
Affective Consequences of Refusing to Help in Communal and Exchange Relationships

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Two studies illustrate the importance of a distinction between communal and exchange relationships in understanding reactions to helping and refusing to help. In Study 1, refusing to help caused declines in positive affect when a communal (but not an exchange) relationship with the help seeker was desired. In Study 2, recalling a refusal to help a communal (but not an exchange) partner caused declines in positive affect. Recalling when someone else helped or refused to help did not produce analogous changes. Results demonstrate that there are differential reactions to refusing to help in communal and exchange relationships, differential reactions apply to naturally occurring relationships as well as desired relationships created by laboratory manipulations, and affective reactions in communal relationships are not due to merely knowing the other has (or has not) been helped. The authors suggest that they reflect the impact that helping or failing to help may have on communal relationships.

The studies reported in this article build on and extend a program of research originally designed to address two basic questions. The first question was, Does giving help cause people to feel better? It had long been assumed, but never clearly shown, that in terms of experienced improvements in affect, helping benefits not only the person who needs and receives aid but also the person who gives help (see Williamson & Clark, 1989b, for a review of the literature). In our two initial studies (Williamson & Clark, 1989b, Studies 1 and 2), the affective states of subjects induced to help improved relative to those not given an opportunity to help.

The second question was, Does the positive influence of helping on helpers' affective states vary according to relationship type? The idea that the type of relationship between helper and help recipient would influence how people feel after giving aid was derived from work by Clark and Mills (e.g., 1979, 1993; Mills & Clark, 1982) on qualitative differences in the rules that people believe should govern the giving and receiving of benefits in communal and exchange relationships. In communal relationships, people feel a mutual responsibility for one another's needs. They believe benefits should be given in response to the other's needs as those needs arise. Receiving a benefit does not create an obligation to respond with specific repayment, nor does it affect feelings of obligation to respond to each other's needs as

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they arise. In exchange relationships, people give benefits with the expectation of receiving comparable benefits in return or as repayment of benefits received in the past. Communal relationships are often exemplified by relationships between friends, romantic partners, and family members. Exchange relationships are often exemplified by relationships between strangers, acquaintances, and business associates.

In a series of empirical studies supporting the communal/exchange distinction, Clark, Mills, and their colleagues found that when people have or desire a communal relationship, they attend more to the other's needs (Clark, Mills, & Powell, 1986; Clark, Mills, & Corcoran, 1989) and help the other more (Clark, Ouellette, Powell, & Milberg, 1987) than when they have or desire an exchange relationship. They also tend to react negatively to indications that the other is repaying them for specific benefits (Clark & Mills, 1979), and they do not keep track of individual inputs into the relationship (Clark, 1984; Clark et al., 1989).

The communal/exchange distinction, and work supporting it, suggested to us that when communal relationships exist or are desired, reactions to having provided help should be more positive than when exchange relationships exist or are desired. Our reasoning was that helping conforms to communal norms and, consequently, should aid in maintaining existing communal relationships or promoting the formation of new ones. In contrast, help—other than help that is very low in cost or necessitated by an emergency—is not expected in exchange relationships. Voluntarily providing help to someone with whom an exchange relationship is preferred may cause declines in the helper's affect as a result of fearing that the recipient will interpret the help as a sign that the helper desires a communal relationship when that is, in fact, not the case.

We began testing these ideas in two studies. In the first study (Williamson & Clark, 1989b, Study 3), subjects were led to desire either a communal or an exchange relationship with another person. They then either helped that person or were not allowed to help. Among those desiring a communal relationship, helping (relative to not helping) was associated with greater improvements in affect. Similar effects were not observed among those led to desire an exchange relationship. In the second study (Williamson & Clark, 1992), subjects induced to help another with whom they desired a communal relationship experienced improved affect after helping, relative to equivalent subjects given no opportunity to help. This occurred regardless of whether subjects felt they had chosen to help or were required to help. Among subjects led to desire an exchange relationship, choosing to help actually resulted in declines in

affect relative to having no opportunity to help, whereas being required to help had no effects.

We interpreted the fact that affect improved equally among subjects desiring a communal relationship regardless of whether they freely chose to help or were required to help (coupled with no improvements in affect in the analogous exchange conditions) as suggesting that improvements in affect were not due to perceiving oneself to be a better person as a result of having helped. Instead, we proposed that subjects felt good as a result of having behaved in a manner consistent with communal norms and thereby having promoted a desired communal relationship. Unlike the communal conditions, the manipulation of choice had an impact on affect in the exchange conditions. Subjects who chose to help someone with whom they desired an exchange relationship felt significantly worse than did those who were required to help. We interpreted these results as evidence that subjects who voluntarily behave in a communal manner when an exchange relationship is desired feel badly about possibly having promoted a communal relationship rather than the preferred exchange relationship.

Although our initial studies paint a consistent picture of the affective consequences of helping in different types of relationships, they also raise some interesting questions. One is whether refusing to help will lead to declines in affect in communal but not in exchange relationships. A second is whether it is one's own actions (i.e., having personally helped or refused to help) that cause the observed effects or whether they are simply due to knowing the other's needs have or have not been met. A third question was whether affective reactions to helping and refusing to help are the same in existing, naturally occurring communal and exchange relationships as those observed in the laboratory when the potential helper wants to establish a new communal or exchange relationship with the other. The primary purpose of the present studies was to specifically address these questions.

In Study 1, the type of relationship subjects desired with the potential recipient of help was experimentally manipulated. We then investigated whether refusing to help influences refusers' affective states. It was predicted that refusing to help, relative to receiving no request for help, would cause affect to decline when communal relationships were desired but would not cause analogous declines when exchange relationships were desired.

Study 2 assessed affective reactions to having helped and having refused to help others with whom subjects had existing, naturally occurring communal or exchange relationships. This was accomplished by measuring subjects' affective responses to recalling times when

they helped or failed to help others with whom they had existing communal or exchange relationships. We predicted that the results in these conditions would follow the pattern predicted for Study 1 and observed in our prior laboratory work (Williamson & Clark, 1989b, 1992). We expected that in the communal (but not the exchange) conditions, recalling failures to help would be associated with deteriorations in affect relative to recalling help given.

In addition, a parallel set of conditions was included in Study 2 to measure subjects' affective reactions to recalling times when another person helped or failed to help someone with whom the subject had a communal or an exchange relationship. We suspected that the results in these conditions would not parallel the results of Study 1 or those of the conditions in Study 2 in which subjects recalled personally helping or failing to help, because another person helping or failing to help should not directly influence the subject's own relationship with the individual needing aid. Nonetheless, we thought it was important to conduct this study-within-a-study to investigate the possibility that our prior results and those predicted for the present studies might be due to merely knowing the other has or has not received help rather than to the act of personally providing or failing to provide help per se.

STUDY 1

Method

OVERVIEW

While participating in an experiment on word recognition, subjects were led to desire either a communal or an exchange relationship with an attractive female who supposedly needed help. Half the subjects received a large request for aid that they were expected to refuse; the remaining subjects received no request. Affect was measured prior to and immediately following the interval in which the request or no request was made.

SUBJECTS

Subjects were 82 undergraduate students (41 men and 41 women, mean age = 18.6 years) who were recruited for an experiment on word recognition. Participation partially fulfilled a psychology course requirement. Each subject was randomly assigned to one of four conditions: (a) communal—refuse to help, (b) communal—not asked, (c) exchange—refuse to help, or (d) exchange—not asked. Two additional students participated in the study. One, a male in the exchange-refuse condition, agreed to the request for help designed to elicit refusal. His data were excluded from all analyses. Complete data were not available for the other student, a female in the exchange/not-asked condition, because

she failed to fill out the first affect assessment form. No subject indicated suspicions about the true purpose of the study.

MEASURES OF AFFECT

A measure of positive and negative affect, the Positive Affect Negative Affect Scale (PANAS), developed by Watson, Clark, and Tellegen (1988), was employed in the present study. The PANAS consists of 10 positively valenced adjectives (PANAS-PA)—*interested, excited, strong, enthusiastic, proud, alert, inspired, attentive, determined, and active*—and 10 negatively valenced adjectives (PANAS-NA)—*distressed, upset, guilty, scared, hostile, irritable, ashamed, nervous, jittery, and afraid*. Instructions requested that subjects rate the appropriateness of each adjective for describing their current feelings on a scale from 1 (*Very slightly or not at all*) to 5 (*Extremely*). The PANAS has demonstrated adequate reliability and validity and has been shown to be sensitive to changes in positive and negative affect (e.g., Watson et al., 1988; Williamson & Clark, 1992). Cronbach's alphas conducted on measures of affect collected at the beginning of the session were .89 for the PANAS-PA and .83 for the PANAS-NA, coefficients comparable to those reported by Watson et al. (1988).

Although we made no a priori predictions that changes in positive and negative affect would not be the mirror image of one another, positive and negative affect may be independent to the extent that one type of affect is influenced by a causal variable, whereas the other type of affect is influenced in a different way or remains unchanged (e.g., Diener, Larsen, Levine, & Emmons, 1985). Indeed, in a previous study employing the PANAS, we found that among exchange (but not communal) helpers, effects of helping on negative affect were not parallel to effects of helping on positive affect (Williamson & Clark, 1992). Thus it seemed important to explore the possibility that refusing to help might influence positive and negative affect in different ways.

PROCEDURE

Subjects were run individually or in groups of two or three. Each sat at one of three tables arranged to face separate walls in the experiment room. They were told that the study focused on the processes involved in recognizing words. To investigate these processes, they would perform two tasks. The experimenter said previous research had shown performance could be affected by subjects' current moods. For this reason, moods would be measured immediately before the start of each task so that these effects could be controlled in data analyses. The experimenter emphasized that to obtain accurate measures of actual performance, it was very important that subjects rate their moods according

to the way they really felt at the time each measure was taken.

After giving each subject an envelope containing the first affect assessment form and materials for the first task, the experimenter asked that subjects not communicate during the session. They then began the first task, and the experimenter left the room. Written instructions advised subjects to complete the first affect assessment before beginning the task. For the next 10 min, subjects worked on a filler task involving locating and circling words in a matrix of letters.

After 10 minutes, the experimenter returned, collected the first task materials and affect measures, and said there was something she had forgotten to have them do before they started. She explained that the coordinator of undergraduate education for the psychology department had asked that each subject listen to a tape and read some information about a research project being conducted by an undergraduate student. Because this would take only a few minutes and because it was supposed to be done before the end of the experiment, the experimenter had decided to take care of this matter before starting the second task. She then told subjects that the undergraduate researcher's name was Janet and that Janet would arrive later to talk to them. Each subject was given an audiocassette, a small tape player with earphones, and an envelope containing a memo from the coordinator of undergraduate education with some information about Janet's project. Memos were printed on department stationery and signed by the actual undergraduate advisor in the department. Subjects in all conditions read that, because of a shortage of subjects this semester, those participating in experiments taking less than 1 hr to complete were being asked to participate voluntarily in an additional research project being conducted by an undergraduate student. They were advised that should they decide not to participate in this extra research project, they would still receive credit for the experiment in which they were participating. Instructions indicated that subjects should listen to the tape prior to reading Janet's research description. Tapes and research descriptions contained the experimental manipulations and had been placed in a box prior to the start of the experiment. Materials were drawn from the box at random, allowing the experimenter to remain unaware of subjects' assignment to condition.

For those in a communal condition, the tape indicated that Janet was single, new to the university, and interested in meeting people. It was assumed that most of the subjects, who were predominantly first-year students, would be available for and interested in having a communal relationship (e.g., a friendship or, possibly, a romantic relationship) with a physically attractive other who was interested in meeting people. (As will be seen,

subjects discovered that Janet was attractive soon after they listened to one of the tapes.)

For subjects in an exchange condition, the tape indicated that Janet was married and had been at the university for 2 years. Janet did not express an interest in meeting new people. It was assumed that most of the subjects would prefer an exchange relationship with someone who was married and who did not indicate interest in meeting people. At this point, it should be noted that prior studies including measures specifically designed to assess the effectiveness of the communal/exchange manipulations (Clark, 1986; Clark & Waddell, 1985) have provided evidence for their effectiveness. For example, in the Clark (1986) study, subjects were first exposed to the communal or to the exchange manipulation. Then, under the guise of a study on impression formation, they rated the degree to which they would follow communal and exchange norms in a relationship with the target. They also selected the type of relationship they would most like to have with the target from a list of typical exchange and communal relationships. Results revealed that subjects exposed to the communal manipulation were significantly more likely than those exposed to the exchange manipulation to say they would conform to communal norms with the other (e.g., they would enjoy responding to the other's needs and would like the other to respond to their needs) relative to conforming to exchange norms (e.g., if they received something of value from the other, they would immediately return something comparable; if they gave something of value to the other, they would expect repayment soon afterward). Moreover, relative to subjects exposed to the exchange manipulation, a significantly greater proportion of those exposed to the communal manipulation said they would choose to have a type of relationship believed to be typically communal in nature (i.e., a friendship) with the other rather than a type of relationship believed to be typically exchange in nature (i.e., an acquaintanceship or a businesslike relationship).

After exposing subjects to either the communal or the exchange manipulation, both tapes went on to say the following:

Now about my research . . . The psychology department has allowed me to use part of your experimenter's time to get some work done on my own research project. I will stop by later—after you've finished the experiment you're working on now—so that we can discuss my research and so that I can answer any questions you may have about it. For right now, your experimenter will give you an envelope which contains some information about the research I will be doing this semester. When you've finished with these materials, please put them all back into their envelope and give them to your experimenter. He or she will see that I get them.

At the top of each research description (which subjects read after listening to the tape) was a small xeroxed copy of a photo of an attractive female.¹ The same photo was used in the communal and exchange conditions. Beneath the photo was a brief description of Janet's research project—a study investigating the relationship between college students' study habits and their favorite leisure-time activities. For subjects assigned to a not-asked condition, the message ended at this point. For those assigned to a refuse condition, the message went on to say that Janet needed help to complete this project before the end of the semester and that she was using this means to contact other undergraduate students who might be interested in volunteering to help her. Providing help would mean that the student must commit at least 10 hrs per week for the rest of the semester. Subjects could then indicate interest in helping Janet by answering "yes" and by writing their names and phone numbers in the space provided below the description. It was expected that virtually all subjects would refuse this request. As noted previously, only one person actually agreed. His data were not included in any analyses.

During the time in which subjects listened to the tapes and examined the materials in the envelopes, the experimenter waited in another room. After 10 min, she returned and told them to put the materials from Janet aside so they could begin the second task. Subjects were then given another envelope containing a second affect measure and materials for the second word recognition task. As before, subjects were reminded to complete the affect measure immediately before beginning the second task, and the experimenter left the room.

After 10 min, the experimenter returned and said the experiment was over. After collecting the second task materials, she gave each subject a Reactions to Word Recognition Study form that included the following two questions as partial checks for suspicion about the real purpose of the study: "Sometimes people's own perceptions of the task/experiment affect their performance. In your own words, what was the purpose of the study?" and "Any other comments you'd like to make about the study?" After completing this form, subjects were further checked for suspicion and carefully debriefed.

Results

Dependent measures were changes in positive and negative affect. Change scores were calculated as differences between the sum of a subject's scores on the appropriate pretest items and the analogous sum on the posttest items. Preliminary analyses revealed (a) that no differences existed between conditions at pretesting for either positive or negative affect, both $F_s < 1.60$, *ns*, and (b) that whether subjects participated alone or with one or two other individuals did not influence changes in

either positive or negative affect, both $F_s < 2.74$, *ns*. On the premanipulation measure, average positive affect scores (overall $M = 26.0$) and average negative affect scores (overall $M = 15.5$) were comparable to norms for college students ($M_s = 29.7$ for positive affect and 14.8 for negative affect) reported by Watson et al. (1988). Changes in positive affect were not correlated with changes in negative affect, $r = .13$, *ns*.

CHANGES IN POSITIVE AFFECT

A 2 (Communal vs. Exchange) \times 2 (Refuse vs. Not Asked) \times 2 (Male vs. Female Subjects) ANOVA revealed a main effect for desired relationship type, $F(1, 74) = 3.99$, $p < .05$. Positive affect deteriorated more when a communal relationship was desired ($M = -2.0$) than when an exchange relationship was desired ($M = -0.2$). The main effect of subject gender was also significant, $F(1, 74) = 4.22$, $p < .04$. Positive affect deteriorated more among women ($M = -2.0$) than among men ($M = -0.1$). The main effect for request condition was not reliable, $F(1, 74) = .03$, *ns*.

Of the possible interactions, only the predicted interaction between request-for-help condition and desired relationship type was statistically significant, $F(1, 74) = 8.55$, $p < .005$. Mean changes in positive affect are shown in Figure 1. Planned comparisons (Winer, 1962) revealed that, as hypothesized, positive affect deteriorated more in the communal-refuse condition ($M = -3.3$) than in the communal/not-asked condition ($M = -0.6$), $F(1, 74) = 4.83$, $p < .05$. The difference between mean changes in the exchange-refuse ($M = 1.1$) and exchange/not-asked ($M = -1.4$) conditions approached significance, $F(1, 74) = 3.75$, $p < .10$.²

The Gender \times Refuse to Help interaction was marginally significant, $F(1, 74) = 3.78$, $p < .06$, and the three-way interaction including desired relationship type approached significance, $F(1, 74) = 2.97$, $p < .09$. An examination of the means suggested that the positive-mood deteriorating effects of refusing to help in the communal condition might be more extreme for male than for female subjects. However, post hoc comparisons by the Scheffé method indicated that no two groups differed at the .05 level.

To summarize, as predicted, among subjects led to desire a communal relationship, refusing a request for help caused positive affect to deteriorate relative to receiving no request for help. Also as expected, among subjects led to desire an exchange relationship, refusing to help did not cause positive affect to decline.

CHANGES IN NEGATIVE AFFECT

For changes in negative affect, the predicted interaction between request-for-help conditions and desired relationship type was not significant, $F(1, 74) = 0.04$, *ns*. The 2 (Communal vs. Exchange) \times 2 (Refuse vs. Not

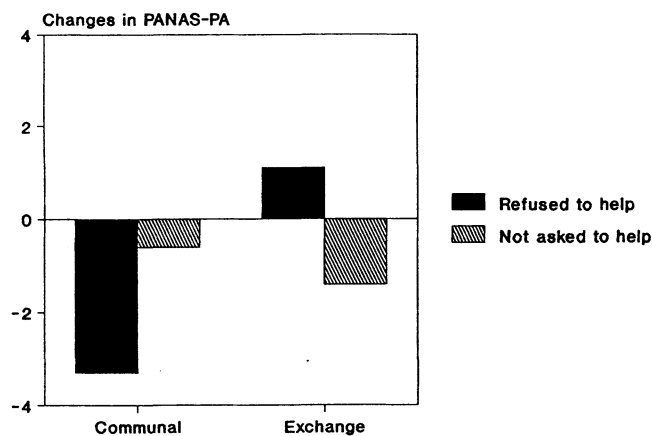


Figure 1 Changes in positive affect as a result of refusing or not being asked to help when either an exchange or a communal relationship is desired, Study 1.

NOTE: PANAS-PA = the 10 positively valenced adjectives on the Positive Affect Negative Affect Scale (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988).

Asked) \times 2 (Male vs. Female Subjects) ANOVA revealed only two significant effects (all other F s < 0.19 , ns): a two-way Request Condition \times Gender interaction, $F(1, 74) = 4.94$, $p < .03$, that was qualified by the three-way interaction, Request Condition \times Relationship Type \times Gender, $F(1, 74) = 4.11$, $p < .05$. An examination of the means suggested that, overall, subjects were relieved when someone with whom they had been led to desire an exchange relationship did not ask for their help and that this was more pronounced for women than for men. However, Scheffé tests revealed no differences between any two groups that were significant at the .05 level.

Discussion

As predicted, relative to receiving no request for help, refusing to help caused positive affect to deteriorate when a communal (but not an exchange) relationship was desired with the help seeker. However, whereas positive affect deteriorated as predicted, negative affect did not increase. Some explanations for this pattern of results are considered in the General Discussion section of this article. The results of Study 1 were encouraging to the extent that they provided evidence that refusing to help someone with whom a communal relationship is desired can result in undesirable consequences (i.e., deterioration of positive affect) for the refuser. Refusing to help someone with whom an exchange relationship is desired did not result in similar affective consequences.

STUDY 2

The results of earlier research by Williamson and Clark (1989b, 1992) revealed that when communal, but

not exchange, relationships were desired, helping improved affect relative to not being able to help or not being asked to help at all. The results of the study just presented add important information to these earlier findings. That is, we now have evidence that when communal, but not exchange, relationships are desired, refusing to help causes positive affect to deteriorate. An important question to answer at this point is whether these effects occur only when a potential helper wants to form a new relationship with the other. Would they occur in established and ongoing communal and exchange relationships as well? According to our theoretical position, similar results should be obtained because helping not only promotes new communal relationships but also maintains existing communal relationships.³

In Study 2, we also explored a mechanism that might underlie the observed affective consequences of helping (Williamson & Clark, 1992) and of refusing to help (Study 1). That is, simply knowing the other person's needs have or have not been met may lead to changes in affect (Williamson & Clark, 1989b, 1992). Because people supposedly care more about the needs of those with whom they have (or would like to have) communal relationships than the needs of those with whom they have (or would prefer to have) exchange relationships or no relationship at all, it may not matter whether the subject is the helping or refusing agent or someone else occupies that role. The critical factor would simply be whether a communal partner's needs have been met. In this event, affective changes when the subject is an observer would follow the patterns observed when subjects were active helpers or refusers.

In Study 2, we took quite a different methodological approach than that of Study 1. We asked subjects to recall a time when they either helped or refused to help another with whom they had an existing communal or exchange relationship. We assumed that recalling such incidents would have an impact on subjects' affect similar to the original incidents (although, perhaps, somewhat muted). Thus we expected affect to deteriorate more when subjects recalled failing to help a communal partner than when they recalled helping a communal partner.

In the same study, we also asked subjects to recall times when others helped or refused to help a person with whom subjects had a communal or an exchange relationship. We reasoned that if the effects of helping and refusing to help that we had observed in the past were due to simply knowing that a communal partner had received or failed to receive needed help, then parallel changes in affect should be observed in these conditions. However, if those earlier effects were primarily due to the subject's having personally helped or failed to help the

other, then parallel results should not be observed in these conditions.

To summarize, the specific hypotheses tested in Study 2 were as follows: (a) recalling a time when one personally refused to help a communal partner will have more detrimental effects on subjects' affective states than will recalling a time when one personally helped a communal partner and (b) these changes will be diminished in the context of exchange relationships. We also investigated the possibility that it is not the act of helping (or refusing to help) per se that influences helpers' (or refusers') affective reactions in communal relationships but, rather, simply knowing the other's needs have (or have not) been satisfied.

Method

OVERVIEW

While participating in an experiment on recalling past experiences, subjects recalled and wrote stories about instances in which a person with whom they had either a communal or an exchange relationship needed help. Half the subjects recalled a time when the other received help; remaining subjects recalled a time when the other did not receive help. In half the cases, the person who helped or did not help was the subject; in remaining cases, the person who helped or did not help was someone other than the subject. Affect was measured prior to and immediately following the interval in which subjects wrote their stories.

SUBJECTS

Subjects were 235 undergraduate students (110 men and 125 women, mean age = 19.7 years) who were recruited for an experiment on recalling past experiences. Participation partially fulfilled a psychology course requirement. No subject indicated suspicion about the true purpose of the study.

MEASURES OF AFFECT

As in Study 1, affect was assessed with the PANAS (Watson et al., 1988). Recall that expected results were not obtained for changes in negative affect in Study 1. This may have occurred because the PANAS-NA does not measure the sorts of negative affect that are influenced by refusing to help. For example, Larsen and Diener (1992) pointed out that the PANAS measures affect from only two of the eight octants of the circumplex model of emotion. In particular, the PANAS appears to measure what Larsen and Diener (e.g., 1992) termed *activated unpleasant affect* (PANAS-NA) and *activated pleasant affect* (PANAS-PA). Conspicuously absent are some adjectives typically believed to be central to subjective affect—for example, *happy*, *cheerful*, *sad*, *depressed*. In Study 2, we included these four adjectives in the pre- and posttest

measures of affect. Subjects rated the appropriateness of each adjective for describing their current feelings on a scale of 1 (*Very slightly or not at all*) to 5 (*Extremely*).⁴

PROCEDURE

Subjects participated individually. On arrival, each was seated in a cubicle equipped with a desk on which a signal button was mounted. They were told that the study involved comparing the types of information people remember about different topics. Consequently, they would write a short story about each of two different topics. To justify collection of pre- and postmanipulation measures of affect, subjects were told that current moods have been shown to influence performance. For this reason, moods would be measured immediately before the start of each task so that their effects could be controlled in statistical analyses. The experimenter emphasized that to obtain accurate measures of actual performance, it was very important that subjects rate their moods according to the way they really felt at the time each measure was taken.

Subjects were instructed to press the signal button to summon the experimenter as soon as they had finished filling out the measure of initial affect. The experimenter then gave the subject the first affect measure and waited in another cubicle while the subject completed the form. When signaled, the experimenter returned, collected the affect measure, and gave the subject an envelope containing materials for the first writing task. After advising the subject to read the instructions carefully before beginning the task, the experimenter once again left the subject's cubicle.

Experimental conditions were manipulated by instructions for the topic about which subjects were to write their stories. Prior to the beginning of the study, instruction packets had been placed in envelopes, sealed, and randomly ordered. Thus the experimenter was unaware of subjects' assigned conditions.

Subjects assigned to a communal condition were instructed to write about a time when "someone with whom you had a close interpersonal relationship—that is, a good friend, family member, or romantic partner"—needed help. Subjects assigned to an exchange condition were instructed to write about a time when "someone with whom you did not have a close interpersonal relationship—that is, an acquaintance or a stranger"—needed help. Communal relationships are most frequently typified by relationships between close friends, family members, and romantic partners, and exchange relationships are most frequently typified by relationships between acquaintances and strangers (e.g., Clark & Mills, 1979, 1993; Mills & Clark, 1982). Although friends, family members, and romantic partners may not always behave according to communal norms, people

tend to believe that these are the ideal rules to follow in these types of relationships (Clark & Chrisman, in press). Similarly, although acquaintances and strangers may not always behave according to exchange norms, people tend to believe that these are the ideal rules for these types of relationships.

In help conditions, subjects were directed to write about help or "some sort of aid" having been provided. In refuse conditions, subjects were directed to write about a refusal or failure to provide help. Subjects assigned to the self condition were instructed to write about themselves as the helpers/refusers, and subjects assigned to the other condition were instructed to write about "someone you know" as the helper/refuser. To give an example of a set of experimental manipulation instructions, subjects assigned to the communal-refuse-self condition read the following: "On separate sheets of paper, please write a short narrative story about the following topic: A time when you refused to help or failed to help someone with whom you had a close interpersonal relationship—that is, a good friend, family member, or romantic partner." In the context of writing their stories, subjects were asked to specify approximately how long ago the event had occurred.

Instructions also advised subjects that once they started to write, they would have 15 min to complete their stories. They were told they could take as much time as they needed to organize their thoughts, and when they were ready to start writing, they should press the button on the table to signal the experimenter to begin timing their allotted 15 min of writing time. If they finished writing their stories in less than 15 min, they should press the button to let the experimenter know they were finished. At the end of 15 min or when subjects pressed the button to indicate they had finished writing (whichever came first), the experimenter returned, collected their stories, and had them complete a second affect assessment—supposedly in preparation for the second writing task. After subjects completed this form, they were carefully checked for suspicion and debriefed.

Results

Dependent measures were obtained by subtracting pretest scores from analogous posttest scores for total PANAS-PA and PANAS-NA. Difference scores were also calculated for the items *happy*, *cheerful*, *sad*, and *depressed*. Preliminary analyses revealed no differences between conditions at pretesting for any of the affect measures, all F s < 1.56, *ns*. On the premanipulation measure, average PANAS-PA (overall $M = 28.5$) and PANAS-NA (overall $M = 14.6$) scores were comparable to norms for college students reported by Watson et al. (1988). Additional preliminary analyses revealed that, on average, more than 2 years (overall $M = 28.6$ months) had passed

since the occurrence of the event about which subjects wrote their stories. There were no differences between conditions in time since the event, $F(7, 207) = 0.55$, *ns*.

To test hypothesized differences between helping and refusing to help among subjects in the self conditions, a 2 (Help vs. Refuse) \times 2 (Communal vs. Exchange) \times 2 (Male vs. Female Subjects) ANOVA was calculated for each dependent measure. A parallel set of exploratory analyses then compared changes in affect for subjects in the other conditions.

HELPING VERSUS REFUSING TO HELP—SELF CONDITIONS

Changes in PANAS-PA. The 2 \times 2 \times 2 ANOVA revealed a main effect of helping versus refusing on changes in the PANAS-PA, $F(1, 116) = 17.46$, $p < .0001$, indicating that positive affect declined in the refuse conditions ($M = -2.5$) relative to the help conditions ($M = 1.2$). The main effect for subject gender approached significance, $F(1, 116) = 3.08$, $p < .08$, suggesting that, across conditions, positive affect declined more among men ($M = -1.4$) than among women ($M = 0.1$). The main effect for relationship type was not significant, $F(1, 116) = 0.01$, *ns*. Of the possible interactions, only the predicted interaction between help/refuse and communal/exchange was significant, $F(1, 116) = 4.22$, $p < .04$ (all other F s for interactions < 2.19, *ns*). Mean changes in PANAS-PA in the self conditions are shown in Figure 2.

Planned comparisons (Winer, 1962) revealed no difference between exchange conditions (M s = 0.2 in the help condition and -1.6 in the refuse condition), $F(1, 124) = 2.08$, *ns*. Positive affect decreased in the communal-refuse ($M = -3.4$) condition relative to the communal-help ($M = 2.1$) condition, $F(1, 124) = 19.53$, $p < .001$. These results indicate that, as predicted, recalling a time when one refused to help a communal partner led to greater declines in positive affect (as measured by the PANAS-PA) than did recalling a time when one helped a communal partner. Also as expected, analogous changes in positive affect were not significant in exchange relationships.⁵

Changes in PANAS-NA. No significant changes in negative affect as measured by the PANAS-NA were observed, all F s < 0.94, *ns*. In general, scores on this measure tended to decline across experimental conditions. In only one case (women in the exchange-refuse condition) did negative affect increase, and this increase was small in magnitude ($M = 0.5$). In all other conditions, negative affect was alleviated (M s ranging from -0.5 to -1.6).

Changes in other affect measures. Recall that we included four additional adjectives (*happy*, *cheerful*, *sad*, and *depressed*) in Study 2 to explore the possibility that types of affect not assessed by the PANAS might be influenced by refusing to provide help. For changes in each adjective, a 2 (Help vs. Refuse) \times 2 (Communal vs. Exchange) \times 2

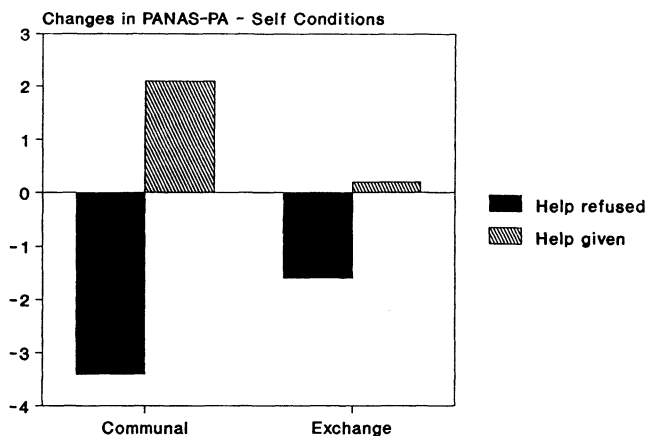


Figure 2 Changes in positive affect as a result of recalling instances of personally helping or refusing to help in communal or exchange relationships, Study 2.

NOTE: PANAS-PA = the 10 positively valenced adjectives on the Positive Affect Negative Affect Scale (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988).

(Male vs. Female Subjects) ANOVA was calculated. Significant effects emerged for changes in happiness and cheerfulness. In both cases, although the pattern of means looked much like those for changes in the PANAS-PA reported earlier, only the help/refuse main effect was significant, $F_s(1, 116) = 8.27, p < .01$, and $4.07, p < .05$, respectively (all other $F_s < 1.95, ns$). These results indicate that happiness and cheerfulness declined more in the refuse conditions ($M_s = -0.3$ and -0.2 , respectively) than in the help conditions (both $M_s = 0.1$). Like changes in the PANAS-PA, declines were most evident (albeit nonsignificantly) when subjects recalled having refused to help a communal partner.

The $2 \times 2 \times 2$ ANOVA revealed no significant changes in sadness, all $F_s < 1.19, ns$. However, one significant effect emerged for changes in the adjective *depressed*: the Help/Refuse \times Subject Gender interaction, $F(1, 116) = 5.73, p < .02$. The pattern of means indicated that, across relationship type, women became more depressed when they had refused to help ($M = 0.3$) than when they had helped ($M = -0.2$). Two other effects approached significance: the communal/exchange main effect, $F(1, 116) = 2.90, p < .09$, and the Help/Refuse \times Communal/Exchange interaction, $F(1, 116) = 2.75, p < .10$. As would be expected, feelings of depression tended to increase most in the communal-refuse condition.

HELPING VERSUS REFUSING TO HELP—OTHER CONDITIONS

We included four additional conditions in our study to investigate the effects of merely knowing that a person with whom one has a communal or an exchange relationship has or has not received help from someone else. Like the conditions in which subjects were themselves

the helpers or refusers, data from this study-within-a-study were also subjected to 2 (Help vs. Refuse) $\times 2$ (Communal vs. Exchange) $\times 2$ (Male vs. Female Subjects) ANOVAs for changes in the PANAS-PA, the PANAS-NA, and the four additional adjectives (*happy*, *cheerful*, *sad*, and *depressed*). For the PANAS-PA, only the three-way interaction was significant, $F(1, 103) = 4.35, p < .04$. No other main effects or interactions approached significance, all $F_s < 2.34, ns$. An examination of the means suggested that women especially experienced elevations in positive affect when another person had refused to help their communal partners ($M = 3.3$). Men, on the other hand, seemed to experience declines in positive affect when another person had helped someone with whom the subject had an exchange relationship ($M = -1.9$). However, these patterns were not predicted, and post hoc Scheffé tests revealed no differences between any means at the $p < .05$ level. Therefore, we collapsed across subject gender and focused on the variables relevant to our hypotheses. The pattern of mean changes for the other conditions is shown in Figure 3. Clearly, they do not parallel results obtained when subjects recalled personally helping or refusing to help. Indeed, within the communal conditions, another's failure to help appears to be associated with increases in positive affect relative to another's provision of help. The same pattern did not appear in the exchange conditions.

No other $2 \times 2 \times 2$ ANOVAs for changes in measures of affect in the other conditions were significant, and only one analysis approached significance. Specifically, the three-way interaction for changes in PANAS-NA was marginally significant, $F(1, 103) = 3.29, p < .07$ (all other F_s for changes in PANAS-NA and in *happy*, *cheerful*, *sad*, and *depressed* $< 2.68, ns$). Scheffé tests revealed no significant differences between mean changes in negative affect as measured by the PANAS-NA.

CONTENT ANALYSES

Two individuals independently coded subjects' stories for cost of help and benefit to recipient. One rater coded all stories; the second rater coded a randomly selected 20% of the stories. Content analyses were then conducted to explore the possibility that systematic differences might exist in the types of events subjects recalled.

Cost of help. Cost of help was rated on a scale of 0 (*Not at all costly*) to 4 (*Extremely costly*). In making these judgments, raters attempted to take the subject's viewpoint, rather than their own, and to be sensitive to cues in the stories about how costly the subject felt providing help was or would have been. Raters agreed 90% of the time about the cost of helping.

On average, subjects wrote about moderately costly needs for help (overall $M = 1.96$). A 2 (Help vs. Refuse) \times

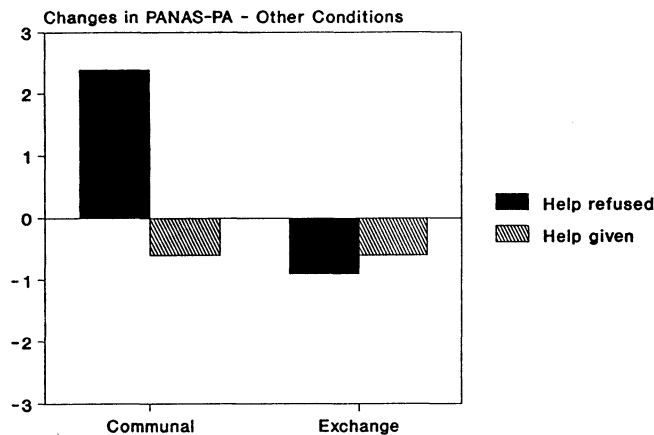


Figure 3 Changes in positive affect as a result of recalling other persons helping or refusing to help subjects' communal or exchange relationship partners, Study 2.

NOTE: PANAS-PA = the 10 positively valenced adjectives on the Positive Affect Negative Affect Scale (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988).

2 (Communal vs. Exchange) \times 2 (Self vs. Other) \times 2 (Male vs. Female Subjects) ANOVA revealed a main effect for help versus refuse, $F(1, 219) = 24.40, p < .0001$, and a main effect for self versus other, $F(1, 219) = 4.40, p < .05$. Cost was greater in the help ($M = 2.22$) than in the refuse ($M = 1.68$) conditions. In addition, stories written about others ($M = 2.08$) involved more cost than did those written about the self ($M = 1.85$). No other main effects or interactions approached significance, all $F_s < 1.72, ns$. We were particularly interested in ruling out the possibility that changes in affect might simply reflect ease of refusal based on cost of needed help. This did not, in fact, appear to be the case. For subjects assigned to recall refusing to help, cost of help was not related to changes in PANAS-PA, and this was true regardless of relationship type, all $r_s = .03, ns$. Cost of help also was not related to changes in PANAS-PA among those assigned to recall helping, all $r_s < .10, ns$.

Benefits of help. Benefit to the person in need when help was actually given or, in the case of refusal, the benefit that would have resulted had the help been given was rated on a scale of 0 (*Not at all beneficial*) to 4 (*Extremely beneficial*). Once again, raters attempted to make these judgments from the subject's perspective rather than their own. Raters agreed 92% of the time on benefits to the person in need.

On average, benefits were judged as moderate (overall $M = 2.46$). The $2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2$ ANOVA revealed two significant main effects (all other $F_s < 1.76, ns$). Benefits were greater when help was given ($M = 2.75$) than when it was refused ($M = 2.14$), $F(1, 219) = 23.87, p < .0001$. In addition, benefits were greater in stories written about

others ($M = 2.68$) than in those written about the self ($M = 2.26$), $F(1, 219) = 10.79, p < .001$.

Discussion

Consistent with prior results and the specific hypotheses for Study 2, changes in positive affect indicated that even after a period of time had elapsed (on average, more than 2 years), recalling a time when one refused to help a partner in a communal relationship had more detrimental effects on affect than did recalling a time when one gave help to a partner in a communal relationship. Also as expected, these effects were diminished (and nonsignificant) when subjects had exchange relationships with the individuals who needed help.

The same pattern of results was not obtained in the four conditions in which subjects recalled someone else helping or failing to help a person with whom the subject had a communal or an exchange relationship. This strongly argues against the idea that affective reactions to personally helping or refusing to help are due to merely knowing that the other has or has not received help.

We conducted exploratory analyses of the content of subjects' stories and found that events were judged as both more costly and more beneficial when help was given than when help was refused, and also when someone else was the helper or refuser rather than the subject. We suspect that these results reflect (a) an increased likelihood that help will be given when it is most needed and (b) the salience of relatively costly amounts of help when it is given by other people. For neither costs nor benefits did the critical interaction involving relationship type approach significance. This suggests to us that, at least on the dimensions of helping evaluated, the types of events subjects recalled did not play a major role in observed changes in positive affect. In addition, we found no evidence that how easy it is to refuse a request for help (in terms of the cost of providing help) is a critical factor in determining changes in affect.

In sum, the pattern of results obtained in Study 2 fits nicely with that obtained in Study 1 and the patterns we obtained earlier (Williamson & Clark, 1989b, Study 3, 1992). In addition, Study 2 demonstrated that the pattern of affective reactions to giving versus refusing to give help is much the same in existing and naturally occurring communal and exchange relationships as in desired new communal and exchange relationships created by laboratory manipulations.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

These two studies, together with prior work, provide considerable evidence that within the context of communal relationships, helping promotes positive affect,

whereas refusing to help causes positive affect to deteriorate. The same set of studies also demonstrates that these effects do not apply to exchange relationships. Beyond this, the second study reported here provides new evidence that this pattern of results generalizes to existing, naturally occurring communal relationships.

What Mechanisms Underlie the Observed Differential Effects of Helping Versus Refusing to Help?

We continue to favor the explanation that providing help within the context of desired or existing communal relationships improves positive affect because it is consistent with communal norms and thus promotes the development and maintenance of such relationships. In contrast, helping is not called for by exchange norms, and consequently, it does not serve the same function in those relationships. Indeed, helping in exchange relationships may create undesired debt and thus cause positive affect to decline (Williamson & Clark, 1992).

This explanation fits well with the observation in Study 2 that help given or refused by others does not produce the same pattern of results as help given or refused by oneself. The behavior of others directly neither fosters nor hinders the formation or maintenance of the particular type of relationship one wishes to have with another person. The behavior of others may, however, indirectly influence the formation or maintenance of communal relationships. Interestingly, another's refusal to help someone with whom one has or desires a communal relationship might actually promote that relationship. It may, by contrast, make the help one gives especially appreciated, or it may reduce the chances that a rival communal relationship will form. These may be the processes underlying the unpredicted trend for improved affect to be associated with another person refusing to help someone with whom a subject had a communal relationship.

Indeed, all our results are consistent with our relationship promotion and maintenance interpretation. In addition, they provide some evidence contrary to two possible alternative explanations. First, unlike earlier research in which type of relationship between helper and help seeker was not considered (e.g., Batson, Coke, Jasnoski, & Hanson, 1978; Batson, Fultz, Schoenrade, & Paduano, 1987; also see Williamson & Clark, 1989b, for a comprehensive review), it does not appear that the effects of helping on affect in communal relationships that we have observed occur because subjects perceive themselves to be good people for having helped (Williamson & Clark, 1992).

Second, our current work provides some evidence against the idea that observed effects are due to merely knowing the other has received help (and being happy about that state of affairs in communal but not exchange

relationships) or merely knowing the other has not received help (and being unhappy about that state of affairs in communal but not exchange relationships). In Study 2, recalling that another person provided or failed to provide help to someone with whom subjects had communal or exchange relationships produced a very different pattern of results than did recalling times when subjects themselves provided or failed to provide help.

Why Were There No Effects for Negative Affect?

As in our prior work, predicted effects of helping or, in this new work, of failing to help on negative affect as measured by the PANAS-NA were not observed. In none of our studies can the lack of results be attributed to a ceiling effect because premanipulation scores were low. It is possible that the PANAS does not tap the kind of negative affect influenced by refusing to help (see, for example, a relevant discussion of the affect dimensions measured by the PANAS in Larsen & Diener, 1992). However, in Study 2, we assessed two aspects of negative affect—sadness and depression—in addition to those measured by the PANAS-NA. As with the PANAS-NA adjectives, refusing to help did not produce significant changes in subjects' feelings of sadness, and only among women did there appear to be a slight increase in depression associated with refusing to help. The possibility remains that refusing to help could influence types of negative affect not measured in these studies, perhaps those categorized as *unactivated unpleasant affect* (e.g., dull, sluggish, bored) on the circumplex model proposed by Larsen and Diener (1992). However, the present studies indicate that refusing to help has little impact on many aspects of negative affect. Why might this be? As we have noted elsewhere (Williamson & Clark, 1992), it may be that under ordinary circumstances, there is a cap on the level of negative affect people are willing to report or, alternatively, will allow themselves to experience before making efforts to alleviate their negative feelings. Perhaps, when increases in negative affect occur, people actively try to control those feelings (Clark & Isen, 1982). For example, subjects may have initially felt upset or guilty about refusing to help but quickly convinced themselves that their refusal was justified by time limitations or other factors. Additional research is needed to clarify the processes through which refusing to help influences some types of affect while leaving other types unchanged.

Can Helping Improve Affect Only Through Its Ability to Promote Communal Relationships?

In this article, we have made a case that helping improves affect (and failing to help causes affect to deteriorate) largely because of the role that helping with no expectation of repayment plays in promoting or

maintaining communal relationships. We do believe that this is the process underlying the effects we have observed. In making our case, we have argued against a self-perception interpretation of our findings and also against interpreting our findings in terms of merely knowing the other has received or failed to receive help. However, we would like to add a caveat. That is, we suspect that there are times when processes other than relationship promotion or maintenance mediate improvements in affect after providing help.

Consider self-perception first. We speculate that when there are no clear implications of helping for either promoting a communal relationship or harming an exchange relationship, helping may improve affect through self-perception processes (e.g., Batson et al., 1978, 1987). This might happen, for instance, when one donates blood to an anonymous recipient. Relationship considerations would not be an issue in this case, and one may come to feel good as a result of perceiving oneself to be a good person. This is, of course, speculative; however, we include this example to point out that we are not attempting to totally rule out self-perception as a possible cause of improved affect in every case. Rather, we argue against self-perception as an explanation for the results of our particular studies.

Next, consider merely knowing that another has or has not received a benefit from someone else. We speculate that such knowledge can sometimes influence affect, although we do not believe it was the mechanism at work in our studies. Again, when promoting or maintaining a communal relationship is of little concern but the other's welfare is of considerable concern, merely knowing the other has or has not been helped may be a potent determinant of affect. Imagine, for instance, a parent with a very strong and certain communal relationship with her child (for discussions of the strength of communal relationships, see Clark & Mills, 1993; Williamson & Schulz, 1993). This parent will not be overly concerned with establishing or maintaining the communal nature of this relationship; it is already firmly and solidly established. In this case, we suspect that the mother's affect will improve as a result of another person helping her child.

For the time being, these ideas remain speculative. Nonetheless, we think it is important to include them, lest readers form the impression that we believe helping improves affect only when it serves to promote or maintain communal relationships, and then, only when one personally provides the help.

Does Refusing to Help in Communal Relationships Always Result in Declines in Affect?

We also suspect there are times when people do not feel bad after refusing to help someone with whom they

have a communal relationship. Consider, for example, a case in which the parent of a sick child turns down a friend's request for a ride to the airport so that the parent can stay home with his child. Most likely, the parent will not experience undue distress, nor will the friend be offended, because it is understood that the needs of a sick child take precedence over providing friends with transportation to the airport (see similar discussions by Clark & Mills, 1993; Williamson & Clark, 1989a). As we have proposed, however, the key factor in these situations may well be whether the relationship is damaged as a result of the refusal. For instance, if a person feels compelled to turn down an unreasonable or unfair request for help from a friend or family member, the refuser may nevertheless experience unpleasant affective consequences if the relationship suffers, even though the person feels that refusing this particular request for help was the right thing to do.

Is Helping Selfishly Motivated?

A final issue that we would like to address is the question of whether helping is selfishly motivated. What does our research indicate? Although this issue is not central to our research program, it is a question that has recently received attention (e.g., Batson, 1993; Batson & Oleson, 1991). We have suggested that our communal subjects experienced improved affect as a result of helping *because* helping promotes or maintains desired communal relationships. We have also suggested that positive affect deteriorated as a result of failing to help *because* failing to help is detrimental to communal relationships. Thus our research may seem to indicate that helping in communal relationships is egoistically motivated. In fact, we believe that helping in a communal (or any other) relationship can be either unselfishly or egoistically motivated. People may, indeed, help in order to develop or maintain a communal relationship. Or they may help in order to avoid feeling guilty about failing to meet felt obligations in communal relationships. These do appear to be selfish motives.

However, it is important to distinguish what motivates people to follow communal norms from the norms themselves (Clark & Mills, 1993). The norms specify that members of communal relationships should help each other and demonstrate a general concern for each other's welfare (e.g., Clark & Mills, 1979; Mills & Clark, 1982). Most people have internalized communal norms about helping others with whom they have family or romantic relationships or with whom they have friendships. They believe it is good to help these others without expecting anything tangible in return. In contrast, people may be motivated to follow communal norms for a number of reasons, including the belief that helping promotes and/or maintains a communal relationship.

Most people also have internalized norms about helping those with whom they do not have communal relationships when an emergency arises or when the cost of helping is low (e.g., giving directions). People believe it is good to live up to those norms without expecting anything tangible in return. We speculate that when issues of relationship development or maintenance are not salient (e.g., calling an ambulance for a stranger who has collapsed in front of one's home, donating money to charity), people should feel good about helping. These good feelings may be mediated through self-perception processes. We also speculate that helping or failing to help may sometimes have affective consequences because it influences others' perceptions of one's competence (e.g., helping another solve a complex statistical problem). Such speculations go beyond the scope of the research reported in our studies to date, and their evaluation must await further research.

NOTES

1. Prior to the start of the experiment, this photo was selected from a group of nine photos of college-age females. A total of 20 undergraduate students (6 males and 14 females) independently rated each of these photos on a scale of 1 (*Extremely unattractive*) to 5 (*Extremely attractive*). The photo used in the present study received a mean rating of 4 (*Somewhat attractive*).

2. One might ask, as a reviewer did, why we did not compare results in the communal-refuse condition with those in the exchange-refuse condition and predict that the drop in affect would be greater in the communal than in the exchange condition. Although this could be done (and if it is done, the results are significant), we argue that this comparison is not methodologically sound. The reason is that we were interested in assessing the effects of refusing to help relative to not being asked to help in each type of desired relationship. This is best addressed by comparing effects of refusing and not being asked to help *within* the communal conditions and *within* the exchange conditions, thereby holding constant any effects of merely having been led to desire a communal versus an exchange relationship. For instance, one can imagine that once a person has been led to desire a communal relationship, nervousness about actually meeting the other might increase over time, whereas the same would not occur in the exchange conditions. A comparison between the communal-refuse and exchange-refuse conditions might pick up on such effects rather than (or in addition to) differential affective reactions to refusing to help in the two different relationship conditions.

A similar argument can be made against within-cell pre- and postanalyses being an appropriate way to test our hypotheses about differential effects of refusing to help in communal and exchange relationship conditions. That is, although such analyses do show that positive affect changed reliably only within the communal-refuse condition, this change could be due to anything that changed in the environment or within subjects in this condition from pre- to posttest, including, but not limited to, refusing to help.

3. We actually had some evidence suggesting that our laboratory findings would generalize to real-life situations. That is, in studies of family caregivers of Alzheimer's disease victims (Williamson & Schulz, 1990) and cancer patients (Williamson & Schulz, 1993), those who reported having stronger interpersonal relationships (in terms of closeness or more frequent mutual communal behaviors) with the patient before illness onset felt less burdened by providing aid than did those who reported having weaker relationships with the patient.

4. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for pretest measures in Study 2 were .88 for the PANAS-PA and .82 for the PANAS-NA.

5. Within-cell pre- and postanalyses revealed that positive affect changed reliably only within the communal conditions. That is, PANAS-PA scores improved when subjects recalled helping a communal partner ($M_s = 28.8$ and 30.9 , respectively), $F(1, 30) = 3.93$, $p < .05$, and deteriorated when subjects recalled refusing to help a communal partner ($M_s = 27.5$ and 24.1 , respectively), $F(1, 30) = 17.57$, $p < .0001$. In contrast, PANAS-PA scores did not change when subjects recalled helping an exchange partner ($M_s = 27.0$ and 27.2 , respectively), $F(1, 30) = 0.07$, ns , and a tendency for positive affect to decline when subjects recalled refusing to help an exchange partner only approached significance ($M_s = 29.1$ and 27.5 , respectively), $F(1, 30) = 3.15$, $p < .09$.

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