

**Understanding Intuitive Beliefs About Emotion and Altruism**

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Theories that reject the existence of altruism argue that because benefits, including emotional ones, can serve as an ulterior motive for doing good deeds, they imply selfishness. We find that lay beliefs about the relationship between emotion and altruism reflect the opposite. Specifically, people view emotions as signaling authentic concern for a cause, while lack of emotion generates suspicion. Four studies find that emotion-driven prosocial deeds merit greater charitable credit than the same deeds without emotion. In the eyes of others, logical reasons for giving, such as duty and utilitarian concerns, are insufficient substitutes for feeling emotion. Even when prosocial actors reap emotional benefits, lay people do not penalize them for this unless they are explicitly described as motivated by that selfish benefit. Results suggest that authenticity of motives may be more important than selflessness for judgments of altruism.

**Paying it Forward: Generalized Reciprocity and the Limits of Generosity**

Kurt Gray, Adrian F. Ward, and **Michael I. Norton**

When people are the victims of greed or recipients of generosity, their first impulse is often to pay back that behavior in kind. What happens when people cannot reciprocate, but instead have the chance to be cruel or kind to someone entirely different—to *pay it forward*? In five experiments, participants received greedy, equal, or generous divisions of money or labor from an anonymous person, and then divided additional resources with a new anonymous person. While equal treatment was paid forward in kind, greed was paid forward more than generosity. This asymmetry was driven by negative affect, such that a positive affect intervention disrupted the tendency to pay greed forward. Implications for models of generalized reciprocity are discussed.

## **Conscience Accounting**

Uri Gneezy, **Alex Imas**, and Kristóf Madarász

We report the results of two experiments in which people who first made an unethical choice were then more likely to donate to charity than those who did not. In addition, those who knew that a donation opportunity would follow the potential moral transgression were more likely to behave unethically than those who were not told of the donation option. We interpret this increase in charitable behavior as being driven by a temporal increase in guilt induced by past unethical actions. We develop and test behavioral hypotheses showing that the emotional response to recent unethical behavior acts as a motivator for prosocial behavior and that individuals internalize these responses *ex ante*. Particularly, they are more likely to engage in unethical acts if they know that there will be a limited opportunity to relieve their guilt afterwards. We term such behavior conscience accounting, and discuss its importance in charitable giving.

## **Paying to be Nice: Consistency and Costly prosocial behavior**

**Ayelet Gneezy**, Alex Imas, Leif D. Nelson, Amber Brown, and Michael I. Norton

Building on previous research in economics and psychology, we propose that the costliness of initial prosocial behavior positively influences whether that behavior leads to consistent future behaviors. We suggest that costly prosocial behaviors serve as a signal of prosocial identity and that people subsequently behave in line with that self-perception. In contrast, costless prosocial acts do not signal much about one's prosocial identity, so subsequent behavior is less likely to be consistent and may even show the reductions in prosocial behavior associated with licensing. The results of a laboratory experiment and a large field experiment converge to support our account.