

Lecture 12

Prosocial Behavior

When was the last time you helped someone else out?

What was your motive for helping?

What is the most expensive thing that was ever given to you?

Was the person who gave it a relative?

Have you ever helped a complete stranger, or been helped by one?

Altruism Defined

A motive to increase another's welfare without conscious regard for one's self-interests

Examples: Jumping in a lake to save a drowning child, calling in a domestic dispute, and less heroic acts like teaching for low pay, donating money, etc.

Prosocial Behavior motivated by Altruism

We are particularly interested in prosocial *behavior* motivated by altruism: the desire to help another person even if it involves a cost to the helper

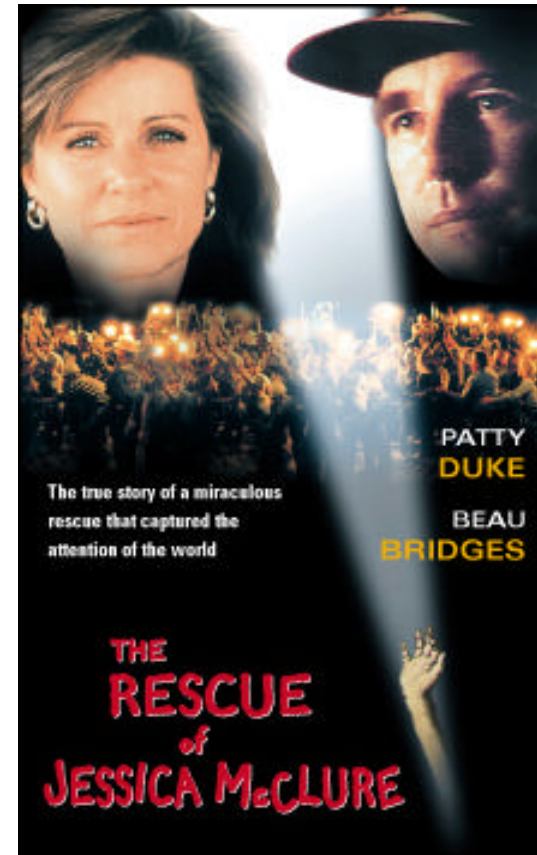
Acting with no thought as to what you will get in return: even willing to sacrifice (incur a cost)

Example

Baby Jessica



In 1987, 18-month-old Jessica McClure fell down a water well in a backyard in Midland, Texas in 1987. Literally hundreds of volunteers worked around the clock to free her. The undying spirit that surrounded her rescue was truly amazing. Why did these people help? Were they truly concerned for Jessica's well-being?



Think about your motivations



Outline

Goals of Prosocial Behavior

Improving Our Basic Welfare:

Gaining Genetic and Material Benefits

Gaining Social Status and Approval

Managing Self-Image

Managing Our Moods and Emotions

Does Pure Altruism Exist?

Improving Our Basic Welfare

Gaining Genetic and
Material Benefits

Insights into the Evolution of Help

Inclusive fitness –

the ability of one's genes to survive
in one's own offspring **AND** in any
relatives one helps

Helping a close relative promotes the
survival of those genes.

Evolutionary Psychology

Natural selection favors genes that promote the survival of the individual

Ultimate Goal: Get as many of our genes as possible into the next generation

Translation: Protect your relatives!!!!

Evolutionary Psychology: attempt to explain social behavior in terms of genetic factors that evolved over time according to natural selection

But how does it explain helping strangers?

Kin Selection

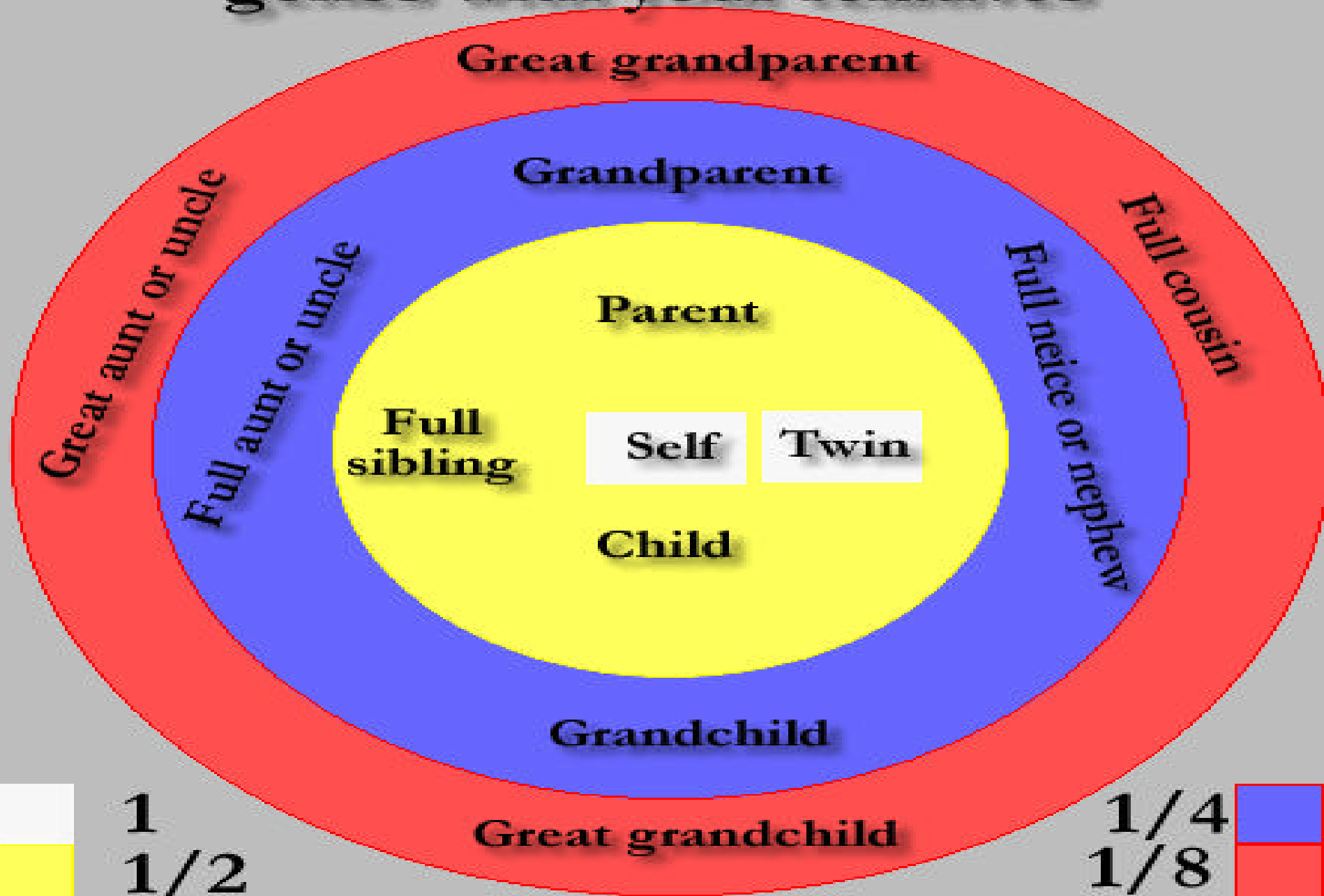
J.B.S. Haldane said he: “would sacrifice himself for three brothers or nine cousins.

Benefits/Costs > 1/degree relationship.

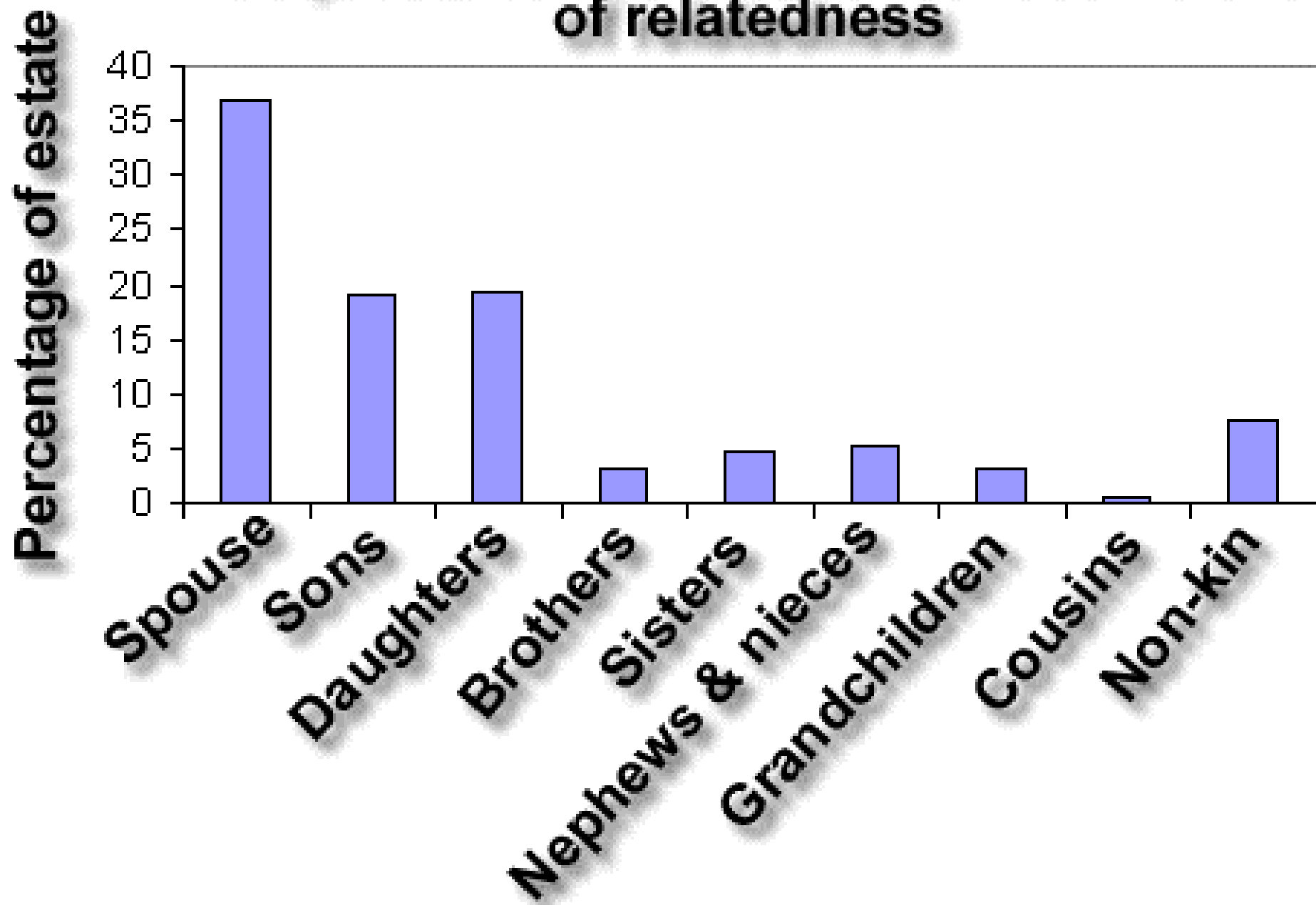
Example: Do I help my sister get a date?

one husband / 1,000 dollars > 1/.5 [2]

You share a proportion of your genes with your relatives



Bequests to relatives reflect coefficient of relatedness





Genetic Relatedness and Helping

Would you lend your car to your brother?

What about your grandfather?

What about a cousin?

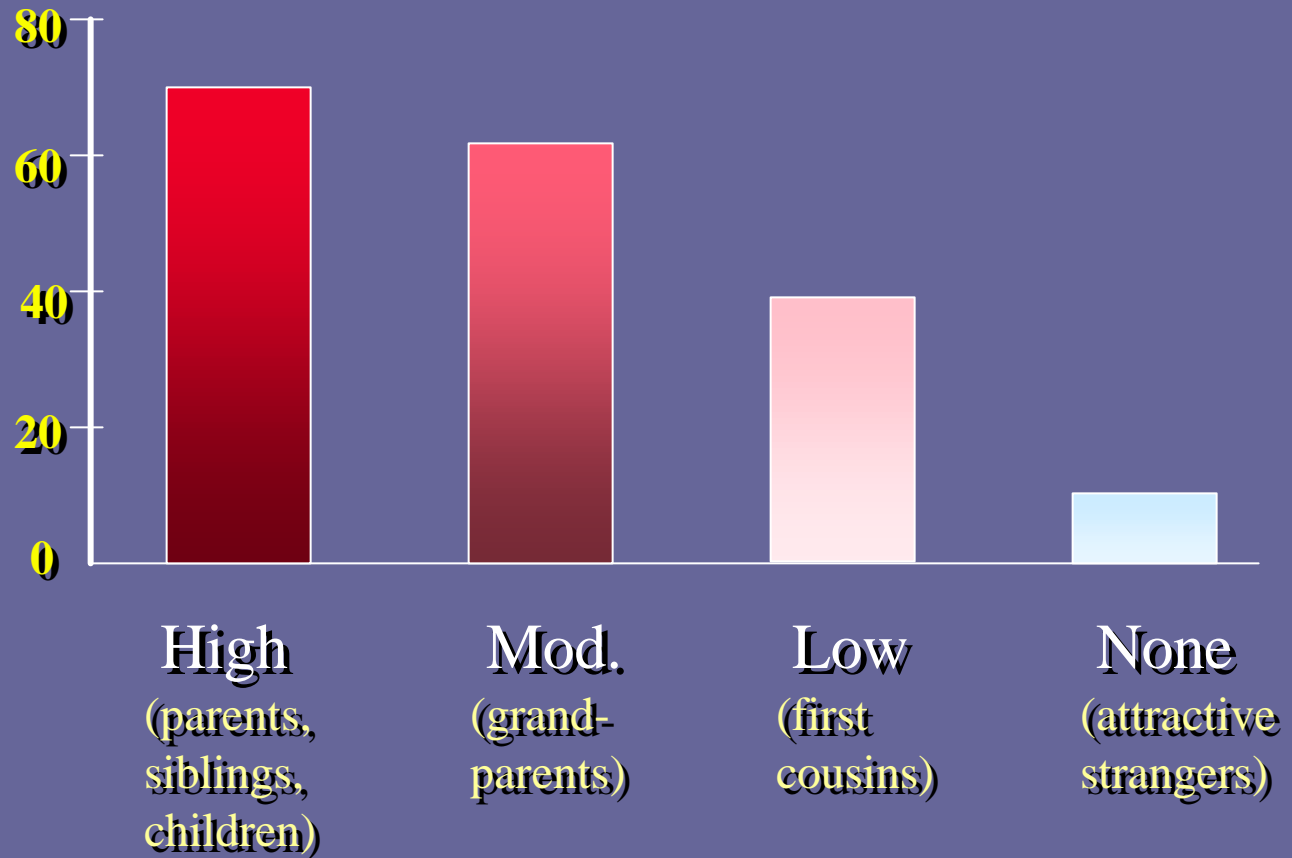
What about an attractive stranger?

Michael Cunningham and his colleagues asked people whether they would be willing to help other people in different situations.

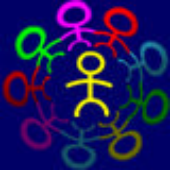




Percentage
Volunteering
to Help



Degree of Relatedness



Genetic Similarity and Need

The tendency to help relatives is stronger when the help is more related to survival.

Participants in one series were asked to imagine scenarios like the following:





Genetic Similarity and Need

There are three people asleep in
different rooms of a burning house:

A cousin

A grandfather

An acquaintance.

You have time to rescue only one.

Which do you save?



Genetic Similarity and Need

There are three people who need you
to run a small errand to the store:

A cousin

A sister

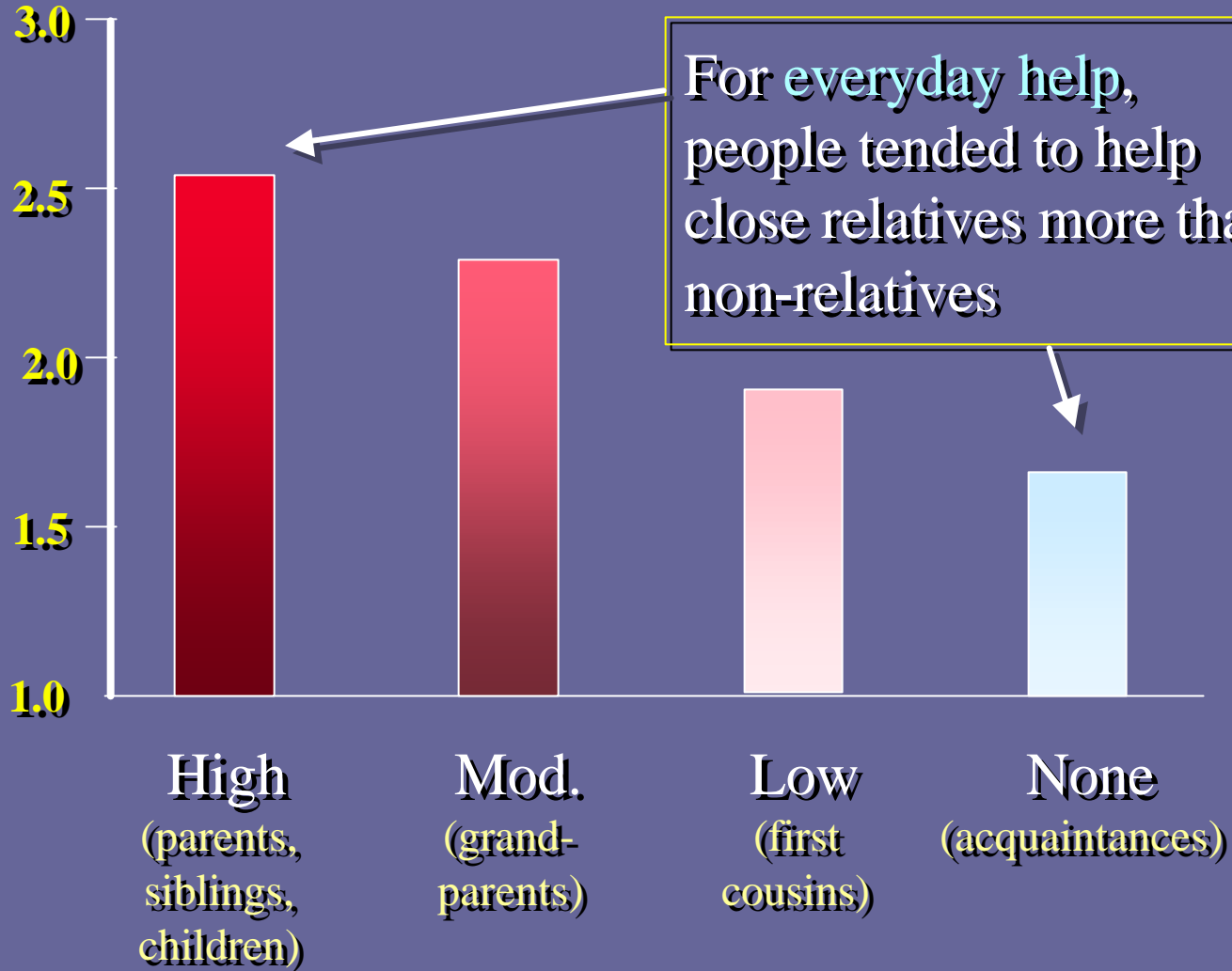
An acquaintance.

You have time to help only one.

Whose errand do you run?



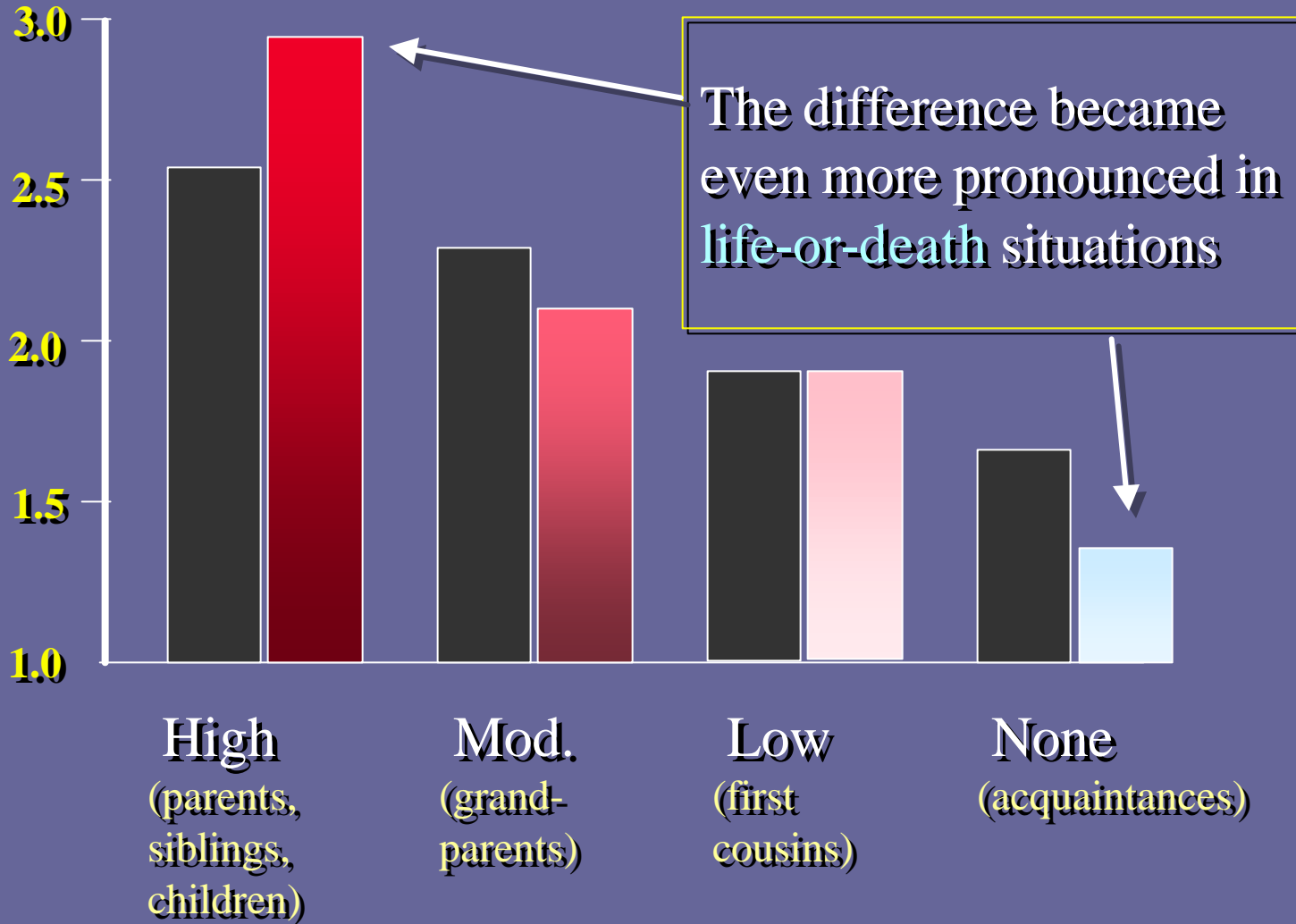
Tendency to Help



Degree of Relatedness



Tendency to Help



Degree of Relatedness

Insights into the Evolution of Help

Reciprocal aid –

help that occurs in return for prior help

Other animals will help non-relatives if they live in close proximity and can better survive by sharing.

People working for organizations who provide more benefits work harder for the firm.



Learning to Help: Instilled Beliefs

Students who have studied economics, and learned the principle of self-interest:

Are less likely to contribute to charities
(Frank, Gilovich, & Regan, 1993)

Are more likely to exploit a partner in a bargaining game (Maxwell & Ames, 1981)

Are more likely to negotiate for a lopsided payment (Kahneman et al., 1986).



Expanded Sense of “We”

Children exposed to others of different ethnic and religious backgrounds later develop a feeling of “we-ness” with the larger human family (Piliavin et al., 1981).

European Gentiles who helped Jews escape from Nazis were exposed to more different ethnicities growing up than were non-helpers (Oliner & Oliner, 1988).

Gaining Social Status and Approval

Social Responsibility: The Helping Norm

Social responsibility norm –
societal rule that people should help
those who need their assistance

Bystanders As Sources of Help

Bystander effect –

the tendency of a bystander to be less likely to help in an emergency if there are other onlookers present

Bystanders As Sources of Help

Diffusion of responsibility –

the tendency for each group member to dilute personal responsibility for acting by spreading it among all other group members

Example: Bystanders to an emergency may assume someone else will call the police.

When will we help?



- Kitty Genovese and the alley in which she was murdered. Ironically, she would probably be alive today had fewer people heard her desperate cries for help.

Kitty Genovese

In the early 1960's, in Queens, she was attacked and killed in the alley of an apartment complex

She was raped and murdered, all the while screaming for help

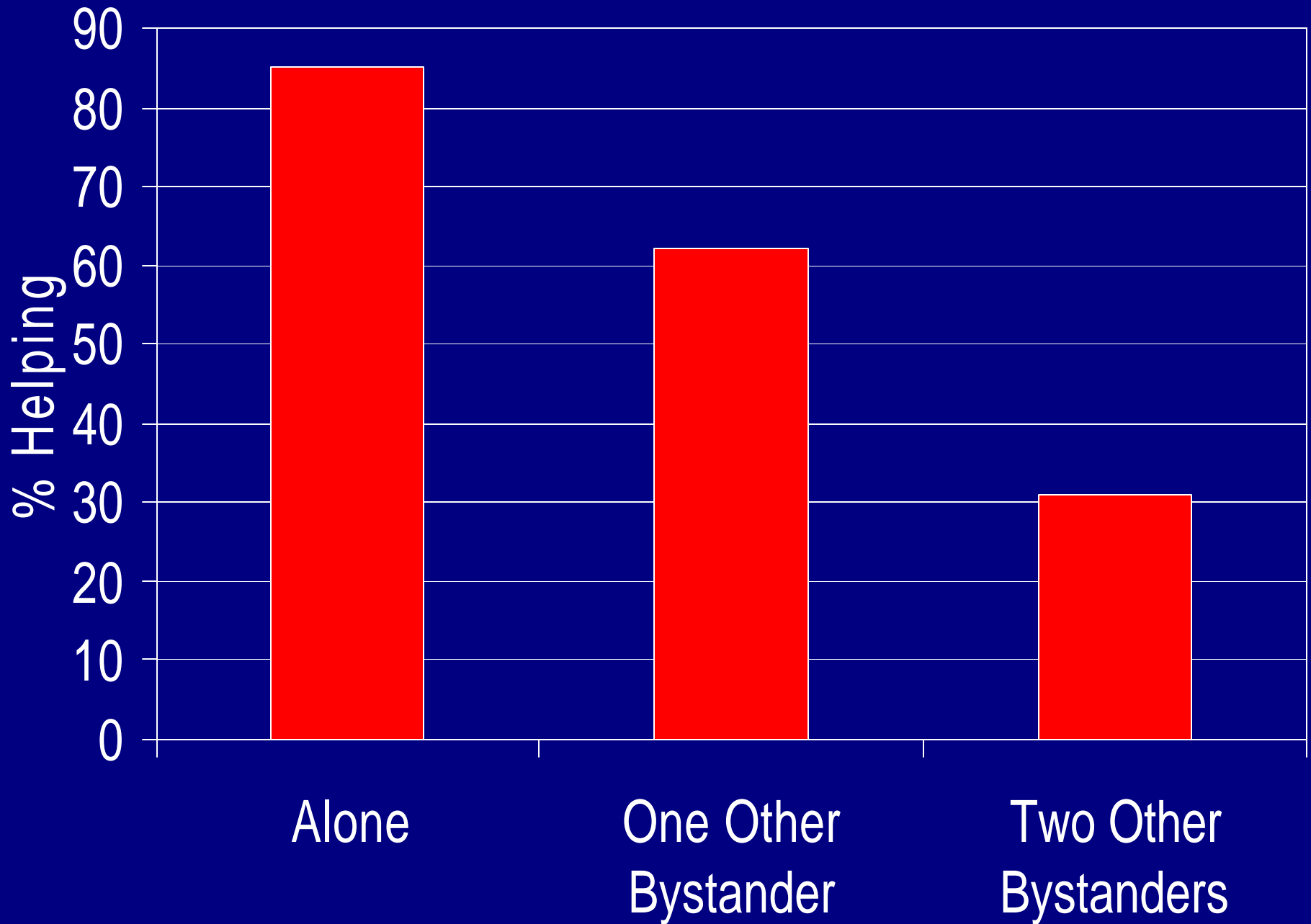
The attack lasted for 45min and was witnessed by 38 residents

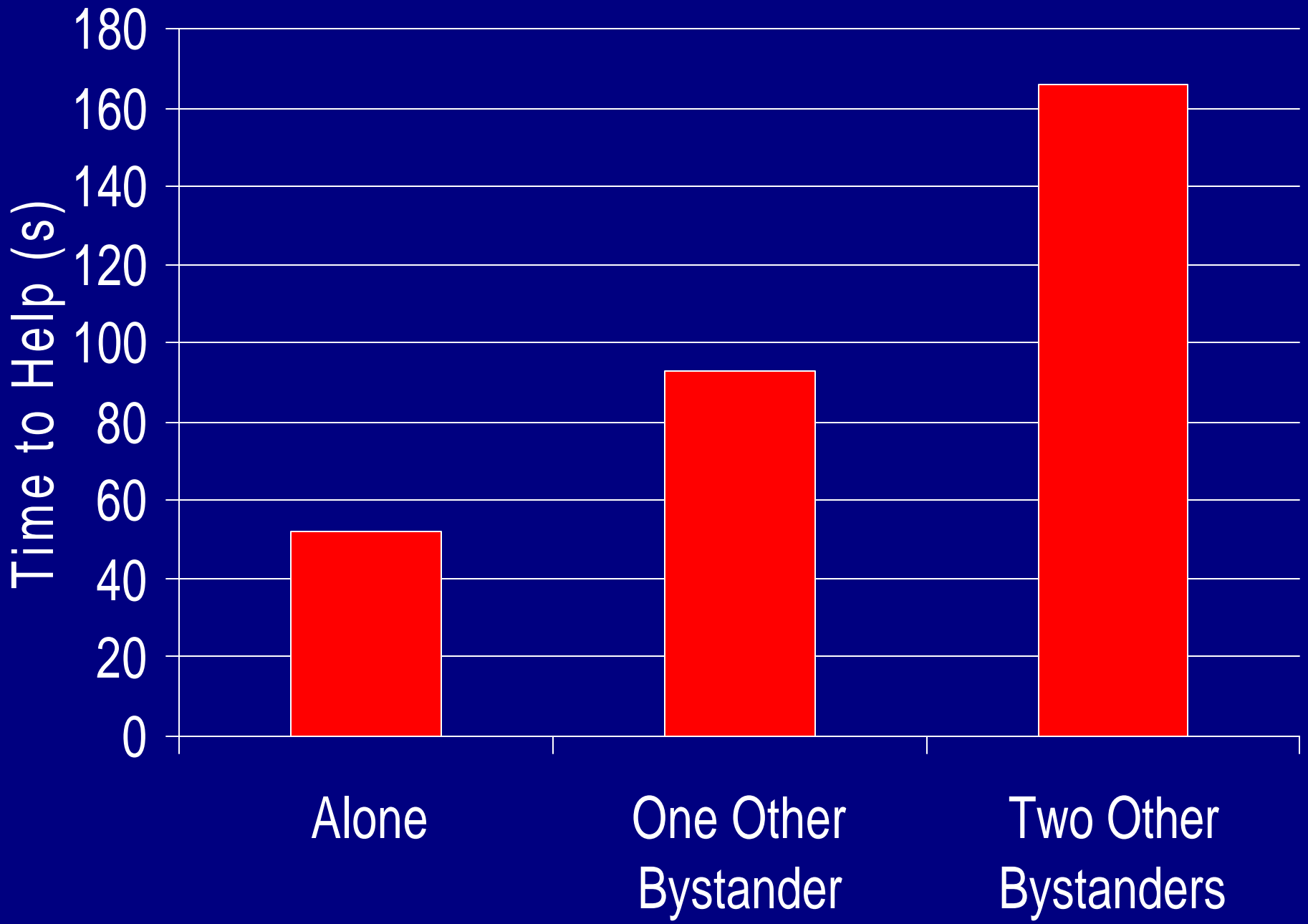
NOT ONE EVEN CALLED 911

What happened in the minds of the 38 bystanders that stopped ALL of them from helping her? What makes others give their lives for strangers?

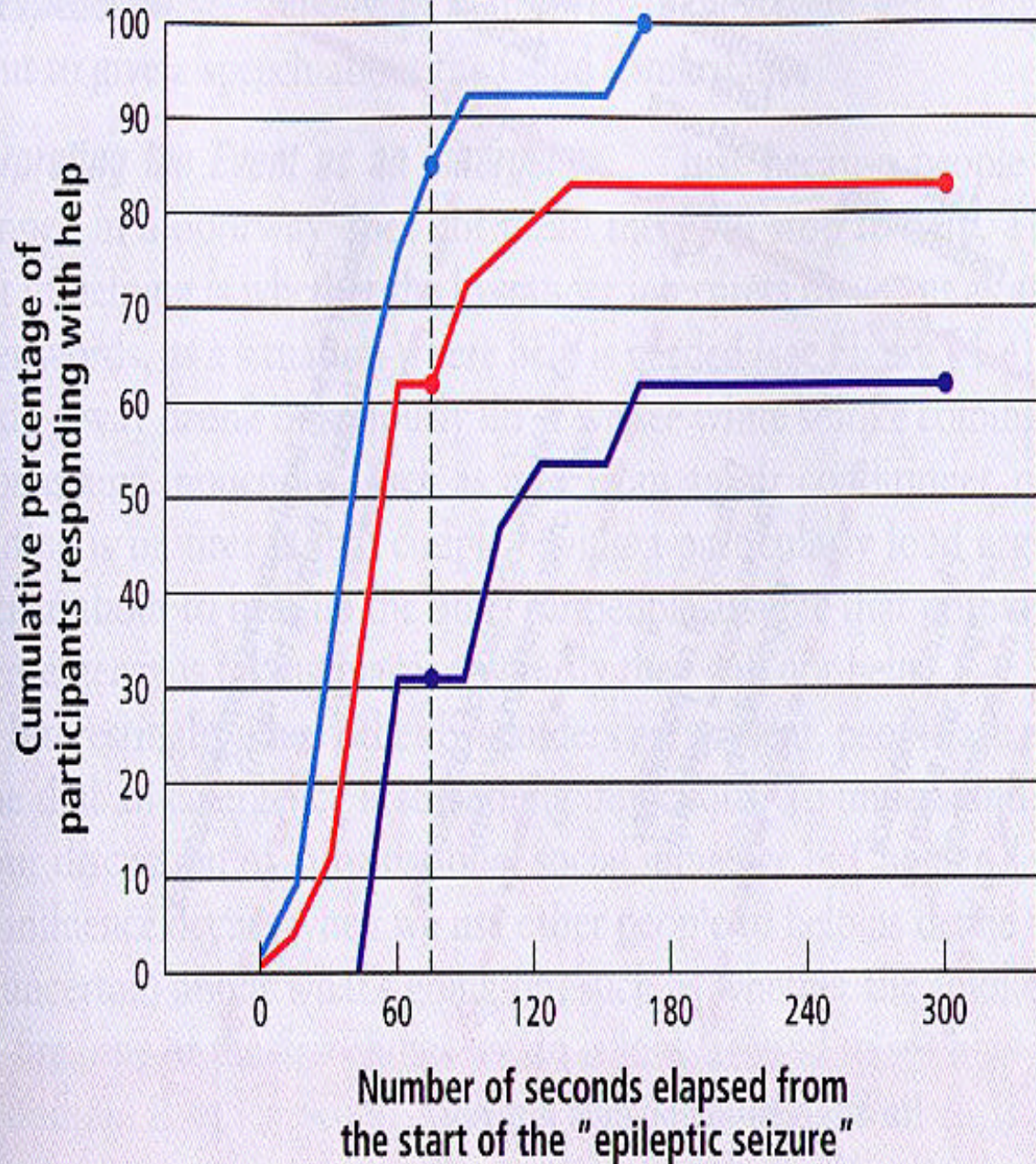
Latané and Darley (1968) reported the first experimental test of the “bystander apathy” apparent in the Genovese case. Participants in their study thought they would discuss “problems faced by students in a high pressure urban environment.” They never met the other members face-to-face. Instead all communication took place over an intercom.

Shortly after beginning the discussion (after everyone had introduced themselves), one of the other group members began to choke and appeared to be having a seizure. Who would help? How long would it take?





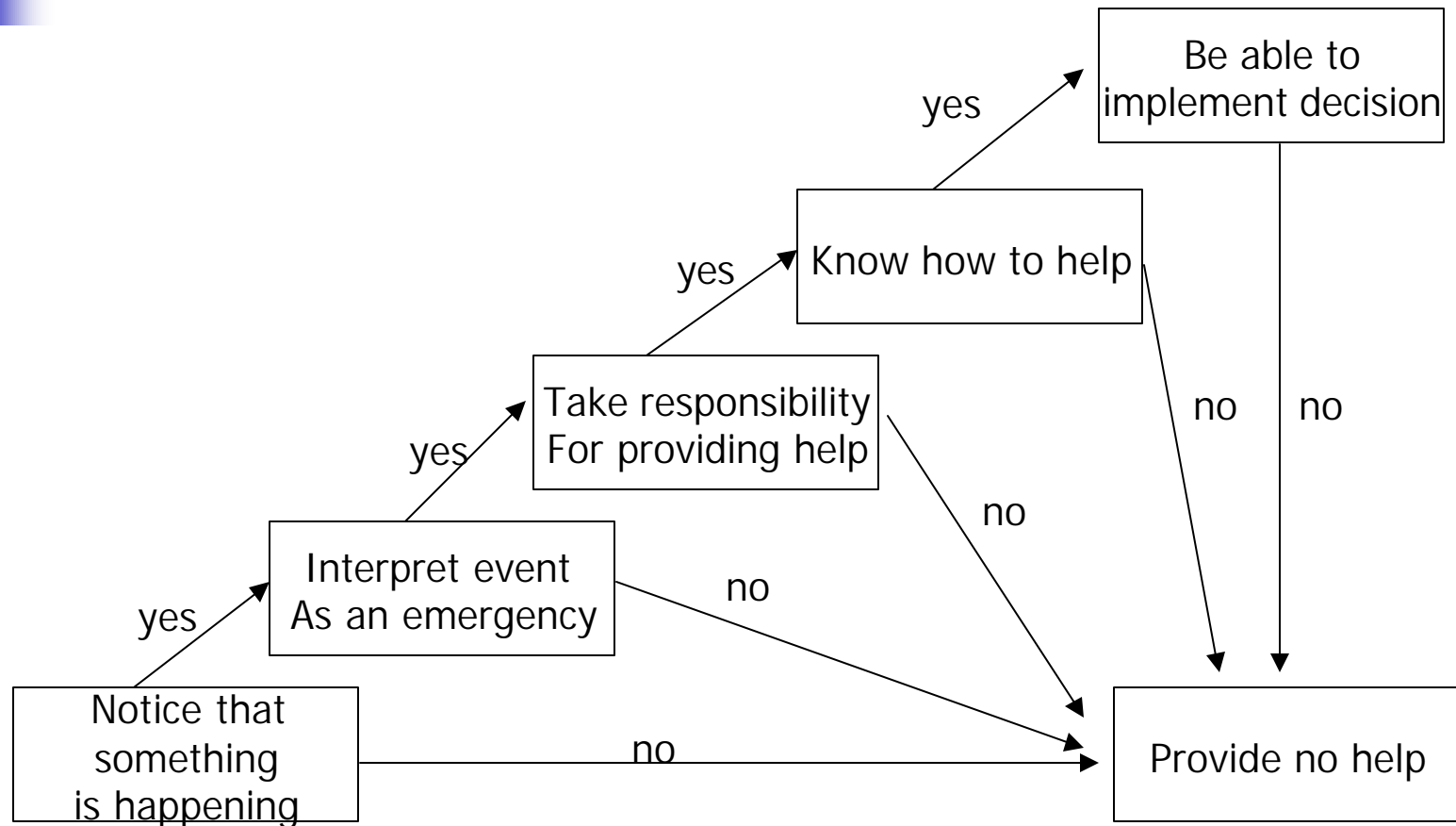
Point at which the victim's voice was no longer heard



Bottom line?
If you need help, you want *JUST ONE* other person with you!

- Participants who believed they were the only bystander
- Participants who believed there was one other bystander besides themselves
- Participants who believed there were four other bystanders besides themselves

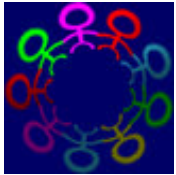
Five Steps to Helping In An Emergency (Latane & Darley (1970))



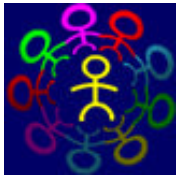
Gaining Social Status and Approval



Desire for Approval



Effects of Those Around Us



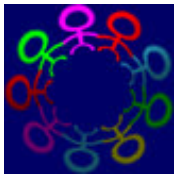
Gender and Help



Desire for Approval

Students who score higher on a scale measuring the need for approval from others donate more money;

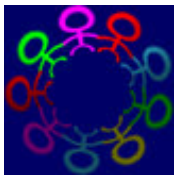
But only if the donation is public (and can thus buy approval).



Helping Models

Observing another giving help can teach young children about the helping norm.

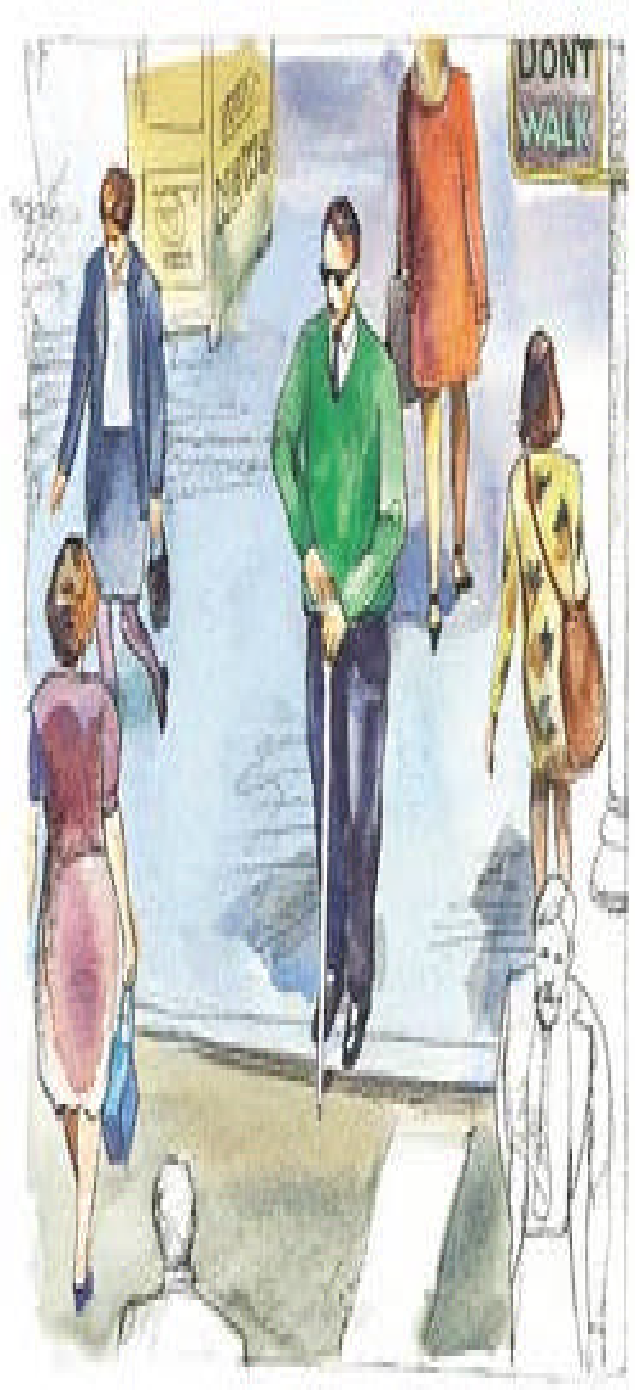
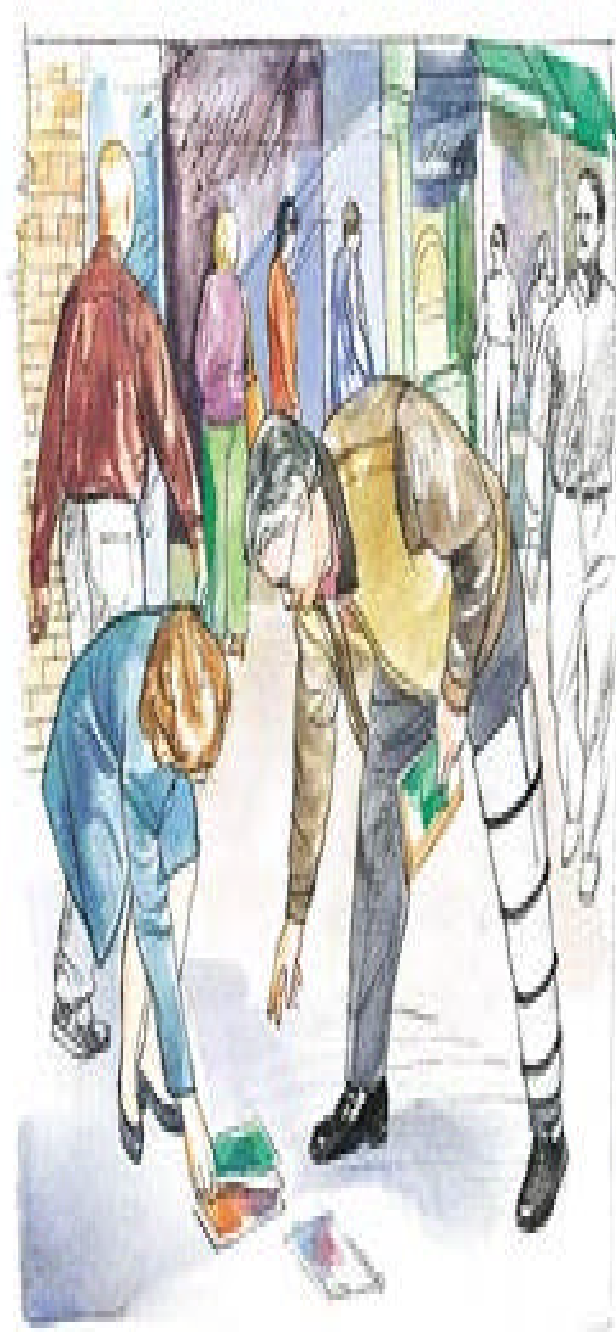
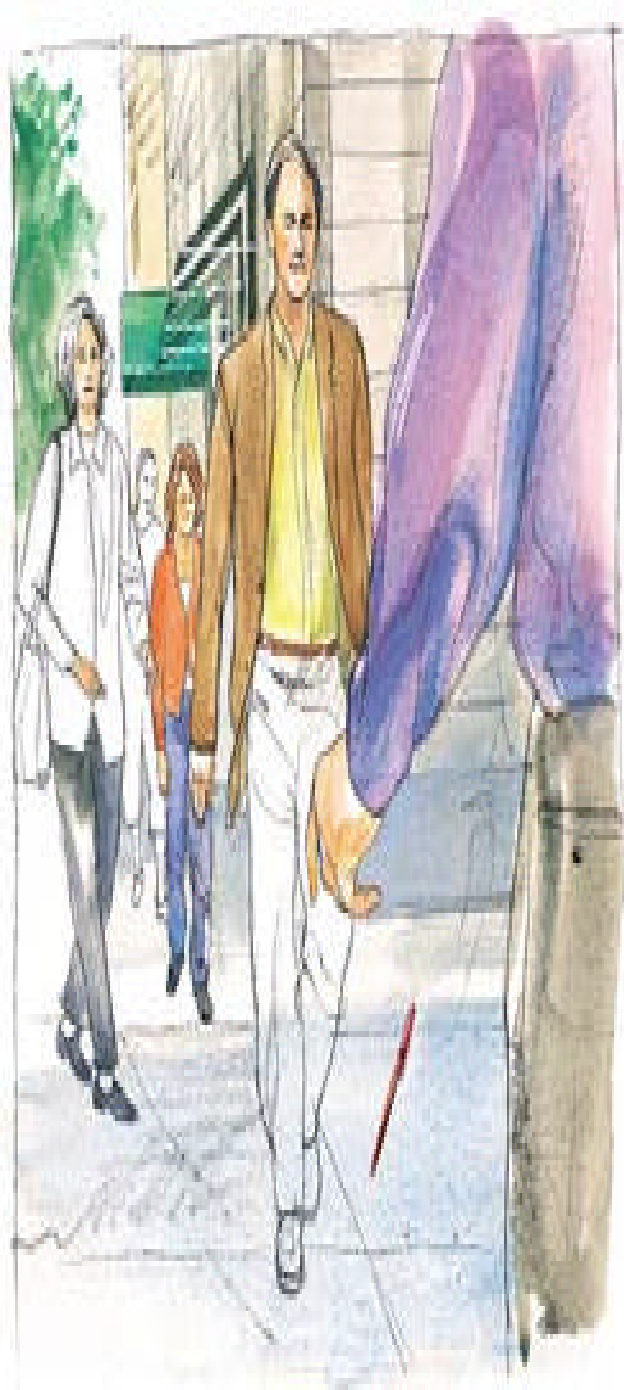
For adults, a model can remind them of the helping norm.



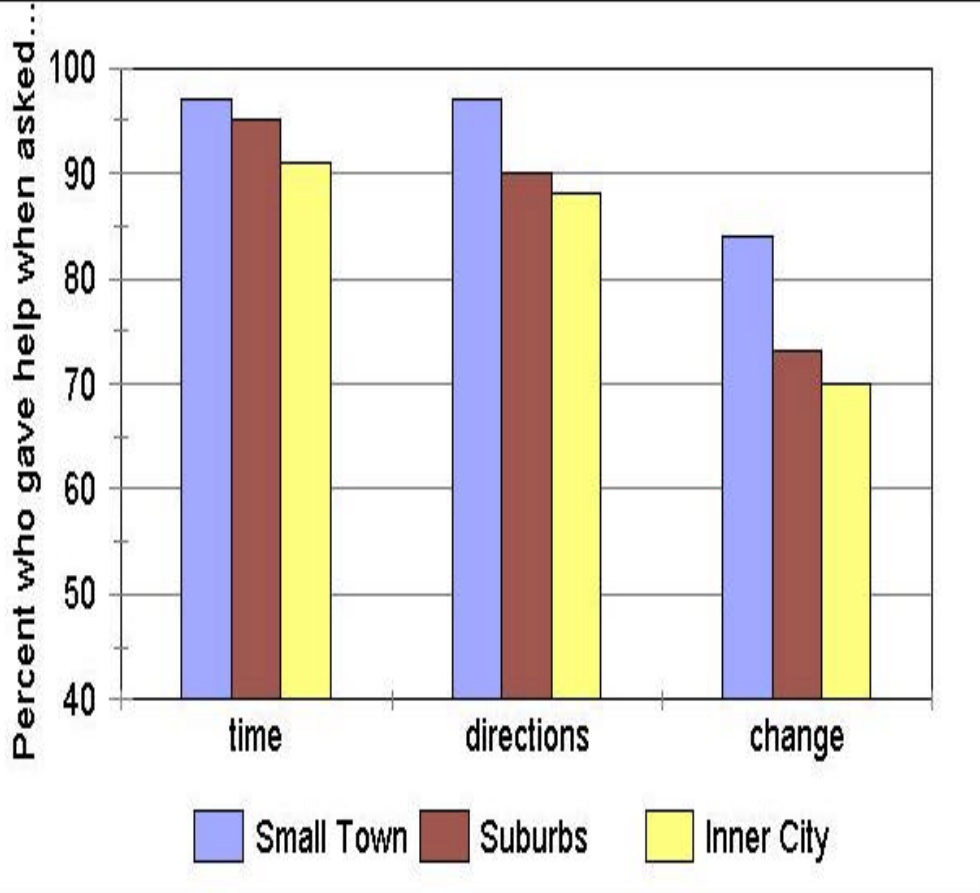
Population Density

Helping is less likely in densely packed cities.

Part of the problem is that people living in dense urban environments pay less attention to those around them (Evans & Lepore, 1993; Milgram, 1970).



Where are others more likely to help you; in a small town or a big city?



Urban Overload

Hypothesis: people living in cities are constantly bombarded with stimuli and tune much of it out to avoid over-stimulation

Density more correlated with helping than population size is

Helping varies by culture . . .

Helping in twenty-three cultures

In twenty-three cities around the world, researchers observed how many people helped in three situations: helping a person with a leg brace who dropped a pile of magazines, helping someone who did not notice that he or she had dropped a pen, and helping a blind person across a busy intersection. The percentages in the table are averaged across the three situations. The cities in boldface are in countries that have the cultural value of *simpatía*, which prizes friendliness, politeness, and helping others.

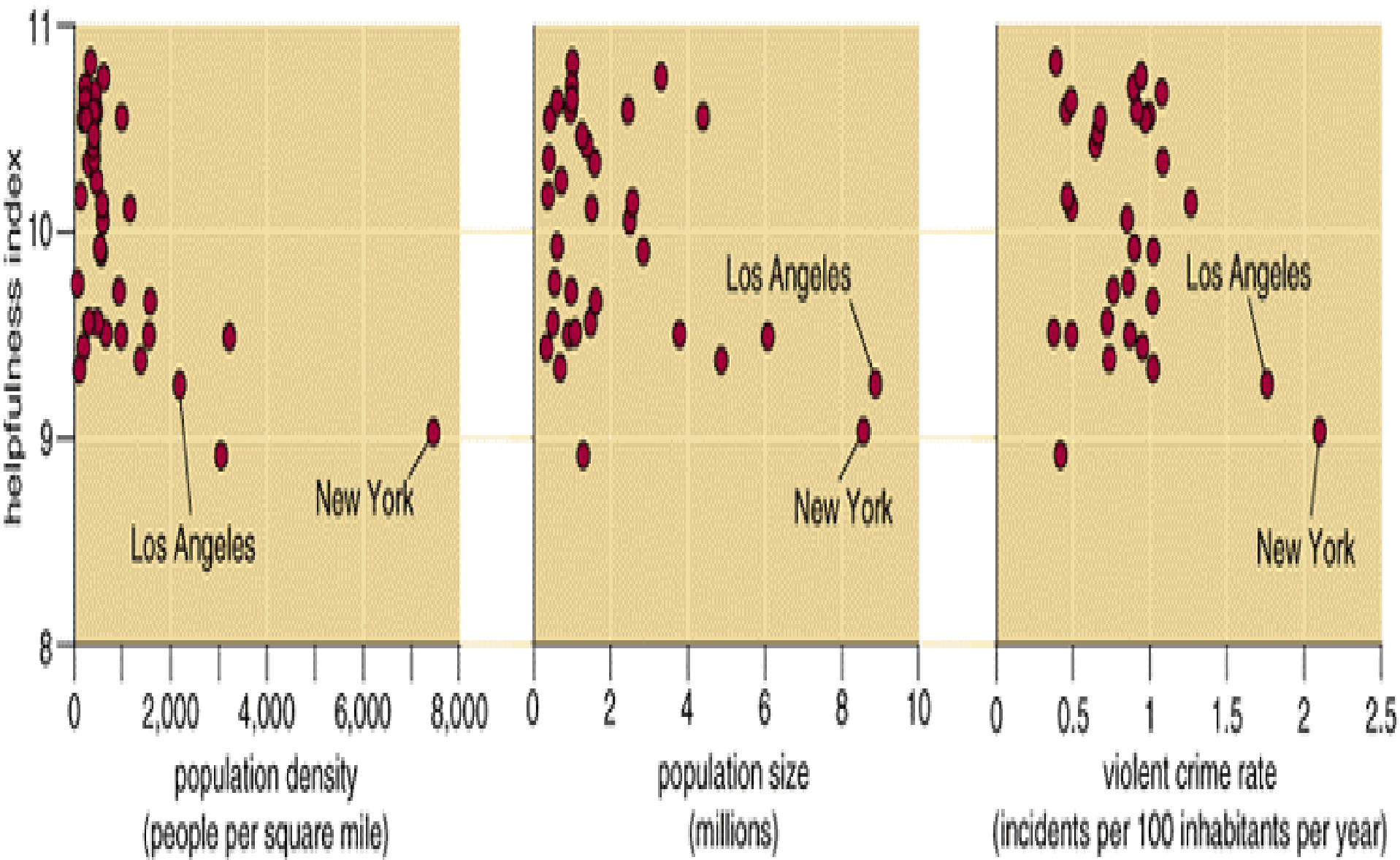
CITY	PERCENT HELPING
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	93
San Jose, Costa Rica	91
Lilongwe, Malawi	86
Calcutta, India	83
Vienna, Austria	81
Madrid, Spain	79
Copenhagen, Denmark	78
Shanghai, China	77
Mexico City, Mexico	76
San Salvador, El Salvador	75
Prague, Czech Republic	75
Stockholm, Sweden	72
Budapest, Hungary	71
Bucharest, Romania	69
Tel Aviv, Israel	68
Rome, Italy	63
Bangkok, Thailand	61
Taipei, Taiwan	59
Sofia, Bulgaria	57
Amsterdam, Netherlands	54
Singapore	48
New York, United States	45
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	40

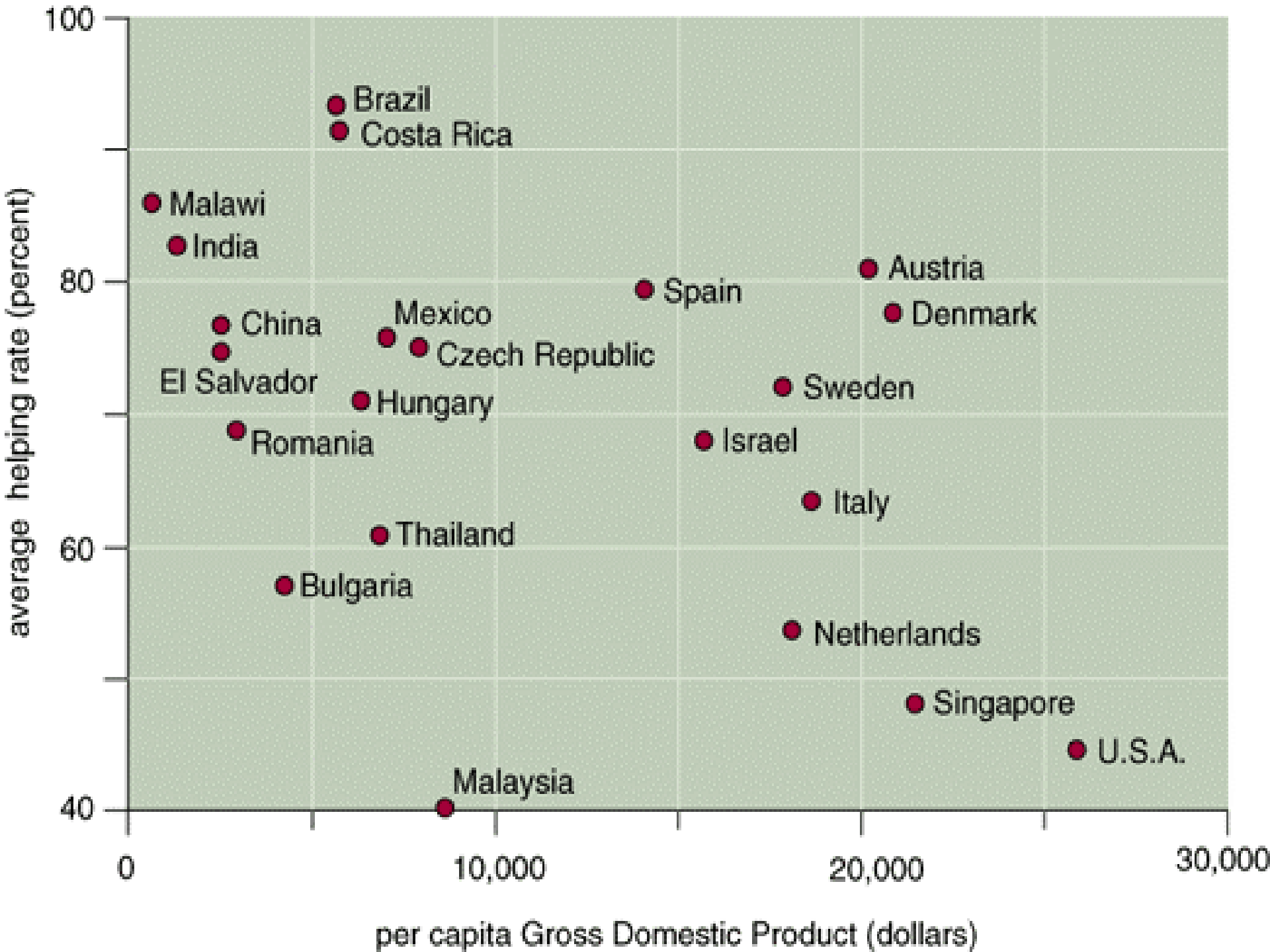
Helping varies by region of the country . . .

TABLE 10.2 Helping in the U.S.A.

Six types of helping (returning a pen dropped by a researcher who was walking past; helping a researcher with a leg brace pick up dropped magazines; checking for change when asked for change by a researcher; helping a researcher, who was in dark glasses and carrying a white cane, cross the street; mailing a stamped, addressed letter apparently dropped by someone; and average per capita contributions to the United Way in 1990) were studied in 36 U.S. cities. The top ten and bottom ten cities are listed in this table. Although there was a great deal of variability from one helping measure to the next, some overall patterns emerged, including the findings that higher density (population per square mile) and higher cost of living were strongly associated with less helping. *(Based on data from Levine et al., 1994.)*

Top Ten Cities for Helping		Bottom Ten Cities for Helping	
Overall Rank	Region	Overall Rank	Region
1. Rochester, NY	Northeast	27. Salt Lake City, UT	West
2. Houston, TX	South	28. Boston, MA	Northeast
3. Nashville, TN	South	29. Providence, RI	Northeast
4. Memphis, TN	South	30. Chicago, IL	North Central
5. Knoxville, TN	South	31. Shreveport, LA	South
6. Louisville, KY	South	32. Philadelphia, PA	Northeast
7. St. Louis, MO	North Central	33. Fresno, CA	West
8. Detroit, MI	North Central	34. Los Angeles, CA	West
9. E. Lansing, MI	North Central	35. New York, NY	Northeast
10. Chattanooga, TN	South	36. Patterson, NJ	Northeast



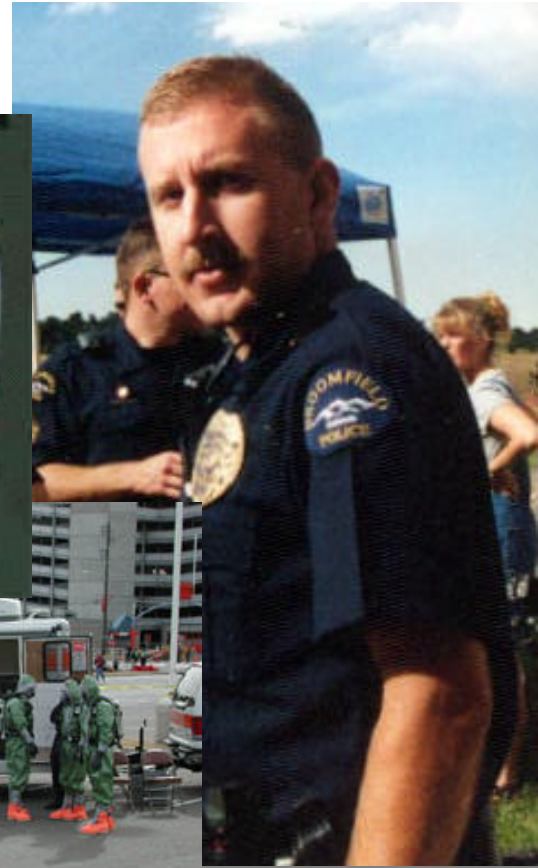


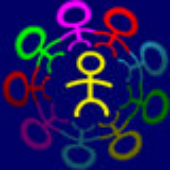
Individual Differences

Not everyone is selfless...not everyone is selfish!

Altruistic Personality:
aspects of a person's personality dispositions that leads them to help others in a wide variety of situations.

(e.g., high emotionality, empathy, and self-efficacy)



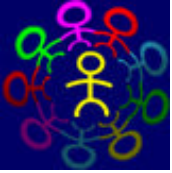


Gender and Help

Women are universally perceived as kinder, more soft-hearted, and more helpful (Williams & Best, 1990).

But over 90% of Carnegie Hero awards go to men (for saving, or attempting to save, the life of another).

Why?



Gender and Help

Women are more likely to help those they already know.

Men are more likely to help strangers in emergency situations.



When the Titanic sank, 70 percent of the females and 20 percent of the males survived. The chances of survival were 2.5 times better for a first than a third class passenger. Yet, thanks to gender norms for altruism, the survival odds were better for third class passengers who were women (47 percent) than for first class passengers who were men (31 percent).

Managing Self-Image

Managing Self-Image

50 years later, those who helped Holocaust victims still showed elevated self-esteem (Midlarsky & Nemeroff, 1995).

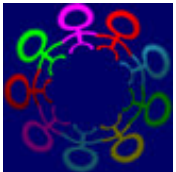
The best predictor of continuing to volunteer in a prison rehab. program was feeling the work was “an important reflection of who I am” (Stark & Deaux, 1994).

Managing Self-Image



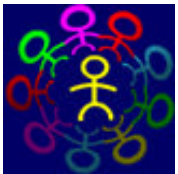
Personal Norms

Religious Codes



Labeling

Self-Focus



Deciding Not to Help Friends or
to Seek their Help



Personal Norms

Personal Norm –

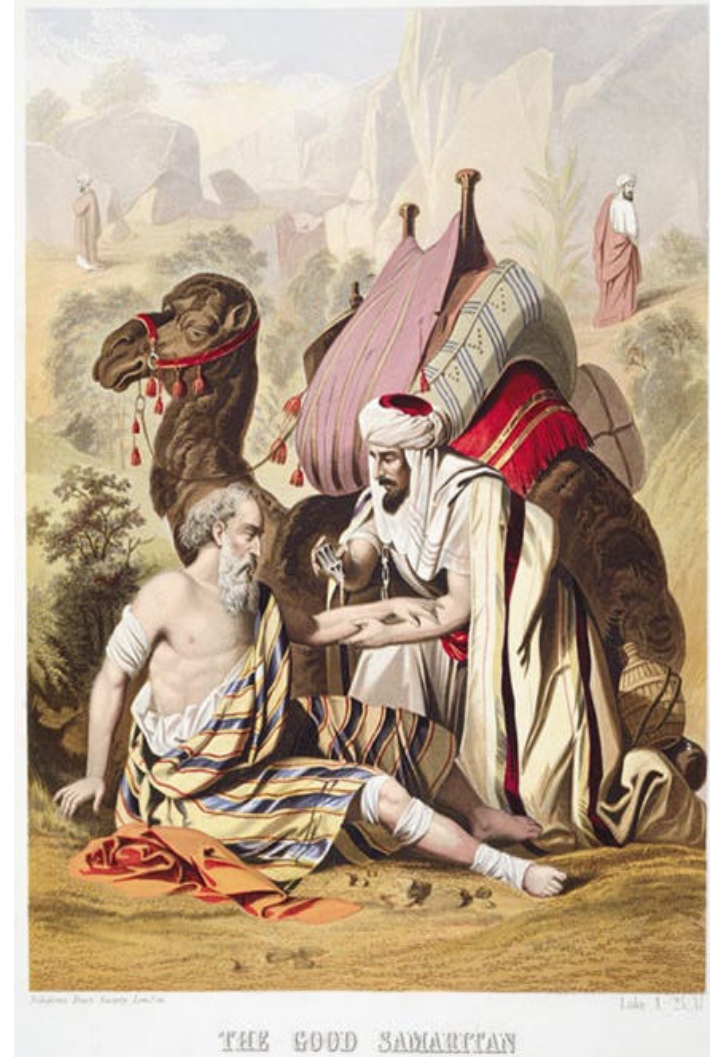
internalized beliefs and values that combine to form a person's inner standards for behavior

Example: I believe that I personally should give blood to the blood bank



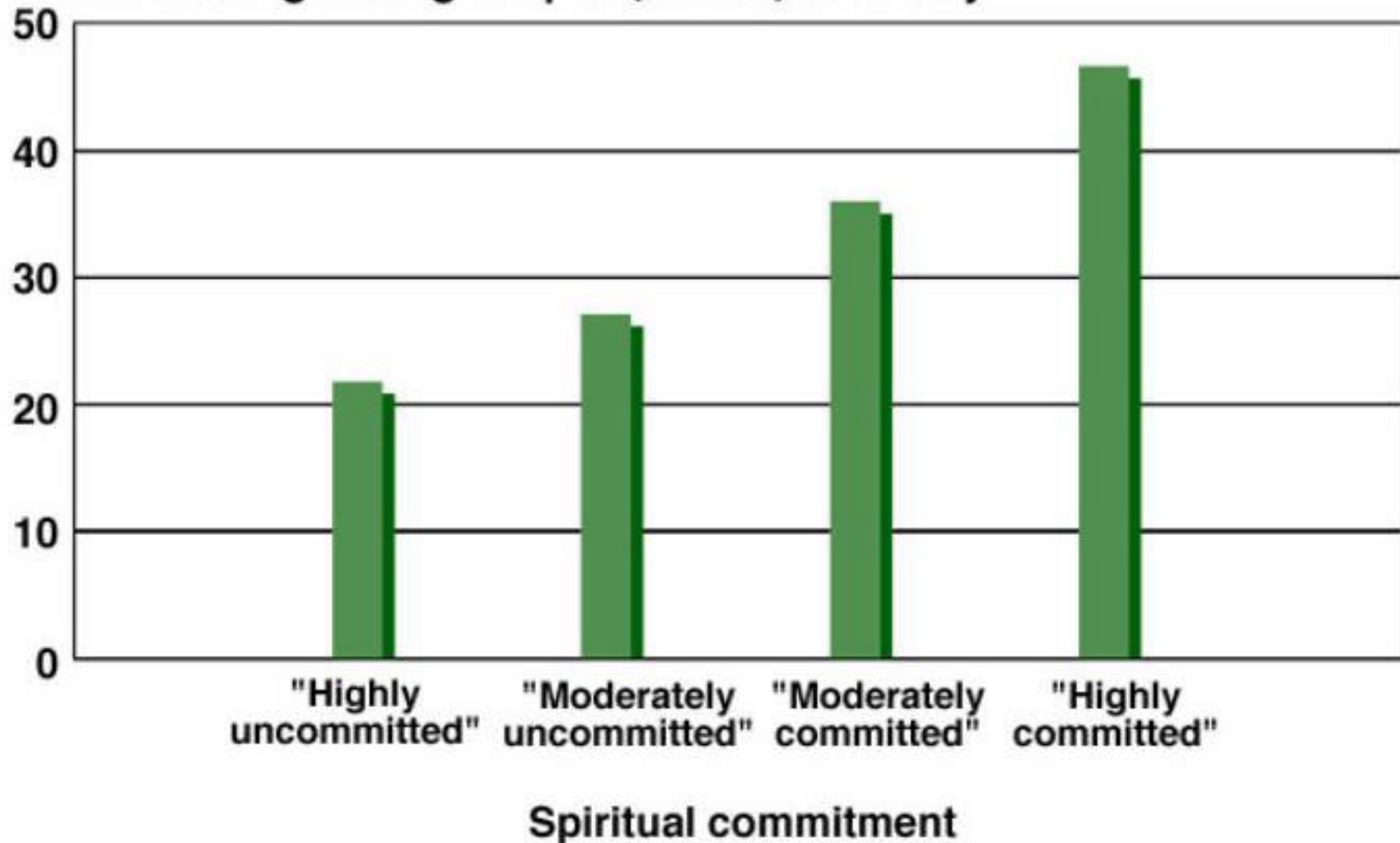
Religious Codes

People who define themselves as highly committed to their spiritual beliefs are, compared to the less committed, twice as likely to volunteer time to help the needy (Gallup, 1984).



Religion and Long-Term Altruism

Percent working among the poor, infirm, or elderly



Does Pure Altruism Exist?

Perspective-taking –

The process of mentally putting oneself in another's position.

Pure altruism –

Behavior that benefits another intentionally for no external or internal reward.

Egoism

A motive (supposedly underlying all behavior) to increase one's own welfare. The opposite of altruism, which aims to increase another's welfare.

Should I volunteer to save the world?

Direct Benefit (maybe a better planet)

Costs (opportunity costs, difficult)

Additional Benefits (praise from friends, refreshments, gain social approval, no guilt)

Perhaps true altruism really does not exist ??

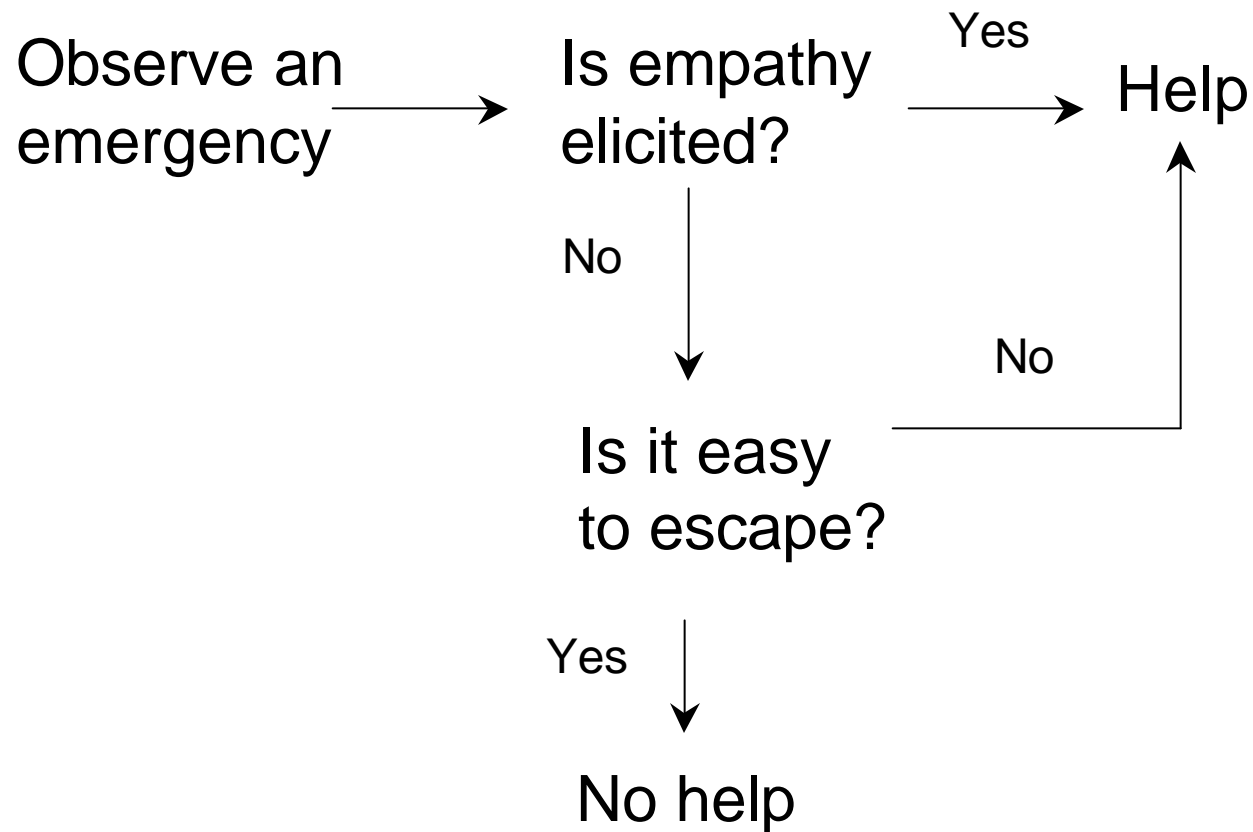
Empathy

Ability to put oneself “in the shoes” of another person and to experience events and emotions the way that person experiences them

Altruism-Empathy Hypothesis: when we feel empathy for another, we attempt to help that person purely for altruistic reasons, regardless of what we stand to gain

But motives are tricky: selfishness raises its head in subtle ways

Empathy-Altruism Model



Empathy-Altruism Model

College subjects told that they would be working with another person named Elaine. Elaine would be receiving mild electric shocks while she performs a task. During observations of Elaine, Elaine describes that the experiment is bringing back a memory of a childhood trauma --she was thrown from a horse onto an electric fence.

Empathy-Altruism cont.

Experimental manipulations:

High empathy versus low empathy conditions: Half the subjects were told that they had a lot in common with Elaine; other half told that they were very different from Elaine. This manipulation was intended to induce/not induce empathy.

Easy escape versus difficult escape conditions:

Half the subjects were told that they could leave after viewing two trials in which Elaine received a shock. Half were told that they could watch her suffer for 10 trials or change places with her.

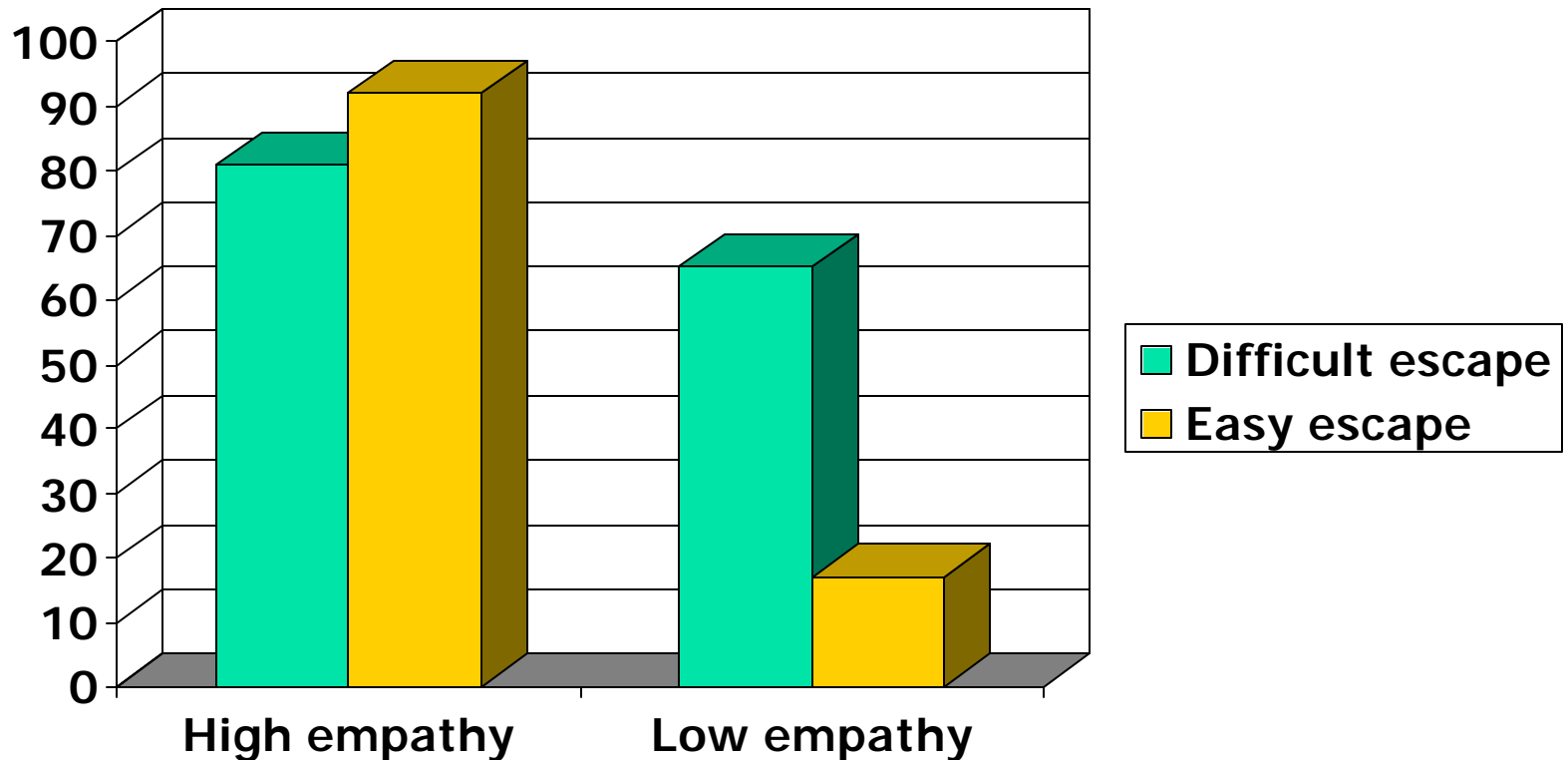
Results

When empathy was low and escape was easy, most left.
Only 18% volunteered to help.

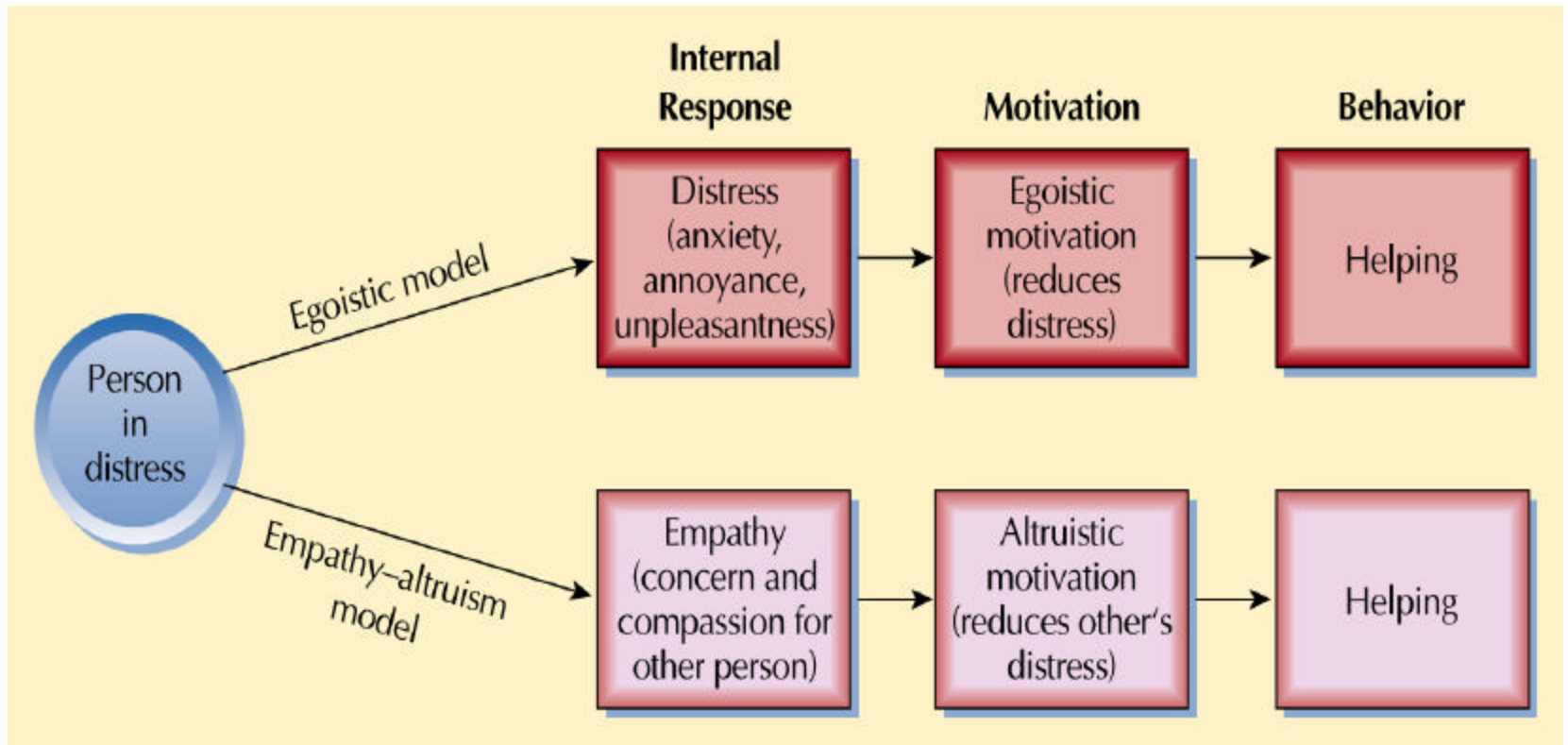
When empathy was low but escape was difficult, people often volunteered to trade places with Elaine (65%).
Perhaps they wanted to reduce the pain of watching someone else suffer.

When empathy was high, people in both easy and difficult escape conditions were likely to help. 80-90% in both conditions volunteered to switch places with Elaine. **Altruism motivated by empathy.**

Percentage of participants who helped as a function of empathy and escape conditions (based on Batson et al., 1981)



Explanations for Altruism



“Altruism” can even extend across species . . . ??

