

Providing Help and Desired Relationship Type as Determinants of Changes in Moods and Self-Evaluations

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Observed in 2 initial studies was converging evidence that helping improves the helpers' moods and self-evaluations. In these studies Ss induced to help showed improved moods and self-evaluations relative to Ss not given an opportunity to help. A 3rd study examined the moderating effects of desired relationship type on reactions to having helped. In this study Ss were led to desire either a communal or an exchange relationship with another. They then helped the other or were not allowed to help. Among Ss led to desire a communal relationship, but not among those led to desire an exchange relationship, helping was associated with greater improvements in moods than not helping. Helping tended to improve self-evaluations regardless of desired relationship type. However, this effect reached statistical significance only among subjects led to desire a communal relationship.

There have been occasional reports that responding to another's needs improves helpers' moods (e.g., Harris, 1977; Yinon & Landau, 1987) as well as their self-evaluations (e.g., O'Malley & Andrews, 1983; Thomas, Batson, & Coke, 1981). The explanation for these findings has typically been that throughout their lives, people are taught by family members, religious institutions, and other members of society that they are good people if they help, and they are often rewarded for having helped (e.g., Aronfreed, 1970; Berkowitz & Connor, 1966; Schwartz & Howard, 1982). By the time people reach adulthood, they have internalized these values and have come to associate helping with rewards and good feelings. Thus, people feel good and evaluate themselves positively if they have helped another person. We designed the present research to provide further insight into these effects.

This research had two primary purposes. Our first purpose was to replicate previous findings that indicate that providing help improves moods and self-evaluations. We did this because although we agreed with prior researchers that helping could improve moods and self-evaluations, the literature is somewhat inconsistent. Sometimes researchers have found that providing help improves moods and self-evaluations; sometimes they have

not. Moreover, there are alternative explanations for some of the previous results that have supported these hypotheses.

Our second purpose was to show that reactions to providing help may be moderated by the type of relationship the donor wants to have with the help seeker. Clark and Mills (1979; Mills & Clark, 1982) have distinguished communal relationships (often exemplified by friends, romantic partners, and family members) from exchange relationships (often exemplified by acquaintances and business partners). In communal relationships, members benefit one another in response to needs. In exchange relationships, members benefit one another with the expectation of receiving comparable benefits. Recent work has shown that people who are led to desire a communal relationship pay more attention to the other's needs, help the other more, and are more responsive to the other's sadness than those who are led to desire an exchange relationship (Clark, Mills, & Corcoran, in press; Clark, Mills, & Powell, 1986; Clark, Ouellette, Powell, & Milberg, 1987). It has also been shown that people led to desire exchange relationships are more concerned with keeping things even in relationships and with not having the other indebted to them than are people led to desire communal relationships (Clark, 1984; Clark & Mills, 1979; Clark & Waddell, 1985).

This previous work has clearly suggested that people desiring a communal relationship should have a greater desire to meet the other's needs than should those desiring an exchange relationship. It has also suggested that after having helped, those desiring a communal relationship should be less likely than those desiring an exchange relationship to feel that the other owes them something in return. For both these reasons, it would seem that people who desire a communal relationship with another should have more positive affective and self-evaluative reactions to having helped that other than should people who desire an exchange relationship.

We turn now to a more detailed discussion of our first goal.

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Why was it necessary to replicate prior findings suggesting that providing help leads to improved moods and self-evaluations? A review of the previous research provides answers to this question.

Prior Literature on Affective Reactions to Providing Help

The idea that helping improves helpers' moods has existed in the literature for many years. For instance, Cialdini and his colleagues (e.g., Cialdini, Darby, & Vincent, 1973; Manucia, Baumann, & Cialdini, 1984) have often demonstrated that being in a negative mood increases helping, and their explanation is that subjects help in order to alleviate their negative state. The idea that helping improves moods is implicit in this position. To give another example, some researchers interested in the effects of positive moods on helping have suggested that people who are in a positive mood may help in order to maintain their positive state (e.g., Isen & Levin, 1972; Isen & Simmonds, 1978). The idea that helping improves mood is also implicit in this position.

In addition, there is more direct evidence that helping improves moods. The first study to directly assess the effects of helping on moods was conducted by Harris (1977, Study 1). In response to a survey, students in her study indicated that they believed that donating money, helping to pick up papers, or giving a ride to a hitchhiker (but not giving money to a panhandler) would improve their moods. In a subsequent study, Harris (1977, Study 3) found that subjects who had actually helped reported improved moods relative to those not asked to help. In the years since the Harris work, Yinon and Landau (1987); Batson, Coke, Jasnosi, and Hanson (1978); and O'Malley and Andrews (1983) have also conducted some research relevant to the idea that helping improves helpers' moods. In the Yinon and Landau work (1987, Study 1), subjects were (a) asked to help, (b) given an unexpected piece of candy, or (c) kept waiting. The moods of subjects who helped did not differ from those receiving an unexpected reward (which should also have improved moods), but, as expected, both groups rated their moods more positively than those who waited. In the Batson et al. study (1978, Study 2), subjects who had agreed to help for no pay (but who had not actually done so) reported feeling happier than did those who were paid a small amount for their help. Finally, O'Malley and Andrews (1983) reported that subjects who had been induced to feel guilty by participating in a thought-listing exercise and who had then agreed to donate blood for money showed significant declines in negative (i.e., guilty) feelings.

Although the results of all this work can reasonably be interpreted as evidence that helping improves moods, there are reasons for hesitating to firmly draw that conclusion. Specifically, although subjects have reported believing that helping would improve their moods (Harris, 1977, Study 1), and although subjects have reported feeling better after agreeing to help (Batson et al., 1978, Study 2; O'Malley & Andrews, 1983), beliefs about helping and feelings after having agreed to help do not necessarily correspond to feelings after one has not only agreed to help but has also actually given that help. In addition, in both the Harris (1977, Study 3) and Yinon and Landau (1987, Study 1) experiments, subjects who helped had more interpersonal interaction with the recipient than did those in the control condition.

Thus, interacting with another person, rather than helping *per se*, may have caused the subjects' moods to improve. Another explanation for the Yinon and Landau (1987, Study 1) results is that the moods of subjects who were kept waiting may have deteriorated, and the moods of subjects in the other two conditions remained unchanged. In the Batson et al. study (1978, Study 2), there was no control group in which subjects had no opportunity to help. Consequently, it may have been that receiving pay for a small amount of help caused subjects to feel worse (e.g., indebted or guilty) rather than that providing the same help for no pay caused moods to improve. Finally, in the O'Malley and Andrews study, subjects in the guilty mood condition were not randomly assigned to help for pay or to help for no payment (helping was a dependent variable). Thus, it is possible that the observed lower guilty feelings among those who had helped were not a result of helping, but rather that those who were feeling only moderately guilty to begin with helped for pay and those who were feeling very guilty did not, perhaps choosing instead to avoid the entire situation.

Other research has failed to find any support for the idea that helping improves helpers' moods. Specifically, in another study by Harris (1977, Study 2), subjects who gave a stranger directions did not rate their moods as more positive than did subjects not asked for help. In the O'Malley and Andrews (1983) study, neither agreeing to help for pay nor agreeing to help for free was associated with any improvement in moods among subjects in either the happy mood condition or the neutral mood condition, nor was agreeing to help for free associated with decreased negative moods among subjects in the guilty mood condition. Furthermore, Batson and his colleagues (Batson et al., 1988, Study 1) recently found that, even among subjects who were highly empathic toward the person needing help, the act of helping itself did not reliably improve moods.

To summarize, although there is evidence consistent with the idea that helping improves helpers' moods, much of it is indirect or subject to alternative explanations. Other research has failed to obtain evidence for the effect.

Prior Literature on Self-Evaluative Reactions to Providing Help

Like the idea that helping should improve helpers' moods, the proposition that helping should improve helpers' self-evaluations has been around for a long time, albeit in a largely separate literature. In particular, self-perception theory (Bem, 1972) postulates that people form attitudes about themselves based on observations of their own behavior. This theory suggests that people who help should subsequently perceive themselves as more helpful people. Indeed, researchers interested in the "foot-in-the-door" effect (that is, the finding that inducing people to provide a small amount of help makes them more likely to provide a larger amount of help later) have often attributed that phenomenon to such a self-perception process (e.g., Beaman, Svanum, Manlove, & Hampton, 1974; Pliner, Hart, Kohl, & Saari, 1974; Snyder & Cunningham, 1975). Specifically, they have argued that having helped once leads people to see themselves as more helpful people, which in turn leads them to be more likely to help in the future.

There is also more direct evidence that helping improves self-evaluations. In two studies conducted by Batson et al. (1978),

subjects who helped another for no pay subsequently evaluated themselves as more helpful and cooperative (sometimes relative to a confederate) than did subjects who helped after being offered pay. In a study by Thomas et al. (1981), after exposure to a moderately helpful model, subjects who had helped evaluated themselves as more helpful, cooperative, unselfish, considerate, and sympathetic than did subjects not given an opportunity to help. Finally, in a study by O'Malley and Andrews (1983), subjects who had been induced to feel happy and who later agreed to donate blood for free showed increases in self-ratings of unselfishness, kindness, and generosity. Subjects induced to feel happy but who did not agree to donate or who agreed to donate for money did not show analogous increases.

Although this work is consistent with the idea that helping improves self-evaluations, as with the literature on the effects of helping on moods, there are reasons to be cautious about drawing firm conclusions. For instance, in the Batson et al. (1978) work, only the first study included a control condition in which subjects were not asked for help. In this condition, self-evaluations were no less favorable than in the voluntary helping condition. In addition, Batson et al. (1978), Thomas et al. (1981), and O'Malley and Andrews (1983) measured reactions to having agreed to help. These may differ from reactions to having agreed and then actually having helped. Finally, in the O'Malley and Andrews (1983) work, subjects were not randomly assigned to a helping condition (helping was a dependent variable). Thus, it is possible that the improved self-evaluations of happy-mood-condition subjects who agreed to help were not the result of their decision to help. An alternative is that subjects in this condition who were feeling particularly good both agreed to help more as a result of their positive mood (cf. Isen, 1970) and experienced positive self-evaluations as a second, direct result of that mood (cf. Forgas & Moylan, 1987; also see Clark & Williamson, 1989, for a review of literature on the effects of moods on judgments of the self).

In addition, not all relevant results have supported the idea that providing help improves self-evaluations. In particular, in the O'Malley and Andrews (1981) study, among subjects induced to feel guilty or not exposed to a mood manipulation, agreeing to help was not associated with improved self-evaluations. Furthermore, Rittle (1983) has reported a study in which helping a child did not lead to significant improvements in helpers' self-evaluations.

In sum, although the results of some research are consistent with the idea that providing help improves self-evaluations, the evidence is not conclusive. In addition, some researchers have failed to find support for the effect.

It is because alternative explanations exist for many of the findings purported to demonstrate that providing help improves moods and self-evaluations and because a few researchers have failed to obtain these effects at all that we began our own research by attempting to conceptually replicate these effects. In doing so, we strove to avoid the alternative explanations we have raised in connection with prior research. Thus, we hoped to contribute to a converging body of evidence suggesting that providing help improves both moods and self-evaluations.

We designed the first 2 studies to test the following two specific hypotheses: (a) Providing help will improve donors' moods and (b) providing help will improve donors' self-evaluations. We turn now to these studies. Later, we return to the question of

whether the type of relationship the donor wants to have with the person in need of help moderates the effects of helping on moods and self-evaluations.

Study 1

Method

Overview. Under the guise of controlling for the effects of moods on task performance, subjects filled out a scale measuring moods and self-evaluations. Then two thirds of the subjects were asked for help. All agreed. Half of these subjects helped; half discovered that experimental rules prevented them from helping. The remaining subjects (the final third) were never asked for help. The experimenter returned; threw out the original mood and self-evaluation ratings, saying they were too old; and had subjects fill out the forms again. The dependent measures were changes in moods and in self-evaluations between the first and second measures.

Measures of moods and self-evaluations. The instrument used to measure moods and self-evaluations consisted of 12 mood adjectives and 16 self-evaluation adjectives, each rated on a scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 11 (*extremely*) in terms of how well each one described the subject's state at the moment the measures were taken. In constructing this instrument, we relied in part on past mood (Gotlib & Meyer, 1986; McFarland & Ross, 1982; Wright & Mischel, 1982; Zevon & Tellegen, 1982) and self-esteem (Bills, Vance, & McLean, 1973; Gough & Heilbrun, 1973; McFarland & Ross, 1982; Sherwood, 1973) scales. The mood items were delighted, cheerful, pleasant, distressed, upset, sad, irritated, tense, angry, nervous, dissatisfied, and at ease. The self-evaluation items were agreeable, friendly, amiable, generous, successful, helpful, dependable, trustworthy, considerate, useful, kind, irresponsible, selfish, uncooperative, incompetent, and unreliable. We reversed scores on the negatively worded items on each scale.¹

Subjects. Subjects were 60 male undergraduate students (mean age = 18.6 years) recruited for an experiment on moods and performance. Each partially fulfilled a course requirement by participating, and each was randomly assigned to one of three conditions: (a) asked and allowed to help, (b) asked but not allowed to help, or (c) no request for help. Five additional students (2 in the asked-help condition, 2 in the asked-no help condition, and 1 in the no request condition) indicated suspicions about the real purpose of the study. They were not counted as subjects, and their data were not included in any analyses.

Procedure. An experimenter showed each subject into a large room and said that the study's purpose was to investigate the effects of moods on task performance. The tasks were a series of simple computer games, and the subject was to complete a mood assessment questionnaire immediately prior to each game. The experimenter emphasized that, because moods are known to change quickly, it was very important that the subject complete each questionnaire based on the way he really felt at that moment.

While the subject worked on the first questionnaire, the experimenter pretended to set up a computer for the games. When the subject indicated that he had completed his form, the experimenter said she was unable to get the program to run. She then went to the door of an adjacent office and knocked. When she opened the door, a confederate could be seen working at a desk. The experimenter said she was having trouble with the game program. The confederate agreed to investigate the problem, but said she was already late for a meeting. She gathered up the papers scattered over the desk and asked the experimenter to take them to the person she was to meet and explain that she would be delayed. As the confederate handed the papers to the experimenter, she "accidentally" knocked two metal trays of letter tiles off the desk so that the tiles

¹ Cronbach's alphas calculated on difference scores in Study 1 were .70 for the mood measure and .81 for the self-evaluation measure.

scattered across the floor. Expressing dismay because she had just sorted the tiles for another experiment, the confederate said she would just have to sort them again but would see about the problem with the game program first. Then the experimenter left. Meanwhile, the confederate went to the computer, tried a few things, and said something was wrong with the disk. She apologized for the delay and said that it would be necessary for her to copy the program from another computer onto a new disk.

At this point the experimental manipulation occurred. Prior to the start of the experiment, the subject had been assigned randomly to an asked to help condition or to the no request condition. If a subject had been assigned to an asked to help condition, the confederate paused as she was leaving and said,

As long as you're waiting anyway, would you do me a favor? I just spilled a bunch of letter tiles on the floor back there, and we really need them for another experiment. Would you mind to pick them up and put them back in order for me? There's a chart on the desk that shows how they need to be sorted. Thanks a lot! We'll be back with you in a few minutes.²

At this point, all subjects who were asked to help the confederate had agreed to do so. Then, as an afterthought, the confederate said,

Oh, wait! I just thought of something! This may be one of those experiments where subjects aren't supposed to leave the room. If it is, it will say so on the inside flap of that folder over there. So, you'd better check that first. If it says you can't leave the room, then don't worry about it. But if it's okay for you to leave, I'd really appreciate the help. Thanks!

The two asked to help conditions (asked and allowed to help and asked but not allowed to help) were differentiated by the folder containing the written instructions. A notation on the inside flap either stated that, for control purposes, subjects must not leave the room during the experiment (asked-no help condition) or contained no such instructions (asked-help condition). Which instructions appeared in the folder had been randomly determined prior to the study, and the confederate was unaware of which instructions were applicable to any particular session. All subjects who agreed to help and whose folders indicated that they were allowed to help actually did so. All subjects who agreed to help and whose folders indicated they could not leave the room did not help. Subjects in the no request condition were never asked to help, and none volunteered.

The confederate left the room, unaware of whether the subject could or could not pick up the tiles. Thus, neither the experimenter nor the confederate knew to which condition subjects who were asked to help had been assigned. Moreover, the experimenter was unaware of whether the subject had been asked for help at all. After 10 min, the experimenter returned with a new disk. She told the subject that he would need to fill out a new questionnaire, because some time had passed since the first one was completed and it had to be filled out right before the task. The experimenter then crumpled the first form, threw it in the trash, and gave the subject a new one to fill out. As before, she worked at the computer while he filled out the new questionnaire.

As soon as the second assessment was completed, subjects were checked for suspicion, then debriefed. After the subject left, his original questionnaire was retrieved from the trash so that difference scores could be computed.

Results

After reversing scores on the negatively worded items (distressed, upset, sad, irritated, tense, angry, nervous, and dissatisfied on the mood measure; irresponsible, selfish, uncooperative, incompetent, and unreliable on the self-evaluation measure), we calculated the dependent measures of moods and self-evaluations 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 no statistically significant differences between conditions at pretesting on either of the dependent measures. Average moods and self-evaluations on the first measure were moderately positive in all three conditions (overall $M = 85.7$ for moods and 126.7 for self-evaluations).

Changes in moods. Mean changes in moods in each condition are depicted on the left side of Figure 1. As can be seen, moods were elevated for subjects in the asked-help condition, improved somewhat in the asked-no help condition, and deteriorated slightly in the no request condition. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) on these data revealed a significant effect of condition, $F(2, 57) = 5.91, p < .005$. Planned comparisons revealed a reliable difference in mood changes between the asked-help ($M = 10.2$) and no request ($M = -1.0$) conditions, $F(1, 57) = 11.79, p < .01$. The difference between the asked-help and the asked-no help ($M = 4.1$) conditions approached significance, $F(1, 57) = 3.55, p < .10$. In sum, helping improved moods more than did receiving no request for help and tended to improve moods more than did simply being asked and agreeing to help. Although there was a tendency for being asked and agreeing to help to improve moods relative to receiving no request, it was not significant, $F(1, 57) = 2.40, ns$.

Changes in self-evaluations. The right side of Figure 1 shows mean changes in self-evaluations. Self-evaluations increased in the asked-help condition, improved somewhat in the asked-no help condition, and showed no change in the no request condition. A one-way ANOVA revealed a significant effect for condition, $F(2, 57) = 3.83, p < .03$. Planned comparisons revealed that the difference in changes in self-evaluations between the asked-help ($M = 11.5$) and no request ($M = 0.1$) conditions was significant, $F(1, 57) = 7.26, p < .01$. The difference between the asked-no help condition ($M = 3.5$) and the asked-help condition approached significance, $F(1, 57) = 3.59, p < .10$. In sum, agreeing to help in combination with actually helping improved self-evaluations relative to receiving no request. Actually helping also tended to improve self-evaluations relative to simply being asked and agreeing to help. There was also a tendency for being asked and agreeing to help to improve self-evaluations, relative to receiving no request, but it did not approach significance, $F(1, 57) = 0.64, ns$.³

Discussion

Subjects who helped showed significant improvements in both moods and self-evaluations relative to subjects not asked for help. These results are consistent with the hypothesis that providing help will improve moods and self-evaluations. Moreover, subjects who agreed to a request for help and who actually

² The wording "mind to pick them up" in this request (and also in the request for help used in Study 2) may seem awkward. However, it is the exact wording used by our confederate who claims it is normal speech in the part of the country from which she comes.

³ Clearly, the patterns of results for the mood and the self-evaluation measures are very similar, and, not surprisingly, these measures were positively correlated. This finding also occurred in Studies 2 and 3, and we postpone discussion of this issue until the results of the remaining two studies have been presented.

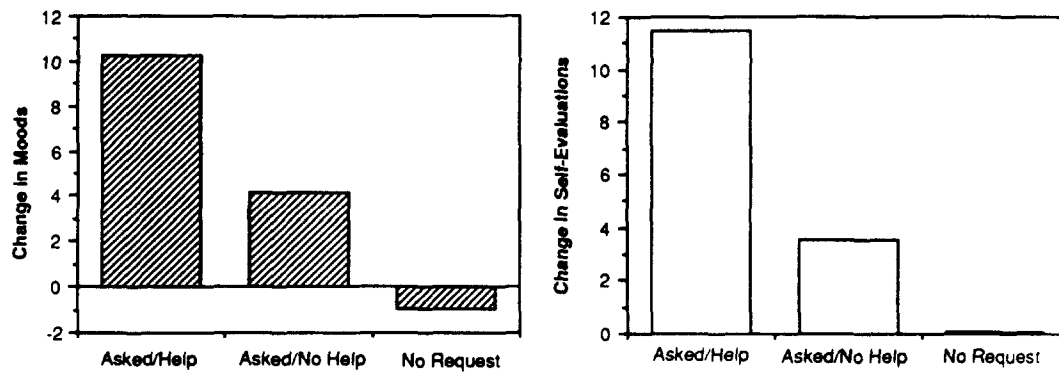


Figure 1. Study 1 changes in moods and self-evaluations as a result of helping, being unable to help, or receiving no request for help.

provided help showed a tendency toward improved moods and self-evaluations relative to subjects who agreed to help but who were not allowed to do so. These results suggest that the act of helping may produce elevations in moods and self-evaluations beyond any improvements resulting from merely agreeing to help.

Although we found Study 1's results to be supportive of our ideas and not subject to the alternative explanations applicable to some earlier literature, it might be argued that they are subject to an alternative explanation. That is, perhaps performing the task itself (i.e., sorting letters), rather than knowing that one was helping, produced the effects. For instance, it is possible that subjects found the letter-sorting task enjoyable or that it made them feel competent. This could account for the improved moods and self-evaluations in the asked-help condition relative to those in the remaining conditions. Alternatively, perhaps subjects were initially anxious about participating in a psychology experiment. Those who picked up and sorted tiles may have been distracted from their nervousness by performing the task, and those who were not distracted may have continued to feel nervous. This could also account for the improved moods in the asked-help condition relative to those in the asked-no help and no request conditions.

We would note, however, that the possibility that the task was distracting and thereby alleviated nervousness seems unlikely. A one-way ANOVA of changes on a "nervousness" measure, composed specifically for purposes of evaluating this explanation and made up of scores on at ease, nervous, and tense (with the latter two reversed), revealed no reliable differences between conditions, $F(2, 57) = 0.35, ns$.

To clearly rule out the possibility that the observed effects were due to performing the task itself, we conducted a second experiment. It included just a help and a no help condition. Subjects in this second study performed the letter-sorting task in both conditions. However, only those in the help condition were led to believe they were helping another by performing the task. Those in the no help condition were led to believe the task was simply part of the required experimental procedure.

Study 2

Method

Subjects. Subjects were 21 male undergraduate students (mean age = 18.3 years) recruited for an experiment on performance on and

reactions to simple tasks. Participation partially fulfilled a course requirement. Each subject was randomly assigned to one of two conditions, help or no help. Two additional students also participated. A suspicion check revealed that 1, originally assigned to the help condition, correctly determined the true purpose of the study. The other, originally assigned to the no help condition, stated during debriefing that he genuinely thought he had helped the experimenter by working on the experimental tasks while she was away. We excluded the data from these students from all analyses.

Procedure. The experimenter showed each subject into a room and stated that he would be asked to do several simple tasks. At the end of the session, he would be asked a series of questions about each one. Some tasks were to be done on the computer; some would not involve the computer. The purpose of the experiment was supposedly to compare reactions to these two types of tasks.

The experimenter commented that it had already been established that some of these tasks were sensitive to momentary changes in moods. Consequently, at specified intervals during the experimental session, measures of current moods would be collected so that the effects of moods could be controlled in the data analyses. The experimenter emphasized that, because moods are known to change quickly, it was very important that the subject rate his moods on the basis of the way he really felt when each measure was taken.

The subject was led to believe that his first task involved playing a computer game. While he completed the first mood assessment form, the experimenter pretended to set up the computer for the game. When the subject had completed this form, the experimenter said that something had apparently happened to the disk containing the game program and that it would be necessary for her to load the program from another computer onto a new disk. She stated that this should only take a few minutes, apologized for the delay, and left, taking the subject's completed mood form with her.

After 10 min, a confederate entered the room, told the subject that the experimenter had been delayed, gave the subject one of two previously prepared handwritten notes from the experimenter, and left. The notes contained the experimental manipulation. Prior to the start of the experiment, subjects had been randomly assigned to one of the two conditions. Neither the experimenter nor the confederate was aware of the subject's assigned condition prior to or during the experiment. In both conditions, the note began with the experimenter explaining that loading the program onto a new disk was taking longer than expected because there was a big job running ahead of the experimenter's job. So that she would not lose her place in line, the experimenter had decided to send a note so the subject could begin the second task. For those assigned to the no help condition, the note continued,

Some letter tiles have been spilled on the table in the back room.

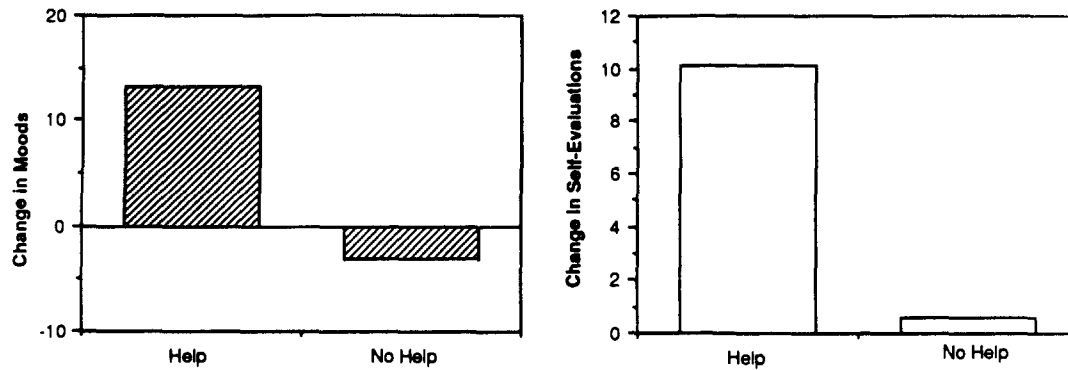


Figure 2. Study 2 changes in moods and self-evaluations as a result of helping or receiving no request for help.

Your second task is to put them in order in the trays. There's a chart on the table that shows how they are to be sorted.

If you finish before I get back, you should work on the third task. Please return to the room you're in now, sit down at the table by the filing cabinet, and fill out one of the *pink* mood forms. Then read the instructions taped to that table, and begin the third task for this experiment.

In contrast, for subjects in the help condition, the note continued,

But before you do that, would you do me a favor? Some letter tiles have been spilled on the table in the back room. I had planned to sort them for another experiment, and now I'm afraid I won't have time before we need them. Would you mind to put them in order in the trays for me? There's a chart on the table that shows how they are to be sorted. I *really* could use the help!

If you finish before I get back (or if you'd rather not help), you should work on the second task. Please return to the room you're in now, sit down at the table by the filing cabinet, and fill out one of the *pink* mood forms. Then read the instructions taped to that table, and begin the second task for this experiment.

All subjects who were asked for help performed the letter-sorting task, as did all subjects who were asked to perform the task as part of the experimental procedure. In addition, after completing the task, they all filled out the second (pink) mood form. After 20 min, the experimenter returned, checked for suspicion, and debriefed the subject as to the actual purpose of the study. As in Study 1, the differences between scores on the mood and self-evaluation questionnaire completed first and on the mood and self-evaluation questionnaire completed after sorting the tiles constituted the dependent measures.⁴

Results

Changes in moods. Preliminary analyses of premanipulation data revealed that, as in Study 1, subjects' average moods were moderately positive (overall $M = 88.8$). However, these analyses also revealed that, prior to the experimental manipulation, the moods of subjects assigned to the help condition ($M = 80.9$) were significantly less positive than those of subjects assigned to the no help condition ($M = 95.9$), $F(1, 19) = 4.51$, $p < .05$. To control for this difference, we computed an analysis of covariance for change scores on the mood measure. Because a relation between change scores and pretest scores may be due to mathematical artifact (see Oldham, 1962), to control for initial differences in mood we used average mood scores $[(\text{pretest} + \text{posttest})/2]$ as covariates rather than pretest scores.⁵ This method is suggested by Oldham (1962).

As shown on the left side of Figure 2, the effect of helping on

changes in moods found in Study 1 was replicated in Study 2. That is, moods were elevated in the help condition (adjusted $M = 13.3$) and deteriorated in the no help condition (adjusted $M = -3.0$). The difference between mean changes was significant, $F(1, 18) = 4.85$, $p < .04$.⁶

Changes in self-evaluations. Preliminary analyses of pretest data indicated that subjects' average self-evaluations were moderately positive (overall $M = 116.5$) and that there were no differences between conditions, $F(1, 19) = 0.02$, *ns*. The right side of Figure 2 shows that, as in Study 1, subjects in the help condition reported improved self-evaluations ($M = 10.1$). Those in the no help condition showed little change on this measure ($M = 0.1$). A one-way ANOVA revealed that this effect was marginally significant, $F(1, 19) = 3.52$, $p < .08$.⁷

Discussion

Study 2's results provide further support for our predictions regarding the effects of helping on moods and self-evaluations. Helping was associated with more positive changes in moods and self-evaluations than was performing the same task when it was not perceived as helping. Importantly, these effects cannot be explained by the alternative explanations for prior work outlined in the beginning of this article or in terms of simply having performed the task itself.

Still, an alternative explanation for the observed effects of helping might be offered. In connection with the effects on both moods and self-evaluations, it might be suggested that subjects who perceived that sorting the letters was part of the experiment might have experienced some evaluation apprehension, whereas those who perceived it as helping did not. In other words, it might be argued that evaluation apprehension, not

⁴ We removed the self-evaluation item helpful from the scale prior to this study because two of the subjects excluded from Study 1 indicated that it was this item that had caused them to suspect that reactions to helping were the true variables of interest in that study.

⁵ Cronbach's alpha calculated on changes in the mood measure in Study 2 was .81.

⁶ An ANOVA (without the covariate) revealed virtually identical results, with $F(1, 19) = 5.50$, $p < .03$.

⁷ Cronbach's alpha was .66 for change scores on the self-evaluation measure in Study 2.

helping per se, might account for the difference in moods between conditions. However, this seems unlikely for two reasons. First, sorting letter tiles into tins was a very simple task that all subjects completed easily. Moreover, once completed, there could be little doubt that it was done correctly. Thus, it is unlikely that evaluation apprehension about performance on this task would be present at the time subjects filled out the second mood and self-evaluation form. Second, all subjects, regardless of whether they thought their performance on the letter-sorting task would be evaluated, believed they would be evaluated on at least two other, more ambiguous tasks. Thus, if being evaluated on experimental tasks produces anxiety, that anxiety should be present in both experimental conditions.

Despite the existence of possible alternative explanations for Studies 1 and 2, it is notable that they do not share common alternative explanations. Moreover, the present studies are not subject to the alternative explanations that hindered clear interpretation of the prior literature on the effects of providing help on moods and self-evaluations (i.e., Batson et al., 1978; Harris, 1977; O'Malley & Andrews, 1983; Thomas et al., 1981; Yinon & Landau, 1987), nor can that prior literature be accounted for solely by the types of alternative explanations raised in connection with the present work. The present studies and prior studies all converge on the conclusion that providing help often improves helpers' moods and self-evaluations and can most parsimoniously be explained in that way. Thus, it seems reasonable at this point to conclude that providing help can improve helpers' moods and self-evaluations.

Study 3

Relationship Type as a Moderator of Reactions to Having Provided Help

Having satisfied ourselves that helping often does enhance donors' moods and self-evaluations, we turned to our second goal. This goal was to examine how affective and self-evaluative reactions to having helped may be moderated by the type of relationship a helper desires with the help seeker. In particular, we focused on how desiring an exchange relationship as opposed to a communal relationship (e.g., Clark & Mills, 1979; Mills & Clark, 1982) might influence reactions to providing help.

Clark and Mills (1979; Mills & Clark, 1982) have argued that different rules govern the giving of benefits in communal relationships (as often typified by friendships, familial relationships, and romantic involvements) and exchange relationships (as often typified by interactions between strangers and business acquaintances). Specifically, communal partners feel concern about and responsibility for meeting each other's needs. Thus, they give benefits in order to please the other or to show concern for the other's welfare. In contrast, exchange partners do not feel responsible for each other's needs. Instead, they give benefits to repay past debts or in expectation of receiving repayment in kind.

A number of studies based on this distinction are relevant to the present research. Some suggest that people who are led to desire or who already have an existing communal (rather than exchange) relationship have a more positive attitude toward attending to the other's needs and toward helping the other. In

particular, Clark et al. (1986, Study 1) found that subjects who thought they could help another (with no expectation of repayment) monitored the other's requests for help more if they had been led to desire a communal rather than an exchange relationship with the other. Also, Clark et al. (1986, in press) found that subjects desiring or actually having communal relationships are more likely than those desiring or having exchange relationships to check indicators of the other's needs, even when they cannot meet those needs. Finally, Clark et al. (1987) observed that subjects led to desire a communal relationship with another are more likely to help that other and to increase the amount of help given if the other is sad than are subjects led to desire an exchange relationship. Because people desiring a communal relationship seem to have a greater desire to help the other than do those desiring an exchange relationship, it seems reasonable to predict that they would also tend to feel better as a result of having helped the other.

Other studies suggest a second reason for making the same prediction. In particular, subjects desiring an exchange relationship have been shown to display more concern about keeping track of individual contributions in relationships (Clark, 1984) and about the other being indebted to them (Clark & Mills, 1979; Clark & Waddell, 1985) than have subjects desiring a communal relationship. Thus, providing help to someone with whom an exchange relationship is desired should result in greater perceptions of inequity and greater distress associated with such perceptions (cf. Walster, Berscheid, & Walster, 1973; Walster, Walster, & Berscheid, 1978) than should providing help when a communal relationship is desired. This, then, suggests a second reason for predicting that providing help should be associated with more positive changes in moods and self-evaluations when a communal rather than an exchange relationship is desired.

Would we necessarily predict that helping someone with whom an exchange relationship is desired would result in deteriorated moods and self-evaluations? No. Given the strong general societal norm that dictates that helping is a good thing (e.g., Aronfreed, 1970; Berkowitz & Connor, 1966; Schwartz & Howard, 1982), it seemed that even those who desired an exchange relationship might experience enhanced self-evaluations and moods as a result of helping the other. Whether moods would rise or fall, then, would depend on which was greater, the distress produced by having created inequity or the good feelings produced by having done something generally perceived to be worthwhile. Thus, we made no specific predictions about the direction of mood and self-evaluation changes in the exchange conditions. Rather, we simply tested our primary hypothesis that providing help would lead to greater improvements in moods and self-evaluations when subjects desired a communal rather than an exchange relationship with the help seeker.

Method

Overview. Subjects were led to desire either an exchange or a communal relationship with an attractive woman in need of assistance. Half of the subjects were able to help, and the remaining half were prevented from helping by experimental rules. Moods and self-evaluations were rated both prior to and immediately following the helping manipulation, and the dependent measures were the changes in these ratings from pre- to postmeasure.

Subjects. Subjects were 50 unmarried male students (mean age =

18.1 years) enrolled in introductory psychology courses. They received partial course credit for their participation. These subjects signed up for an experiment on reactions to task performance. They were randomly assigned to one of four conditions: exchange-help, exchange-no help, communal-help, or communal-no help. Data for 2 additional participants (1 originally assigned to the communal-help condition and 1 assigned to the exchange-no help condition) were not available because they failed to complete the second questionnaire. No subject indicated suspicions about the study's actual purpose.

Procedure. On arrival, each subject was seated at a large table. Prior to the start of the experiment, two batches of letter tiles were placed on the table, one at the subject's seat and one at a seat across from the subject. A handbag, some textbooks, and a woman's sweater had previously been placed on the subject's chair. The experimenter moved these out of the subject's way, saying that they belonged to another subject, Janet, who had already done part of the experiment. She stated that Janet had left for a few minutes to make a phone call, but should return soon. The experimenter then told the subject that he would be doing several simple tasks involving making words out of letter tiles. Later on he would be asked to answer some questions about each task.

As justification for collecting the dependent measures, the subject was told that momentary changes in moods were known to affect performance on these tasks. Consequently, at specified times during the experiment, he would be asked to fill out questionnaires rating his moods at that moment, so that the effects of moods could be controlled in data analysis.

Then the experimenter asked the subject if she could take his picture. All subjects consented. After taking a Polaroid photograph of the subject, the experimenter explained that it would be used as another measure of his moods at the beginning of the study. He was then asked to fill out a background information form and a mood questionnaire.

Pretending to be concerned about Janet's continued absence, the experimenter said she would check on Janet while the subject filled out these forms. She requested that the subject slip his photo into a pocket on the bottom of his background information form and place it in a folder beneath Janet's information form and photo. He also was asked to put his mood form in an envelope marked "mood forms." The experimenter then left the room, supposedly to search for Janet.

At this point, the relationship manipulation occurred. Prior to the start of the experiment, one of two previously prepared background questionnaires about Janet had been placed in the folder by an assistant, allowing the experimenter to remain unaware of the subject's assigned relationship condition. The same photograph of an attractive woman was used for both conditions. Desired relationship type was manipulated by Janet's answers to questions regarding her marital status, how long she had been a student at the university, and her reasons for signing up for this particular experiment. In the communal condition, the form indicated that she was single, was in her first semester at the university, and had signed up for the study because "It looked interesting and [she] thought it would be a good way to meet some new people." In the exchange condition, Janet was married, had been at the university for 2 years, and had signed up for the study because "It looked interesting and it was a good time for [her] husband to pick [her] up afterwards." Asking the subject to place his questionnaire and photograph beneath those of Janet while the experimenter was absent gave the subject an opportunity to look at Janet's photograph and questionnaire. Past checks on the effectiveness of these manipulations have demonstrated that they lead to a desire for the appropriate type of relationship (see Clark, 1986; Clark & Waddell, 1985). Also, in a prior study in which subjects were asked to place their questionnaires beneath those of another subject, only 2 of 50 subjects failed to look at the other's materials (Clark et al., 1987).

Prior to the beginning of the study, slips of paper were prepared and placed in a container; half were marked "help" and half were marked "no help." After being out of the room for 10 min, the experimenter drew one of these slips, read it, and returned to the room. She stated

that she had located Janet and that she was on the phone, trying to deal with a family problem. She added that if it took much longer, Janet would have to leave before she could finish the experiment. The experimenter then administered the helping condition manipulation.

If the slip drawn said "no help," the experimenter said,

She asked me if you could help her out by sorting her letters for her next task. She's afraid she won't have time to do enough of the experiment to get credit for it. Unfortunately, I had to say no, since sorting the letters is part of the task.

You should start on your own task; the instructions are in this envelope.

If the slip drawn said "help," she said,

She asked me if you could help her out by sorting her letters for her next task. She's afraid she won't have time to do enough of the experiment to get credit for it. I said it was okay, if you wanted to, since sorting the letters isn't part of the task.

If you want to help her out, just put these tiles in these trays according to this chart. Then you should start on your own task; the instructions are in this envelope.

At this point, the experimenter once again left the room. In all cases, the envelope contained a second mood form and instructions for a first task. In the help condition, by the time the envelope was opened, the subject had already helped by sorting Janet's tiles, and the instructions advised the subject to complete the mood form prior to beginning his first task. In the no help condition, the instructions advised him to sort his own letter tiles prior to completing the second mood assessment. Thus, all subjects sorted tiles just prior to filling out the second questionnaire, but only those in the helping condition perceived that by doing so they were voluntarily helping Janet. After 20 min, the experimenter returned, checked for suspicion, and debriefed the subject. As in Studies 1 and 2, the dependent measures were changes in moods and in self-evaluations.

Results

On average, subjects in Study 3 rated their moods (overall $M = 92.8$) and self-evaluations (overall $M = 124.7$) as moderately positive prior to the experimental manipulations. There were no significant differences between conditions on either pretest measure.⁸

Changes in moods. The left side of Figure 3 shows mean changes in moods in each condition. Moods improved for subjects in the communal-help condition, deteriorated in the communal-no help condition, and changed very little in both the exchange-help and exchange-no help conditions. A 2 (communal vs. exchange) \times 2 (help vs. no help) ANOVA revealed a significant interaction between helping condition and relationship expectation, $F(1, 46) = 5.67, p < .02$. The main effect for helping approached significance, $F(1, 46) = 3.29, p < .08$. There was no reliable main effect for desired relationship type, $F(1, 46) = 0.06, ns$. Planned comparisons revealed that changes in moods in the communal-help condition ($M = 8.3$) were significantly more positive than those in the communal-no help condition ($M = -7.9$), $F(1, 46) = 8.80, p < .01$. However, there was no reliable difference between changes in moods in the exchange-help ($M = -1.8$) and exchange-no help ($M = 0.4$) conditions, $F(1, 46) = 0.16, ns$. Mean changes in moods in the ex-

⁸ Cronbach's alphas calculated on difference scores in Study 3 were .81 for the mood measure and .80 for the self-evaluation measure.

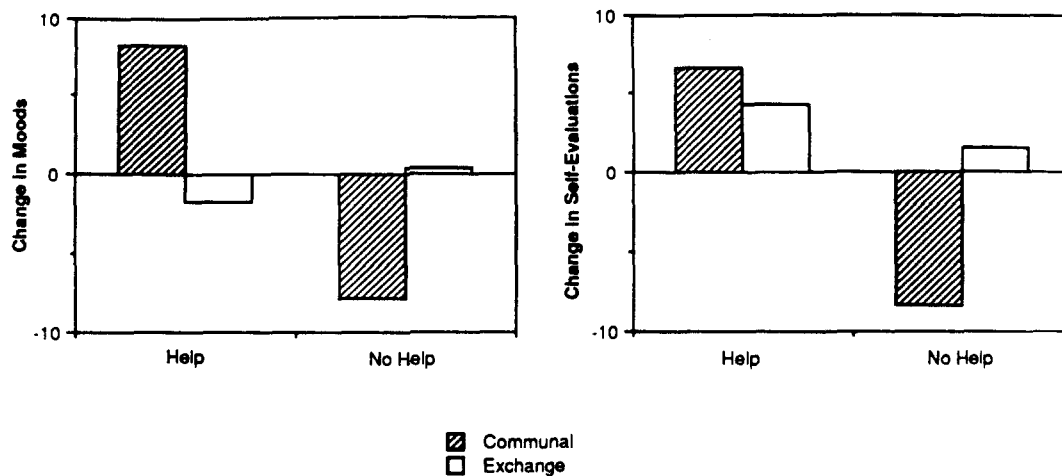


Figure 3. Study 3 changes in moods and self-evaluations as a result of helping or being prevented from helping when either an exchange or a communal relationship is desired.

change conditions were, in fact, opposite in direction to mean changes in moods in the communal conditions.

Changes in self-evaluations. As shown on the right side of Figure 3, self-evaluations increased in both the communal-help and exchange-help conditions, showed little change in the exchange-no help condition, and deteriorated in the communal-no help condition. A 2 (communal vs. exchange relationship) \times 2 (help vs. no help) ANOVA revealed a significant main effect for helping condition, $F(1, 46) = 5.91, p < .02$, such that, regardless of desired relationship type, self-evaluations of subjects who helped improved more than did those of subjects who did not help. The main effect for relationship type was not reliable, $F(1, 46) = 1.08, ns$, but the interaction between helping and relationship approached significance, $F(1, 46) = 2.76, p < .10$. Planned comparisons revealed that changes in self-evaluations in the communal-help condition ($M = 6.6$) were significantly more positive than those in the communal-no help condition ($M = -8.4$), $F(1, 46) = 8.37, p < .01$. However, in spite of a trend in the same direction, changes in self-evaluations in the exchange-help condition ($M = 4.3$) and the exchange-no help condition ($M = 1.5$) did not differ significantly, $F(1, 46) = 0.30, ns$.

Discussion

Ignoring the effects of desired relationship type and considering only the main effect of helping on moods and self-evaluations, the results of our third study fit well with those of Studies 1 and 2. That is, relative to not being able to help, helping produced significant positive changes in self-evaluations and marginally significant positive changes in moods. More important, the results of the third study go beyond prior results to demonstrate that these effects are moderated by desired relationship type. The improvements in moods as a result of helping, relative to not being able to help, occurred only when subjects desired communal relationships. Also, although helping, relative to not being able to help, was associated with improved self-evaluations regardless of desired relationship type, this effect was statistically reliable only in the communal conditions.⁹

We believe these effects are due to differences between the

norms governing the giving of benefits in these two types of relationships. People seem to have internalized a norm that attending to and meeting others' needs is called for and desirable in communal relationships but is not necessary in exchange relationships (Clark et al., 1986, 1987, in press). This, in turn, may cause helping to produce greater improvements in moods and in self-evaluations when a communal relationship is desired relative to when an exchange relationship is desired.

An additional contributor to the observed differences in moods and self-evaluations may be a sense of inequity created by helping with no expectation of repayment when an exchange, but not when a communal, relationship is desired (see, for instance, Clark & Mills, 1979; Clark & Waddell, 1985, for data consistent with this view). When an exchange relationship is desired, this sense of inequity may produce distress after helping and so moderate whatever positive effects helping might have on moods and self-evaluations.

Unlike Studies 1 and 2, in the third study changes in moods and self-evaluations from before helping to after helping could not be contrasted with changes in moods and self-evaluations over an equivalent period during which the issue of giving help simply was not raised. Instead, in Study 3, the only contrast possible was between reactions to helping and reactions to knowing help was needed but not being allowed to provide it. Thus, while we believe (on the basis of Studies 1 and 2) that agreeing to help and then actually helping can improve moods and self-evaluations, the cause of the results in the communal conditions of Study 3 may be more complex. Moods and self-evaluations may have improved more in the communal-help condition than in the communal-no help condition because (a)

⁹ Significant effects of providing help were observed in Studies 1 and 2 without manipulating desired relationship type. However, when we manipulated desired relationship in Study 3, analogous effects were significant only in the communal conditions. This suggests that at least some subjects in the first 2 studies desired communal relationships with the help seeker. This seems reasonable because in those studies subjects actually met the person needing help, and she behaved in a friendly, relaxed manner.

agreeing to help and then actually helping caused moods and self-evaluations to improve, (b) being prevented from helping caused moods and self-evaluations to deteriorate, or (c) both of these processes affected moods and self-evaluations.

Additional Analyses Relevant to all Three Studies

Before turning to the general discussion, we address two additional questions relevant to all three studies. First, what is the relationship between our conceptually based measures of moods and self-evaluations? Second, were the observed effects of helping on self-evaluations due solely to subjects' self-ratings on adjectives close in meaning to *helpful* (e.g., helpful, considerate), or were they reflected in self-ratings of adjectives further in meaning from helpful as well (e.g., trustworthy, competent)?

Association Between Measures of Moods and Self-Evaluations

Unlike most prior studies on reactions to having helped another, each study in the present series included measures of *both* moods and self-evaluations. In all three studies, the pattern of results obtained from these two measures was basically the same, and in all three the two measures were positively correlated ($r = .58$ for Study 1; $r = .68$ for Study 2; $r = .69$ for Study 3; all $ps < .001$).

Clearly, these measures are closely related. To investigate whether they could be empirically separated, we combined the data from all three studies and performed a factor analysis with varimax rotation on the difference scores obtained for each adjective.¹⁰ Nine factors emerged, but only the first 2 could be easily interpreted. The first factor included seven positive self-evaluation adjectives (friendly, .38; agreeable, .70; generous, .51; useful, .49; amiable, .74; kind, .71; and considerate, .73). It also included one positive mood item (pleasant, .62). This factor might best be described as a positive self-evaluation factor. The second factor included five negative mood items (upset, .54; dissatisfied, .53; angry, .76; tense, .49; and irritated, .51) and one positive self-evaluation item that loaded negatively (friendly, $-.56$). This factor might be labeled a negative mood factor. None of the remaining factors were easily interpretable.

Although the fact that self-evaluation adjectives tended to fall on the first factor and mood adjectives tended to fall on the second factor is supportive of the idea that our measures tapped separate constructs, the initial two factors are also clearly distinguished by their positive (Factor 1) versus negative (Factor 2) tones. Thus, judging solely on the basis of our factor analysis, we cannot argue that our two measures can be clearly separated or that they tapped empirically distinct constructs in these particular studies.

Generality of the Self-Evaluation Effects

Next, consider the question of whether the observed effects of helping on self-evaluations were due solely to subjects' self-ratings on adjectives close in meaning to helpful or whether the effects were more general. As a first step in addressing this question, we reversed the evaluative tone of the five negative self-evaluation items (i.e., unreliable, irresponsible, uncooperative, selfish, and incompetent) and had two judges rate each of the

16 adjectives on a scale from 1 (*far from being identical in meaning to helpful*) to 5 (*identical in meaning to helpful*). Rating the adjectives on this dimension proved difficult, as evidenced by a fairly low correlation between the two judges' ratings ($r = .38$). Nonetheless, we averaged the two judges' ratings for each adjective to obtain a "closeness" score for each. On the basis of these scores, the adjectives were split into two groups, those closest in meaning to helpful (helpful, reliable, considerate, kind, generous, responsible, useful, and dependable) and those furthest in meaning from helpful (cooperative, friendly, agreeable, amiable, trustworthy, unselfish, competent, and successful).

Next, we redid the analyses for all three studies, including a new, within-subjects variable of closeness in meaning to helpful. In the case of Study 1, the new 3 (helping: asked-help, asked-no help, no request) \times 2 (adjectives: close, far) ANOVA revealed a main effect for helping, $F(2, 57) = 3.83, p < .03$; no main effect for adjectives; and a marginally significant interaction between helping and adjectives, $F(2, 57) = 2.84, p < .07$. The interaction can best be described as indicating that, although the pattern of means in the three helping conditions was the same for close adjectives ($M_s = 6.9$ for asked-help, 1.2 for asked-no help, -1.3 for no request) and for far adjectives ($M_s = 4.6$ for asked-help, 2.3 for asked-no help, 1.4 for no request), the observed effects were stronger for the close adjectives. We performed a comparison in the form of a one-tailed t test to determine if, within the helping condition, the increase in self-evaluations was greater for the close adjectives ($M = 6.9$) than for the far adjectives ($M = 4.6$). It revealed that the observed difference approached significance, $t(19) = 1.26, p < .11$. Analogous one-tailed t tests in the asked-no help and in the no request conditions did not approach significance.

For Study 2, the new 2 (helping: help, no help) \times 2 (adjectives: close, far) ANOVA revealed a main effect for helping that approached significance, $F(1, 19) = 3.30, p < .09$; a significant main effect for adjectives, $F(1, 19) = 6.51, p < .02$; and a nonsignificant interaction between helping and adjectives, $F(1, 19) = 1.74, ns$.¹¹ The main effect for adjectives indicated that, across both the help and no help conditions, adjectives close in meaning to helpful were more strongly endorsed than were those far in meaning from helpful. More important for the present purpose, a comparison in the form of a one-tailed t test to determine if, within the helping condition, the increase in self-evaluations was greater for the close adjectives ($M = 0.8$) than for the far adjectives ($M = 0.6$) revealed no significant difference, $t(9) = 0.79, ns$. Unexpectedly, an analogous one-tailed t test in the no help condition revealed a significantly greater improvement in ratings on the close adjectives ($M = 0.4$) than in ratings on the far adjectives ($M = -0.3$), $t(10) = 3.05, p < .006$.

Finally, for Study 3, the new 2 (helping: help, no help) \times 2 (relationship: communal, exchange) \times 2 (adjectives: close, far)

¹⁰ Note, however, that we did not include data derived from ratings of the adjective *helpful* in Study 1 in this analysis because ratings of that adjective were not available from Studies 2 and 3.

¹¹ In the analyses of data from Studies 2 and 3, we used average ratings on the close and far items rather than summed ratings. Dropping the adjective *helpful* in Studies 2 and 3 meant that there were more far adjectives (8) than close adjectives (7), and we wanted to avoid a main effect of adjective type due solely to this imbalance.

ANOVA revealed a significant main effect for helping, $F(1, 46) = 6.15, p < .02$, and an interaction between helping and relationship type that approached significance, $F(1, 46) = 2.61, p < .12$. Neither the main effect for relationship nor the interaction between helping, relationship, and adjective was reliable, both $F_s < 1.05$. Most important for the present purposes, there was a significant interaction between helping and adjective type, $F(1, 46) = 6.01, p < .02$, indicating that the effect of helping on self-evaluations was stronger for close adjectives ($M_s = .65$ for the help condition and $-.23$ for the no help condition) than for far adjectives ($M_s = .11$ for the help condition and $-.23$ for the no help condition). A comparison in the form of a one-tailed t test to determine if, within the helping condition (collapsing across the relationship variable), increases in the close adjectives ($M = .65$) were greater than increases in the far adjectives ($M = .11$) revealed a significant effect, $t(24) = 4.99, p < .0001$. An analogous one-tailed t test for the conditions in which subjects were not allowed to help did not approach significance.

To summarize, in all three studies the general pattern of means for both close and far adjectives was that self-evaluations improved more when subjects had just provided help than when they had not. In two of the three studies, there was evidence for this effect being stronger when adjectives close in meaning to helpful were considered than when adjectives far in meaning from helpful were considered.

General Discussion

Considering first the simple question of whether helping (relative to not being asked to help or to being unable to help) can lead to improvements in moods and self-evaluations, the results of all three studies, combined with results previously reported by other researchers (e.g., Batson et al., 1978, Study 2; Harris, 1977; Thomas et al., 1981; Yinon & Landau, 1987), indicate that the answer is *yes*. As noted earlier in this article, and in other researchers' articles as well, this is an effect that presumably occurs as a result of having been socialized to believe that one is a good person if one helps and having been frequently rewarded for helping.

Furthermore, the present results go beyond those prior results in at least three ways. First, there were some inconsistencies in the prior literature on the effects of providing help on moods and self-evaluations. The present series of studies adds converging evidence in support of the hypotheses that providing help can improve moods and self-evaluations by providing three replications of an effect that had not always been found in previous attempts and also by ruling out some alternative explanations applicable to prior work. Although new alternative explanations can be raised for some of our own results, most of these alternatives seemed unlikely to us, and none can explain the results of all three studies. In particular, although possible effects of performing the task itself might explain Study 1's results, they cannot account for those of Study 2 or 3. Although evaluation apprehension might explain Study 2's results, it cannot explain Study 1's, nor can it explain the interaction between desired relationship type and helping observed in Study 3. Neither can these alternatives explain all of the accumulated evidence reported previously by other researchers in support of the idea that helping improves moods and self-evaluations.

A second contribution of the present research is the finding that these effects are moderated by the type of relationship the helper desires with the help seeker. In Study 3, only when a communal relationship was desired did providing help (relative to not being able to help) lead to improved moods. Moreover, even though helping was associated with improved self-evaluations (relative to not helping) in both the communal and exchange conditions, the difference between the help and no help conditions reached statistical significance only when subjects had been led to desire a communal relationship.

Finally, a third contribution of this work is the marginal evidence from Study 1 and the stronger evidence from Study 3 indicating that the effects on self-evaluations of providing help may be stronger for perceptions of oneself on traits close in meaning to helpful than for perceptions of oneself on other traits. This suggests to us that the effects of helping on self-evaluations are at least partially mediated by self-perception processes (Bem, 1972). Of course, the effects might also be partially mediated by changes in moods that then cue similarly toned material about the self from memory (cf. Clark & Isen, 1982).

Association Between Moods and Self-Evaluations

Although there have been a number of studies relevant to the effects of providing help on moods and self-evaluations, past empirical work dealing with moods has largely been separate from work dealing with self-evaluations. The present findings suggest that the prior literatures on the effects of providing help on moods and on self-evaluations should not necessarily be considered separate literatures. That is, in all three studies providing help had very much the same impact on both moods and self-evaluations, and there were substantial positive correlations between change scores on each of these two variables. In addition, an overall factor analysis on the change scores of the self-evaluation and mood adjectives did not result in clear and distinct self-evaluation and mood factors.

We do not find the close empirical association between these two variables surprising. Although the mood and self-evaluation measures were created to be conceptually distinct, there were a priori reasons for expecting changes in self-evaluations to lead to changes in moods and for expecting changes in moods to lead to changes in self-evaluations. In particular, in much past work, manipulations that should lead to changes in self-evaluations (i.e., giving success or failure feedback) have been used to manipulate moods (see, for instance, Isen, 1970; Clark & Waddell, 1983), because changes in moods are assumed to follow changes in self-evaluations. Moreover, researchers have found that changes in moods can lead to similarly toned changes in self-evaluations (see, for instance, Izard, 1964; Wessman & Ricks, 1966), and several authors have set forth theoretical accounts of processes through which moods may influence self-evaluations (see Bower, 1981; Clark & Isen, 1982; Schwarz & Clore, 1988; and Clark & Williamson, 1989, for a review of a number of such possible processes).

One interesting question for the future is whether providing help ever has divergent effects on these two variables. Study 3's results suggest that it might. In particular, recall that desired relationship type and helping interacted to produce effects on moods such that subjects only felt better as a result of helping when they desired a communal relationship. However, this in-

teraction was not significant for self-evaluations. Instead, unlike moods, helping tended to improve self-evaluations regardless of relationship type. This suggests to us that there may be times when people do not really want to help and do not enjoy helping but may still evaluate themselves positively for having done so. One such time may be when people are situationally induced to help someone with whom they desire an exchange relationship rather than a communal relationship. There may be other times as well. For instance, culture occasionally dictates that communal norms be followed in a relationship even though the desire to do so may be absent. This may occur, for instance, in the case of a genetically close but personally unappealing relative. Such a relative might be provided with help when needed, and self-evaluations might improve as a result. At the same time, moods might not improve and might even deteriorate.

What is it About Providing Help That Elevates Moods and Self-Evaluations?

The present series of studies demonstrated that the act of providing help (relative to not being asked to help or relative to being told that help was needed but could not be provided) can improve moods and self-evaluations, and that this effect may be moderated by desired type of relationship. However, it does not identify what component (or combination of components) of the process of providing help or of being prevented from helping is responsible for these effects. There are several possibilities. One is that simply knowing one has chosen or agreed to help, particularly in the context of a communal relationship, causes one to feel good and think well of oneself. (It may also be that knowing one has chosen not to help or has refused to help causes one to feel worse and to evaluate oneself poorly.) This possibility fits well with some prior work in which merely agreeing to help was associated with improved moods and self-evaluations (e.g., Batson et al., 1978; Thomas et al., 1981). However, it might be argued that this explanation is weakened by Study 1's results, in which improvements in moods and self-evaluations in the agree-no help condition were not significantly (or marginally significantly) greater than in the no request condition. Yet it is possible that in the agree-no help condition of that study, subjects were first pleased by having been asked for help and/or having agreed to help and so experienced improved moods and self-evaluations. Being prevented from helping may then have caused moods to deteriorate. To the extent that moods influence self-evaluations (cf. Forgas & Moylan, 1987), self-evaluations may have deteriorated as well.

Additional possibilities also exist. One is that the *act* of actually providing help, particularly in the context of communal relationships, makes people feel good. Another is that anticipating the other's appreciation and/or positive evaluations of the donor causes moods and self-evaluations to improve. It may also be that anticipating that the help seeker will be disappointed at not receiving help causes moods and self-evaluations to deteriorate. Finally, it may be that knowing the other person has received a benefit, particularly in the context of a communal relationship, makes people feel good, or that knowing the other's needs have not been met causes one to feel badly (although it is difficult to see how this could influence self-evaluations directly). It seems to us that any one of these possibilities (or, more probably, a combination of them) may be responsible

for the elevated moods and improved self-evaluations that follow having helped another relative to what happens when helping has not taken place. Determining the exact components of providing help (and/or not helping) that are actually responsible for the effects of providing help on moods and self-evaluations must await further research.

Summary

This research contributes to a converging body of literature that, taken as a whole, now provides fairly convincing evidence that helping can improve helpers' moods and self-evaluations. In addition, it suggests that the type of relationship the helper desires with the help seeker moderates the effect of helping on moods and perhaps on self-evaluations as well. Exactly what aspects of the process of providing help account for the observed effects remains unclear, as does the question of whether the effects of helping on moods and the effects of helping on self-evaluations can be empirically separated and, if so, in what situations.

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