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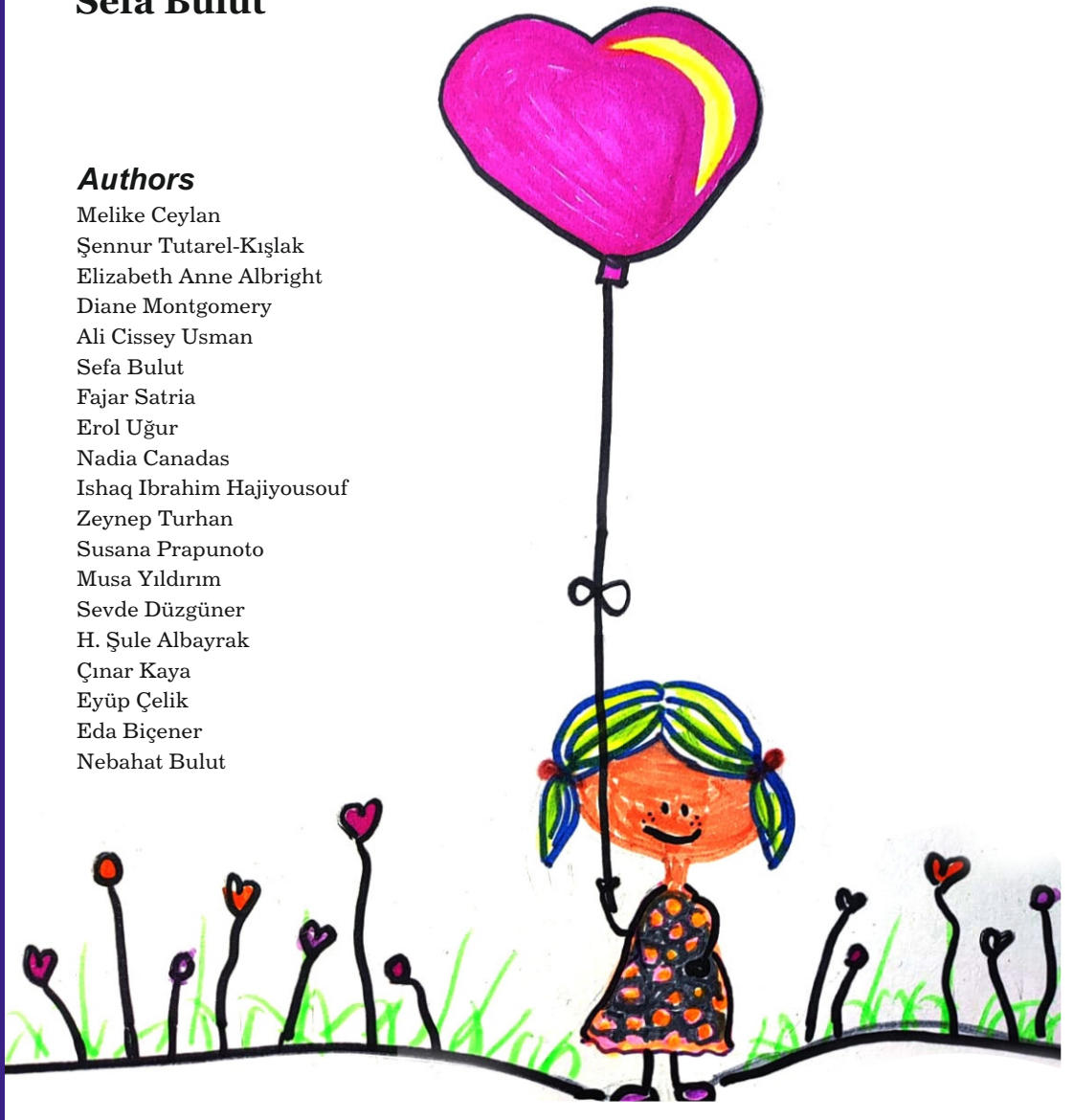

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Altruism in Positive Psychology

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Mother Teresa once shared, “We can do no great things on this earth, only small things with great love.” These small things can be any small acts of kindness and compassion, like stopping by to say hello to an elderly, letting someone pass you in traffic, giving simple gifts, helping a colleague at work, or the vulnerable to fight for their rights despite your being busy.

These actions are behavioral responses of compassion and selflessness that places the interests of others before one’s interests. In other words, a person has to undercut his interest for that of others. Prosocial behavior, altruism, and kindness are values that are often disregarded because altruistic and kind people are viewed as “suckers” and “enablers” with the belief that

success is only achieved by either ignoring or stepping on others. Yet when others are ignored, stepped on, and success is achieved, rarely do the achievers experience true happiness or a sense of love and fulfillment.

Altruism is, therefore, a complex phenomenon that is studied by scholars of diverse academic disciplines, most notably from psychology, biology, evolutionary anthropology, economics, sociology, and philosophy. As almost everyone currently wishes to be an altruist, while others resent the fact that they are not as altruistic as they ought to be, the ambiguity regarding the definition, the benefits, and the scope of altruism are on the rise. Mainly because the term "*altruism*" comprises various concepts across different disciplines.

In this chapter, an attempt is made to investigate the conceptual framework of altruism in the field of biology, psychology, and other related fields, in order to understand the motives that promote altruism. In doing so, we first intend to discuss why the field of positive psychology is interested in altruism and prosocial behavior, followed by why altruism and prosocial behavior are instrumental in many areas.

Introduction

In an everyday sense, altruism or prosocial behavior happens when people try to sacrifice their interests in favor of others. Such kinds of behavior include; supporting those in need, sharing personal resources, sacrificing time, donating blood, volunteering, or collaborating with others to accomplish shared goals. These acts are often honorable "*favors*" given to others without any expectation of a personal reward.

In its common usage, personal interest or motivation is not static, as the term has been used in different ways in an attempt to fit the particular research context in which it is used. Consequently, this has created major confusion. For instance, in the field of economics, the term altruism is often associated with a costly act that confers some economic benefits on other people (Clavien & Chapuisat, 2012). In a typical biological sense, altruism refers to any behavior that reduces personal reproduction capacity and in psychology, the term is often measured based on intentions and motivations rather than the cost associated.

It is therefore fair to wonder whether all these disciplines are trying to discuss the same phenomenon. If so, why is positive psychology interested in such a phenomenon? And what is the relevance of this phenomenon to one's psychological wellbeing or desire to optimize one's positive emotions and reduce the negative ones?

The Importance of Altruism and Prosocial Behavior in Positive Psychology.

The key goal of positive psychology is to help individuals and societies to succeed and flourish by highlighting human fortitude and moral virtue that makes life worth living (Froh, 2004). Highlighting the conditions that necessitate human success and flourishing, largely depends on individual perspectives. One may ask, what is necessary for an individual's wellbeing and flourishing? Or what is necessary for a community's and society's wellbeing and flourishing?

From an individualistic perspective, wellbeing and finding meaning in life is a personal need (Heintzelman &

King, 2014), that is associated with long-life, good health, and reduced depressive and anxiety symptoms (Krause, 2009; Taylor, Kemeny, Reed, Bower, & Gruenewald, 2000). In contrast, these factors can be considered from a societal perspective, by highlighting conditions such as prosocial behavior as a fundamental societal need (Nadav, 2017) because it is a behavior that is critical in building trust and cooperation in complex societies (Henrich et al., 2011). Altruism is thus an important phenomenon in the quest to produce positive attributes like happiness, courage, and love, which are essential for people to overcome their adversities.

Skimming through the wealth of research on a broader perspective of altruism or prosocial behavior predicts that helping others can elevate the sense of meaning in life and being kind can increase happiness (Nelson et al., 2015; Pressman, Kraft, & Cross, 2015). At this point, it is paramount to ask, "why is positive psychology so invested in the concept of altruism?"

As simple as it may seem, almost all of us can recall the pledges and commitments we have made to ensure future prosocial actions. Either a plan to build a home for the homeless or a plan to donate money that will benefit others. Recent research on behavioral science has predicted that people are happier to help family, friends, community members, and strangers only under certain conditions. This has reignited a growing interest in altruism for its role in boosting subjective wellbeing, especially in the field of positive psychology. Subjective Well-Being (SWB) is a complex concept that incorporates the perception of multiple dimensions of life (Symeonidou, Moraitou, Pezirkianidis, & Stalikas, 2018). It consists of a person's cognitive and affective evaluations of life (Diener,

Oishi, & Lucas, 2002). The cognitive domain measures how an individual thinks about his life satisfaction in a broader perspective (e.g., work, relationships, past, present, future, etc.) (Albuquerque, 2017; Dierner, Oishi, & Lucas, 2009). The affective domain, on the other hand, measures the prevalence of positive affect over negative affect (Albuquerque, 2017)

It is worth emphasizing that there is no single clear determinant of SWB, and yet it is viewed by Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) as a conceptual object with no concrete or observable existence but can be deduced from its elements. This has posed some concerns over the possibility of such approaches being structured to boost or improve people's sense of well-being. For now, within the field of positive psychology, Positive Psychology Interventions (PPIs) have been introduced in an attempt to boost people's sense of wellbeing. Positive psychology interventions are deliberate practices aimed at promoting optimistic feelings, and behaviors (Sin & Lyubomirksy, 2009). These deliberate practices have refocused attention on humanity as a character strength, for humanity is a virtue and intrapersonal trait that people display when they socialize with others (Symeonidou, Moraitou, Pezirkianidis, & Stalikas, 2018). Within humanity as a character strength, kindness constitutes one of the intrapersonal traits and virtues (Donaldson, Csikszentmihalyi, & Nakamura, 2011; Schwartz, Quaranto, & Gray, 2013). These can be defined as positive characteristics that resonate with one's feelings, thoughts, and behaviors (Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2004).

Kindness as an attribute is characterized by compassion, generosity, altruism, and caring. It also

reflects the possibility of being caring, compassionate, and doing benevolent deeds without necessarily expecting returned benefits. The idea is that spontaneous acts of kindness should improve the well-being of not only the recipients, but also that of the actors, and this will offer an easy, efficient, affordable, and readily accessible means of solving social issues, stretching from social isolation to more severe mental and physical health conditions. (Aked & Thompson, 2011; Aked, Marks, Cordon, & Thompson, 2008).

Additionally, the interest in kindness is viewed by Lee Rowland (2018) as a combination of several developments. First, the evidence suggests that both empathy and altruism are innate and emerges as early as childhood. Second, people are overwhelmed by negative news that they crave for some positive news. Third, altruism and kindness are vital interventions to ensure that people stay positive and hopeful in the wake of political, economic, and environmental challenges.

The Power and Benefits of Altruism

Workplace burnout, job dissatisfaction, high blood pressure, craving for good news, and anxiety disorders are all major issues in today's society. What if altruism, prosocial spending, and acts of kindness are the cure?

Positive attributes like altruism, kindness, and prosocial behaviors are increasingly being practiced among people. This is in part due to the growing attempts to bring notice to the concept of altruism, which has further led to the establishment of 'random acts of kindness' weeks or related programs. This movement is an effort on stressing the importance of being an altruist or practicing kindness.

Besides, a series of interesting research results report that caring for the welfare of others and prosocial spending do not only promote oxytocin release in humans but also act as a contributing factor to human happiness across various domains. Studies on kindness and prosocial spending have found out that:

- **Kindness reduces the state of social anxiety**: One approach that can improve social avoidance and anxiety is to perform an act of kindness. The prosocial motivation underlying kindness and generosity makes these distinctive from other social experiences. Consequently, kindness and generosity are good techniques in happiness interventions, which are instrumental in increasing well-being levels (Buchanan and Bardi 2010). Despite people being motivated to achieve positive outcomes through their social engagements, engaging in acts of kindness and generosity promotes positive outcomes more so than other methods. That is, kindness and generosity can strengthen social ties, encourage social engagement, and expand social networks (Kurtz & Lyubomirsky 2008)

  Moreover, by promoting the welfare of others, it boosts the likelihood of positive interactions which help to fight negative social experiences such as rejection, perception of threat, and avoidance. Consistent with this, socially anxious participants who engage in any acts of kindness for 4 weeks were reported to have displayed a significant decrease in their social avoidance goals (Alden and Trew, 2013). It was then concluded that engaging in any act of kindness, or prosocial behavior is an effective means of reducing the level

of social anxiety as well as a possible intervention in increasing positive affect.

- **Prosocial spending is good for the heart:** Given the fact that heart disease is the leading cause of mortality globally, and that blood pressure constitutes one of the main factors that put people at a greater risk of cardiac arrest, there is evidence to suggest that prosocial spending or stingy economic decision may have subsequential consequences for cortisol release, a primary stress hormone that is produced in case of danger (Dunn, Ashton-James, Hanson, & Aknin, 2010). Notable longitudinal research has revealed that acts of kindness and providing social support for others are associated with a significant decline in the mortality risk among adults (Brown, Nesse, Vinokur & Smith, 2003). Further, people who volunteer at least four hours weekly were reported as being less prone to develop high blood pressure for four years (Sneed & Cohen, 2013).
- **Altruism increases wellbeing and happiness:** By far, the most common approaches in determining whether altruism increases wellbeing and happiness are prosocial spending and acts of kindness. In a study by Dunn and colleagues (2008), participants were given either $20 or $5 and asked to spend the money. Those in the prosocial spending group were asked to spend the money on someone else or donate it to charity. In the end, regardless of the amount, those who spent the money on others reported higher post-spending happiness compared to those who spent it on themselves.

- Similarly, in a close-knit community, participants were randomly given money and assigned to either purchase candy for themselves or family and friends. Those who opted to purchase candy for their friends and family reported an increase in positive affect (Aknin, Broesch, Hamlin, & Van de Vondervoort, 2015). In addition to this, engaging in positive activities like acts of kindness and gratitude was reported to enhance wellbeing by increasing positive emotions and decreasing negative emotions (Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2013). When people perform an act of kindness for others, they create more opportunities to experience a positive state of mind by encouraging love, trust, and positive emotions within that relationship (Dunn & Schweitzer, 2005)
- Besides, prior research findings on wellbeing also suggest that altruistic behaviors contribute to existential well-being like life satisfaction (Lawton, Moss, Winter, & Hoffman, 2002), as people are likely to feel proud of helping someone in need. By focusing on the needs of others, people experience fewer negative emotions such as fear, guilt, sadness, and anxiety (Nelson, Layous, Cole & Lyubomirsky, 2016). Helping behaviors are also viewed as proactive means of coping with normative stressors that are associated with aging (Kahana, Kelley-Moore, & Kahana, 2012).
- **Kindness promotes team spirit and glimpsing at the workplace:** Acts of kindness and prosocial behavior are important and essential to the workplace as well. Altruism and prosocial behavior act as a buffer against emotional exhaustion and work burnout (Grant & Sonnentag, 2010). These behaviors promote empathy, creativity, and proper perspective-taking (Grant & Berry, 2011).

> Moreover, being at the receiving end of any act of kindness at work translated to experiencing care, support, and thoughtfulness. As a result, a key outcome of these behaviors is the likelihood of it increasing the feelings of connectedness and team spirit.

Similarly, recipients of kindness and prosocial acts may interpret it as validating their competence. For example, in fostering productivity and group cohesion, choosing to either praise or offer gifts to the employees for their contribution to a group project may be interpreted as an explicit endorsement of their ability for acting appropriately in the past and encouraging their autonomy in the future.

Definition of Altruism

Generally, the term altruism sometimes refers to any behavior that benefits others, regardless of its motive (Zaki & Mitchell, 2013). Altruism is also seen as an unselfish concern or behavior that promotes the welfare of another person or an organism with no personal reward in mind. This definition forms the basis of psychological discourse on altruism. However, to the biologist, altruism is any interest or action that fosters the welfare of another individual or organism at a personal cost (Dougherty, 2017). This view specifies that in every altruistic act, there is an element of cost and benefit.

The concept of "altruism" in the field of sociology is often used to study why certain people risk or endanger their life and wellbeing for others. This sociological underpinning of the concept gave birth to norms of reciprocity that are being studied by economic sociologists interested in human cooperation within social or group networks (Zevallos, 2011).

Conceptual Framework of Altruism

While the field of science argues that altruism is self-benefiting, the field of genetics claim that it is derived from a behavioral trait that has withstood environmental pressures. Furthermore, the field of theology considers altruism as evidence of Godly influence that mitigates humanity from being classified as phylogenetic lineages (Dougherty, 2017). Nevertheless, let's start by trying to understand altruism in evolutionary terms. This concept will then be unwrapped across the field of psychology in more detail as it progresses.

In the evolutionary context, theories like kin selection, inclusive fitness, group selection, and the theory of reciprocal altruism all try to explain altruism as a sacrificial act that has a certain cost and benefit. First, the theory of kin selection suggests that altruistic genes may have evolved through a collaboration between individuals with similar genes, such as with relatives for example. Whereas, the theory of inclusive fitness argues that genetic fitness is a product of the several offspring an individual can produce and the altruistic behaviors that encourage offspring production (Marshall, 2016).

However, group selection theory also establishes that the early days of man and animals were all about competition over limited resources. These competitions lead to tribal affiliations wherein individuals would group together to have an advantage while competing with others. For this reason, self-sacrificing behaviors within groups were seen as altruistic acts whereas the same behavior between groups was seen as selfish or competitive (Dougherty, 2017). The theory of reciprocal altruism, which is mostly explained as a sociobiological construct, also suggests that an individual depicts a

behavior with personal risk and associates it with a possible return of benefit from the other (Dougherty, 2017).

To sum up, according to the evolutionary context altruism is a self-sacrificing action that increases the likelihood that the genes of an individual will be represented in the next generation (Niall & Jonathan, 2009; Warneken, 2015). Evolutionary altruism is all about the reproductive consequences of behavior and is not interested in the motivations or psychological mechanism per se, but the propensity to behave in a way that benefits others in terms of genetic reproduction or fitness. This reproductive fitness is made possible by the existence of altruistic genes in humans/organisms that depend largely on cooperation (Numan, 2015). In the evolutionary sense, gene survival is more valued compared to individual survival (Gardner, 2015). Therefore, individuals are more likely to act altruistically if it will benefit the survival of a relative that carries their gene at the expense of their survival, whereas individuals who lack genes that are willing to foster cooperative behavior are less likely to produce offspring who may terminate their lineage.

Indeed, altruistic behavior in the evolutionary sense is a bitter pill to swallow because an organism reduces its reproductive capacity and increases the reproductive capacity of those who are recipients of such behavior. The key point to remember in this approach is that altruism is defined in terms of fitness consequences, not motivational intentions. For this reason, some of the most typical examples of evolutionary altruism are found among creatures that are not capable of conscious thought (Okasha, 2003). This notion, therefore, cannot be equated with an everyday vernacular sense of altruism.

Contrary to evolutionary altruism and the fact that evolutionary altruism is neither sufficient nor rich in its explanation of altruism or prosocial behaviors (Sober & Wilson, 1998), psychological altruism is based on intentions rather than action. For this reason, to define and understand altruism, it is important to distinguish it from its opposite "egoism" (Dambrun & Ricard, 2011) because both altruism and egoism are driven by two separate motives (others versus self). Egoism is based on the argument that people are often deeply driven by what they consider to be in their best interest (Chase, 2020).

According to Ross (2011), this interest is built within the framework of hedonism and altruism. Hedonism tends to focus on value and wellbeing, believing that only pleasure is necessary whereas pain is not valuable (Dan, 2020). In other words, constant and continuous judgment is required in evaluating different actions because of the resulting pleasure or pain. Altruism, on the other hand, has had varying conceptualized definitions (Ross, 2011). Out of these varying definitions, most center on helping others and striving for the greater good or the reward (Ramayah, Lee, & Mohamad, 2010; Ross, 2011) or engaging in an activity with the ultimate altruistic motive (Chase, 2020).

Notwithstanding the complicated nature and varying factors that influence both egoism and altruism, a possible means of understanding these concepts is testing them in situations by applying the key points that differentiate them. For example, supposing Jackson saved Ella from a burning apartment, what motivated him in such an act? It is strange to assume that Jackson did so to benefit from the potential reward of his actions. However, psychological egoism believes that Jackson's altruistic act is motivated by his desire to benefit himself, whether

knowingly or not. It might be that Jackson wanted to be a hero or avoid social reprimand. If so, Jackson's altruistic act is driven by selfish motives with the intrinsic goal being his well-being rather than that of Ella (Batson et al., 2007).

The distinguishing clause between evolutionary and psychological altruism is how they are used in an everyday sense. Psychological altruism is not essentially all about reproductive benefit and cost, whereas evolutionary altruism is the exact opposite (Sober 1998). Psychological altruism is the kind of altruism that is mostly linked with human behavior and is particularly concerned about the motivations and dispositions behind such human acts. Psychological altruism is what positive psychology seeks to promote as it, directly and indirectly, benefits both the doer and the recipient.

Factors That Promotes Altruism and Prosocial Behaviors

There is an affirmation that infants as young as 18 months assist others to obtain out-of-reach items and even in opening cabinets (Warneken & Tomasello, 2009). They engage in such behaviors without prior knowledge of concepts such as morality, rewards, reputation, culture, and reciprocation, and even without encouragement from adults. Human altruism is often associated with concepts like empathy, culture, religion, reciprocity, and social-relatedness, given these factors affect altruistic behaviors.

Empathic Feelings

Empathy is described as understanding another person's experience by imagining oneself in their situation and

experiencing it as if it were being experienced by the self. The Empathy-altruism hypothesis proposes that feelings and emotions of empathy are the motivating factors underlying altruistic motivation (Batson, Lishner & Stock., 2015). The main argument here is that empathy is defined by feelings of compassion, sympathy, and tenderness. These emotional states encourage interest in the welfare of others.

In a nutshell, empathy produces emotional states that become an important mechanism, that promotes or inhibits certain behaviors in a manner that increases the human urge for survival. For example, just as fear may lead to avoidance of dangerous situations and anger induces aggressive behavior, empathy plays a crucial role in inducing prosocial behavior (Decety, Bartal, Uzefovsky, & Knafo-Noam, 2015).

In the views of Decety and colleagues (2015), witnessing others in distress can induce aversive affective arousal. When this arousal is deemed appropriate depending on the context a prosocial drive is triggered (Decety et al., 2015). This is because empathic individuals are more likely to behave in a prosocial manner or share resources with others. After all, they are sensitive to the needs of others in distress. (Eisenberg, Fabes, & Spinrad, 2006; Stern & Cassidy, 2018). To such individuals, helping others may be rewarding, given various studies have shown that observing others in distress and pain can induce aversive negative affective arousal and physiological stress (Lamm, Decety, & Singer, 2011).

Internalized Norms and Principles

Humans are extremely sensitive to social norms, and theories claim that norms are necessary predictors of human forms of prosocial behaviors. Understanding how

norms affect prosocial behavior is therefore important. As social beings, we respond to what others in our society are doing, and what society believes we ought to do to avoid sanctions for failing to comply (Richerson et al, 2016). The normative theory proposes that prosocial behaviors are sometimes influenced by the feelings of moral obligation to act because of personal norms and values (Feigin, Owens, & Goodyear-Smith, 2014). These moral obligations are influenced by shared expectations about situational appropriateness that varies from individuals to individuals (Schwartz & Howard, 1981). People in this regard act prosocial because they perceive it as an appropriate thing to do either due to their own previous experience or by observing others (Dovidio & Penner, 2004).

If social norms inspire prosocial behavior, then it shapes development throughout life. Human prosocial behavior takes shape as early as infancy (Hamlin, 2013) and progresses through early childhood and adolescence (House, 2016). Social norms begin to influence prosocial behaviors in middle childhood (House, 2018). This is when social variation in acts of fairness and prosocial behavior emerges (House, 2016; Blake et al., 2015). However, during adolescence and adulthood when social norms are internalized, emotions play a key role in how norms motivate prosocial behaviors. This is because violations of social norms evoke the feeling of shame, especially when the violations are observed and evaluated by others (House, 2018).

Social Relatedness and Connectedness

Prosocial behavior to some degree is closely related to the extent to which an individual depends on a given relationship. If there were ever a single avenue in which

an individual is expected to ignore self-interest and act for the benefit of others, then it will be within a close personal relationship because commitment in any interpersonal relationship promotes certain behavior patterns. It is suggested that the need for relatedness and the desire to interact with others usually motivate prosocial behavior, particularly among younger children (Warneken, 2015).

However, prosocial behavior is not just an inevitable outcome of every relationship, for there should be certain factors that promote the tendency to put a partner's interest above the self (Schroeder, Graziano, Agnew, & Le, 2015). For sociable individuals, social interaction is gratifying, and the motivation for assisting others is the desire for social interactions and closeness (Eisenberg, VanSchyndel, & Spinrad, 2016).

Negative-State Relief

According to the "Negative-State Relief model" an individual may display prosocial behaviors as a result of certain situational factors. These situational factors, such as witnessing distressing and painful events, increase the willingness to help others (Batson, 1991). However, even in such situations, empathy is still a prerequisite if the doer is to experience the affective emotions of the person in distress. The willingness to help then is either because of the negative emotional arousal experienced when witnessing someone in pain or distress (Dovidio, 2004) or an attempt to improve one's self-esteem due to guilt (Salovey, Mayer & Rosenhan, 1991).

Religion and Faith

While many religious people claim that the influence of religion has instilled in them the sense of prosocial

behavior, others claim it has made them better people. The influence of religion on social behaviors is considered to be ambivalent (Philpott, 2007), as religion sets out norms and values for social behaviors, thereby promoting unity and altruism (Johnson, 2015). Religious ideologies can also impose religious norms, thus discriminating against non-followers (Obaidi et al. 2018).

Regardless of these divert views, many studies found that religious people are more feasible to help and assist others, especially with regards to volunteering and charitable giving (Wiepking, Bekkers, & Osili 2014; Bekkers & Wiepking 2011). This is because religious ideologies influence people's values and norms and facilitate the development of an internal mechanism to feel the need to help others. In line with this, religious engagements also provide a good social network in which people are constantly reminded to help others, which therefore elicits an expectation to comply with such requests (Bekkers and Wiepking 2011). The desire to comply with such expectations is mostly driven by the belief that altruism towards humanity is altruism towards the force behind all creatures. For example, the Christian story of the "Good Samaritan" and the Sufism concept of "I'thar" are all forms of love that are experienced when one increases the joy in others.

Culture Influence

Altruism is fueled or hindered by our experience with socialization, and these experiences differ across societies. Since human values have a strong impact on the manifestations of altruism (Schwartz, 2010) and these manifestations are shaped by culture, it appears that there is a high chance that expressions of prosocial behaviors will differ largely from one cultural

setting to another. In an attempt to understand this, the role of culture in altruism has been studied vastly. As a result, Research has confirmed that the extent and manifestations of prosocial behavior are determined by culture (Henrich, 2015). Apart from culture per se, human demographic attributes such as age, gender, family dynamics (collectivist or individualistic), region (rural or urban) have also been credited to either boost or hinder altruistic behaviors (Ricard, 2015; Draguns, 2013).

Moreover, Daniel and colleagues (2015) also found that prosocial behaviors such as helping others differed across Scotland, United Kingdom, Germany, Turkey, and Israel, and these behaviors are found to be strongly related to cultural values (Schwartz, 2010). Apart from these findings, several studies have also demonstrated that national cultural values can foster variation in prosocial behaviors compared to economical and human development factors. For example, Luria and colleagues (2015) found that the degree to which individuals in a given society are tied together positively correlated with their prosocial behaviors, and the degree of power distance, uncertainty, and long time-orientation was negatively correlated with their prosocial behaviors.

The reasons why national cultural values influence prosocial behavior were also addressed by Winterich and Zhang (2014). They argued that high power distance in society may minimize the perceived obligation of individuals to help the vulnerable. This is why individuals in societies with embedded values, like collectivist societies, tend to value the welfare of others, especially family and in-group members, over their own (Knafo, Schwartz & Levine, 2009). This is because people in such societies aim to work for the betterment of society as a whole and not just for themselves.

Types of Altruism

Kin-based or Nepotistic Altruism

This form of altruism hinges on the propensity of humans and other species to exhibit preferential treatment towards individuals with stronger genetic similarities to their own. Nepotistic altruism is when an individual acts altruistically towards close relatives (Clavien & Chapuisat, 2012). This altruistic tendency is best explained by the concept of inclusive fitness. Inclusive fitness argues that an altruistic behavior will emerge when its beneficiaries are close relatives of the altruist. This implies that the degree to which an individual is likely to perform an altruistic act that will benefit a close family relative is stronger compared to others.

Care-based Altruism

Parental care has become a normal phenomenon that we usually fail to see as an altruistic act. Care-based altruism is a type of behavior that is meant to enhance the welfare of vulnerable individuals. Mammals' intensive treatment for their vulnerable offspring is an important example of care-based altruism, as the survival of their offspring largely depends on the constant care and protective vigilance of their parents (in most cases mothers). Depending on the species, parental care often includes: providing food, heating, cleaning, and protecting against predators (Preston, 2013).

Group or Parochial Altruism

Group alliance is an important concept in human society and it exists at various levels of human social relationships, ranging from community groups, associations, culture, and ethnic groups, an adherent of the same faith or

religion, nations, regions, etc. All these forms of groups according to Wilson (2002) are known to promote group cohesion. Group or parochial altruism is a form of altruism that is aimed at optimizing and promoting the welfare of a group or an act that gives preference for favoring the members of one's group.

Pathological Altruism

Pathological altruism includes subjective altruistic acts that are inherently antisocial. The core principle of pathological altruism rests on behaviors that are focused on the inability to process a broad range of information required to make rational informed decisions that align with cultural principles associated with altruistic behavior (Oakley, 2013). Pathological altruism can also be conceived as actions in which an attempt is made to promote the welfare of others, which unfortunately leads to more harm (Oakley, 2013).

Let's say your friend is getting addicted to painkillers. Whenever he struggles through withdrawal, you help him get more painkillers to feel better. Genuinely, you are trying to help your friend, but the reality is that you are encouraging his addiction and for this reason your altruistic act is pathological. Pathological altruism can emerge from a mixture of factors that are religious, philosophical, ideological, cultural biases, or misinterpretations, that pose a conflict with subjective ideas.

Reciprocal Altruism

Reciprocal altruism is a form of altruism that follows the popular rule "Treat others as you like to be treated" (Zwick & Fletcher, 2013). Reciprocal altruism is common among in-group members such as distant family relatives, colleagues, and friends (Clavien & Chapuisat,

2012). In reciprocal altruism, the motivation is always to return expectations. That is, the recipient is expected to act similarly or reciprocate the act to the altruist in the future (Clavien & Chapuisat, 2012).

How Altruism and Prosocial Behaviors Can Be Promoted

Across all human organizations, the administrators want to encourage altruism and prosocial behaviors. However, the development of altruism or prosocial behavior is a complex task as people have to balance their interests with the interest of others. The good news is that people tend to act more altruistic, cooperative, and supportive when their mood is positive.

For that reason, within the context of day-to-day interactions, the most frequently identified triggers of altruistic motivation have been empathy, even though sometimes empathy can lead to emotional burnout (Batson, Ahmad, & Lishner, 2011). Empathetic feelings trigger the desire to help others even in situations where helping should have desisted. Thus, to foster altruism and prosocial behaviors, it is advantageous to nurture empathy, notably via procedures that constrain emotional contagion.

A notable example of such a practice is the loving-kindness meditation (LKM). LKM requires the concentration of attention and the internal development of authentic and warm positive emotions. Recent meta-analyses studies have shown that LKM interventions improve wellbeing and health (Galante, Bekkers, & Gallacher, 2014) and positive emotions (Zeng, Chiu, Wang, Oei & Leung, 2015). Loving-kindness meditation has also been reported to increase compassion, altruistic behavior (Weng et al, 2013; Klimecki, Leiberg, Lamm, & Singer, 2013), and empathy (Leppma & Young, 2016).

Conclusion

Although altruism is valued and loved by everyone, we now know quite a lot more about altruism than we did before. In this chapter, we started by attempting to understand why positive psychology is fascinated with altruism, followed by the interdisciplinary conceptual framework of altruism. We highlighted the craving for good news as a starting factor among others, as to why positive psychology seeks to promote altruism.

On factors that promote altruism and prosocial behaviors, there is experimental evidence to suggest that internalized norms, negative state relief, empathy, and social connectedness among others are powerful determinants of altruism and prosocial behaviors.

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