norm of self-interest (Miller, 1999).

Nor need altruism, collectivism, and principlism always work in harmony. They can conflict. For example, altruism can conflict with either collectivism or principlism. We humans may ignore the larger social good, or we may compromise our principles, not only to benefit ourselves but also to benefit others for whom we especially care, such as family and friends (Batson, Batson, et al., 1995; Batson, Klein, Highberger, & Shaw, 1995). And whereas there are clear social sanctions against unbridled self-interest, there are not clear sanctions against altruism. As a result, altruism can at times pose a greater threat to the common good than does egoism (Batson et al., 1999).

Different forms of prosocial motivation may also cooperate. Egoism, altruism, collectivism, and principlism each has strengths. Each also has weaknesses. The potential for the greatest good may come from strategies that orchestrate these motives so that the strengths of one can overcome weaknesses of another.

Strategies that combine appeals to either altruism or collectivism with appeals to principlism seem especially promising. For example, think about the principle of justice. It is universal and impartial, but motivation to uphold justice is easily co-opted and vulnerable to rationalization. We humans are quite good at justifying to ourselves, if not to others, why a situation that benefits us or those for whom we care does not violate our moral principles—why we have the right to a disproportionate share of the world's natural resources, why dumping our nuclear waste in someone else's backyard is fair, why attacks by our enemies are atrocities but attacks by our side are necessities. 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 (Bandura, 1999; Batson & Thompson, 2001; Bersoff, 1999). Empathy-induced altruism and collectivism seem more robust, but they are limited in scope and produce partiality toward the interests of particular persons or groups. Perhaps if we can lead people to feel empathic concern for the victims of injustice, or to perceive themselves in a common group with them (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000; also see chap. 20, this volume), then 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, preventing rationalization.

Something of this sort occurred, I believe, in a number of rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe. A careful look at data collected by the Oliners 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 someone known previously. This ini-

tial 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. Something of this sort also may lie at the heart of the nonviolent protest practiced by Gandhi and Martin Luther King. The sight on TV news of a small Black child being rolled down a street in Birmingham, Alabama, by water from a fire hose under the direction of local police, and the emotions this sight evoked, seemed to do more to arouse public opinion than did years of reasoned argument about civil rights.

Looking back, the evidence that empathic concern produces altruistic motivation has certainly changed the way I think about prosocial motives, emotion, and behavior. I suspect it has—or will—change the way you think about them as well.

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