



The Helping Behavior Helps Lighten Physical Burden

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The Helping Behavior Helps Lighten Physical Burden

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ABSTRACT

It is often believed that helping behaviors benefit the recipients at the expense of the performers. However, we propose that costly helping behaviors could alleviate feelings of physical burden experienced by the performers. In support of the proposal, we found in five studies that both imaginary and real helping behaviors led the performers to perceive physically challenging tasks as less demanding (Studies 1, 2, 3, 5), such as perceiving a steep mountain road as less steep (Study 2), a heavy carton as lighter (Study 4), and a long path as shorter (Study 5). These results challenge the conventional wisdom that helping behaviors always come at the cost of the helper and corroborate a growing body of literature showing that helping others could benefit the performer.

Introduction

The benefits of helping behaviors

The present research

The helping behavior helps lighten feelings of physical burden

Study 1

Method

Participants

$M =$

Results and discussion

Procedure and materials

$a =$

$a =$

$r =$

$=$

$b =$ $R =$

*decide to help my classmate
to keep escaping* *completely
completely decide*

Study 2

not at all *very much*

never exercise *exercise a lot*
very strong *very weak*

all very much not at

Method

Participants

$M =$

Materials and procedure

Results and discussion

$a =$

$g =$

$M =$ $M =$ $SD =$ $d =$
 $SD =$

$=$ SD $=$ M M $=$
 SD

$M =$

Results and discussion

$r =$

$g =$

$M =$ $SD =$
 $M =$ $SD =$

$d =$

$M =$ $SD =$ $M =$ $SD =$

Study 4

Method

Participants

$M =$

Materials and procedure

Method

Participants

$M =$

Procedure

much

not at all *very*

Method

Participants

M =

Materials and procedure

Results and discussion

SD =

M =

SD =

d =

M =

Study 5

Results and discussion

a =

M =

SD =

M =

SD =

$d =$

$M =$ $SD =$

$M =$ $SD =$ $d =$

General discussion

Immediate self-reward of helping behavior

The Selfish Gene

Limitations and future directions

Personality and Social Psychology 55

Journal of Experimental Social Psychology 9

Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 52

Annual Review of Psychology 68

The selfish gene

PloS ONE 8

Psychological

The practical implication

Funding

References

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Review of personality and social psychology: Vol. 12. Prosocial behavior

Psychological Review 84

Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 40

Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 60

Journal of

Altruism in later life

Current Directions in Psychological

Science 15

The

International Journal of Psychophysiology 62

Quarterly Review of Biology 46

International Journal of Behavioral Medicine 12

Cognition 73

Perspectives on Psychological Science 1

Psychological Science 23

Psychological Science 14

Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 98

Polish Psychological Bulletin 11

Experimental

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Brain Research 192

Perception 33

Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 58

and Personality Science 6

Social Psychological

Social Psychological Personality Science 5

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