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The Power of Philanthropy and Volunteering

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He who cannot give anything away cannot feel anything either.
Friedrich Nietzsche, The will to power*, Volume 2*

This chapter reviews research on the relationship between giving time (i.e., volunteering) and money (i.e., philanthropy) and givers' psychological well-being. Most of this literature defines psychological wellbeing hedonically, as happiness and other positive emotions, positive evaluations (e.g., life satisfaction), and the absence of negative emotions (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Ryan, Huta, & Deci, 2008). However, on the rare occasions when wellbeing is defined more eudaimonically, as having a deeper sense of meaning, purpose, and fulfillment in life, this is noted. This chapter aims to contextualize the literature on giving and wellbeing within a theoretical framework that can help to specify under which conditions giving can increase givers' psychological wellbeing, and under which conditions it may be less beneficial.

Both time and money are limited resources and the typical view of such resources within traditional economic models is that they exist in order to take care of one's own needs. It is obvious, however, that these resources may also be used to take care of the needs of others. For example, parenting involves an immense commitment of time and financial resources, and these resources are sometimes given to offspring at the expense of the parents'

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own needs. Economic models rooted in self-interest would argue that this type of behavior is still self-interested because parents ultimately benefit if their offspring survive and pass on their genes (Hamilton, 1964). Resources are often given to non-kin as well, with research demonstrating an increasing likelihood of giving both money and time as the social distance between the giver and recipient decreases, for example, when recipients can be identified or have direct social interactions with the donor or volunteer (Bekkers, 2004; Bohnet & Frey, 1999; Hoffman, McCabe, & Smith, 1996). However, even in such cases of giving to non-kin, the potential for reciprocal giving exists (Trivers, 1971), again supporting a more self-interested model of resource sharing.

But what about giving more broadly? There are many instances in which people give to those who are unrelated to themselves and who cannot reciprocate. In fact, 62.8 million Americans devoted almost 8.1 billion hours to unpaid volunteer work in 2010, which was valued at an estimated US$173 billion (Corporation for National & Community Service, 2012). Moreover, they donated $291 billion to charitable organizations in 2010 (Giving USA Foundation, 2011). Taken together, these two behaviors are striking in light of economic models suggesting that giving only exists when either one's own genes benefit (Hamilton, 1964) or when the giving will be reciprocated (Trivers, 1971). Both of these outcomes are unlikely when donating time or money to charitable organizations, yet there may be some unexpected psychological benefits associated with this type of giving. The fact that these unexpected benefits exist does not necessarily mean that all giving is therefore self-interested. This chapter will directly discuss the role of motives for giving, suggesting that psychological benefits of giving are likely to decrease to the extent that people give in order to receive some sort of benefit.

I take a basic "Five W's" approach when summarizing this literature. Organizing the chapter this way allows for an understanding of the current state of the field and what is missing in order to best harness the potential power of philanthropy and volunteering. Thus, this chapter is organized around the following five questions:

1. *What* are the effects of giving time or money on givers' psychological wellbeing?
2. *Where* do these effects exist? Do these effects exist across cultures?
3. *When*, or in which circumstances, do these effects exist?
4. *Who* benefits most from giving, and when giving *to whom?*
5. *Why* should giving time or money have any psychological benefits at all?

This chapter ends with a section called "What next?" which discusses the implications of the review for developing giving-based interventions to increase psychological wellbeing, and for helping organizations to more effectively recruit volunteers and solicit donations.

Question 1: What Are the Effects of Giving Time and Money on Givers' Psychological Wellbeing?

The most fundamental question with respect to money and happiness is the basic one: does having money make people happy? Many of us believe that it does, and based on this belief, we expend a lot of effort to obtain it. However, although there is indeed an association between income and happiness, it is much smaller than one might expect (Aknin, Norton, & Dunn, 2009). After people have their basic needs met, there is not much of an additive effect of increasing levels of income (Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2002; Halpern, 2010). In fact, happiness has remained relatively stable over time in the United States even as average income has steadily increased (Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2002).

So why have studies failed to document a clear relationship between money and happiness? One possibility is that happiness derives from other sources, beyond our intuitive sense that it feels good to receive money. In other words, having money does not necessarily mean that wpeople know how to most effectively use it to increase their wellbeing. In fact, social relationships seem to be more central to people's wellbeing than money or other economic factors (Halpern, 2010). Some researchers have speculated that it is the giving of money (prosocial spending) that leads to happiness (Dunn, Aknin, & Norton, 2008), and this is generally consistent with what is known about studies of happiness. A key predictor of happiness is healthy social relationships (Diener & Seligman, 2002), which are likely to be characterized as much by prosocial behavior as they are by receiving help and support from others. Ironically, however, money itself may also serve to undermine happiness and relationships. For example, one well-designed experiment found that when participants were randomly assigned to reminders of money (e.g., via screensavers with dollar bills on them), they became more focused on themselves and behaved in less prosocial ways (Vohs, Mead, & Goode, 2006).

Correlational Studies on Giving Money

Most studies examining the relationship between giving money and happiness compare relative effects of personal spending to prosocial spending. *Personal spending* includes money spent on bills and expenses and also on gifts for the self, while *prosocial spending* includes money spent on gifts for others and donations to charity. A number of studies find that there is a correlation between prosocial spending and psychological wellbeing.

For example, in a nationally representative sample of Americans, researchers found that there was no association between *personal spending* and happiness, but a positive association between *prosocial spending* and happiness, even when controlling for income (Dunn et al., 2008). Other research has found that the positive relationship between prosocial spending and happiness seems to persist even when participants are aware that there could be psychological benefits associated with this type of giving (Anik, Aknin, Norton, & Dunn, 2009). Attempts to extend these findings to economic behavior, as opposed to self-reported donations, have generally been supportive. At least two studies, for example, have found that participants who give away money to other participants as part of an experimental economics game feel happier and less ashamed compared to those who choose to keep all of their money (Dunn, Ashton-James, Hanson, & Aknin, 2010; Konow & Earley, 2008). Moreover, this is explained by the fact that people who have higher initial psychological wellbeing are more likely to give in these circumstances (Konow & Earley, 2008). Interestingly, this giving behavior ultimately leads to lower cortisol (stress hormone) responses as a consequence of reduced feelings of shame (Dunn et al., 2010). Giving money to others literally gets under our skin, with implications for longer term health.

It is important to note that the majority of correlational research on giving money and psychological wellbeing has been coming from a single research laboratory. There are, however, only three known independent tests of this relationship. Two find small associations between donating money and happiness (Konow & Earley, 2008; Priller & Schupp, 2011), while the other finds no such relationship in a large sample ($N = 29{,}200$) of Americans (Borgonovi, 2008). Taken together, these results point to the need for additional research to investigate contradictory findings. Another limitation of this area of research is that it focuses exclusively on happiness or wellbeing, and I am not aware of any studies that examine mental

health outcomes more broadly (e.g., depression, anxiety). It will be important to know how deep these effects run before designing mental health interventions.

Correlational Studies on Giving Time

Those who tend to give money to charities are often the same people who volunteer their time to charities (Amato, 1985; Apinunmahakul & Devlin, 2008; Bryant, Jeon-Slaughter, Kang, & Tax, 2003; Duncan, 1999; Farmer & Fedor, 2001; Feldman, 2010; Matsunaga, 2007; Reed & Selbee, 2001; Schervish & Havens, 1997). In other words, there is a positive correlation between giving time and money to charitable organizations.

What is the relationship between giving one's *time* (i.e., volunteering) and psychological health? Similar principles seem to apply to giving one's time to others compared to giving one's money. Like money, time is a resource, and having time itself does not necessarily imply happiness. After all, one may have abundant time because one is unemployed or unable to work, and this could translate to lower happiness. As with money, how *time is used* seems more important than the amount of available time in terms of predicting psychological wellbeing.

The relationship between volunteering for nonprofit organizations and mental health is much more established than the one between giving money and happiness, with studies going back as far as the early 1970s demonstrating this link (Cutler, 1973). One early study found that compared to nonvolunteers, older adults who volunteered had higher life satisfaction and lower depression and anxiety, even when controlling for physical health. There were no demographic differences between volunteers and nonvolunteers, thus ruling out demographic factors as potential explanations for the finding (Hunter & Linn, 1980). Since then, a number of studies have confirmed this correlational finding among older adult populations (Greenfield & Marks, 2004; Sarid, Melzer, Kurz, Shahar, & Ruch, 2010; Wheeler, Gorey, & Greenblatt, 1998).

This positive relationship between volunteering and psychological wellbeing also exists among middle-age adults, suggesting that the benefits are not limited to older adults (Borgonovi, 2008; Campbell et al., 2009; Meier & Stutzer, 2008). Moreover, these effects persist despite controlling for a number of potential confounds (e.g., gender, age, employment status, income, general social connectedness (Campbell et al., 2009; Meier & Stutzer, 2008).

Interpretations of Correlational Results

Although potential third variables, such as those mentioned above, have been ruled out, issues with respect to direction of causality are still important to consider when interpreting correlational studies. It is possible that giving time and money to others causes people to feel happier and less depressed, but it is also possible that those who are currently experiencing greater psychological wellbeing are simply more likely to give.

Indeed, there are a number of classic studies supporting exactly this latter claim. When participants are induced to be in a positive mood via a variety of experimental techniques (e.g., experiencing a success versus a failure, finding a dime, being directly induced into positive or negative mood states), many studies find that they are more likely to later exhibit prosocial behavior (Aderman, 1972; Berkowitz & Connor, 1966; Isen, 1970; Isen & Levin, 1972). This "happiness leads to giving" effect has also been demonstrated in children as young as 7 years old (Isen, Horn, & Rosenhan, 1973; Moore, Underwood, & Rosenhan, 1973; Rosenhan, Underwood, & Moore, 1974). Moreover, this effect also extends to naturally occurring positive mood states (Konow & Earley, 2008; Wang & Graddy, 2008) and also outside of the laboratory into employment settings (Forgas, Dunn, & Granland, 2008; George, 1991; Williams & Shiaw, 1999).

So, experimental studies make it clear that happy people are more likely to give time and money to others. But this does not exclude the possibility that the relationship between giving and happiness is bidirectional. What evidence is there that giving one's time and money actually *causes* increased happiness?

Longitudinal Studies on Giving Money and Time

With longitudinal studies the direction of causality is clearer. For example, if a researcher measures giving and happiness at time 1, and then again measure happiness at a later time point, she can examine the effect of giving at time 1 on happiness at time 2, controlling for participants' initial feelings of happiness. Note that studies do not typically examine effects of continuous giving over long periods of time, but simply examine effects of giving at one time point on health and wellbeing at a later time point.

One small study ($N = 16$) found that respondents who chose to spend more of their money (an employment bonus) on others felt happier 2 months

later compared to those who spent more of their bonus on themselves (Dunn et al., 2008). This effect persisted when controlling for their initial levels of happiness, the total amount of the bonus, and their incomes, ruling out these three variables as potential explanations for the finding. A larger study from an independent research lab tracked over 900 older adults over a period of 9 years and found that the more money respondents donated at the beginning of the study, the higher their psychological wellbeing was 9 years later, even when controlling for baseline wellbeing, physical health, income, education, religiosity, and general social integration (Choi & Kim, 2011). Taken together, these two studies suggest that giving money to others can have long-lasting effects on people's happiness and psychological wellbeing that persist up to 9 years later. With longitudinal studies it is always possible that effects may be explained by some unknown third variable (e.g., eudaimonic wellbeing, or dispositional kindness), however, the studies reported above do attempt to rule out some obvious potential third variables.

Longitudinal studies are more prototypical in the volunteering literature. Typically studies compare long-term outcomes of volunteers to nonvolunteers to see if volunteering at one time point has a psychological benefit a few years later, controlling for a number of potential other explanations. Indeed all known studies find that regular volunteers experience increased life satisfaction, happiness, self-esteem, and psychological wellbeing, and fewer depressive symptoms a few years later, compared to those who do not volunteer (Lum & Lightfoot, 2005; Morrow-Howell, Hinterlong, Rozario, & Tang, 2003; Musick & Wilson, 2003; Piliavin & Siegl, 2007; Thoits & Hewitt, 2001; Van Willigen, 2000; Warren, 1993). These studies are most commonly conducted among older adult populations, but there are also psychological benefits to volunteering among younger adults, although slightly attenuated (Musick & Wilson, 2003; Van Willigen, 2000), and among those who have current mental health problems (Warren, 1993).

Interestingly, there is evidence that psychological wellbeing seems to promote more volunteering, which further promotes increases in psychological wellbeing (Thoits & Hewitt, 2001). This parallels the above experimental findings that happy people are more likely to give time and money to others, but goes beyond by directly providing evidence for a positive feedback loop. Whether one jumps onto the loop through being happy (and giving more) or through giving time (and feeling more happy), there seems to be an upward spiral of giving and happier living.

One obvious question that comes to mind is which is a larger predictor of psychological wellbeing, giving money or giving time? It is rare for studies to assess both simultaneously, but one study that did found that there was a larger effect of giving any amount of money compared to giving time (Choi & Kim, 2011), although there were positive effects of both. This study could not specifically compare the effect of giving time versus money to the *same or similar* organizations though, so it is unclear what would happen when the two are directly pitted against each other. Moreover, this study found that there were no additional benefits of volunteering more than 10 hours per week Future studies should include measures of both types of giving to clarify this question.

Experimental Studies on Giving Money

In order to really understand the causal effect of giving money or time on psychological wellbeing, well-designed experimental studies are needed. Since it is difficult to randomly assign people to philanthropic or volunteering behavior, these types of studies are rare. However, a few such studies do exist, and the results are promising.

For example, one such study examined the effect of giving money to others on participants' psychological wellbeing later that same day (Dunn et al., 2008). The researchers measured happiness in the morning, then gave half of the participants $5 and the other half $20. Next, the researchers asked half of the participants to spend the money that day on *themselves* and the other half to spend the money on *another person*. Happiness was again measured in the evening. The researchers found that participants who were assigned to spend their money on others were happier at the end of the day, even when controlling for their baseline levels of happiness. Interestingly, the amount of money did not seem to make a difference: participants received an equal boost to their happiness whether they spent $5 or $20. Although this study differs from more everyday giving situations, because the giving was nonvoluntary and noncostly (since the money was given to the participants), this study provides compelling evidence that spending money on others causes increased happiness, at least in the short term. It is unclear how long this effect lasts though. Would the prosocial spenders wake up happier the next day, or would the effects dissipate quickly? In any case, this is one of the strongest available experimental studies on the psychological effects of giving money to others because it relies on actual giving behaviors.

Other available experimental research relies on guided recall tasks. For example, one study asked participants to recall a time when they spent money on themselves versus on others, then measured their happiness (Aknin et al., 2013). The researchers found that those who were asked to recall spending money on others reported higher happiness than those who recalled spending money on themselves. This was true even when controlling for various alternative explanations (e.g., whether the purchase was needed versus wanted, whether the giving was obligatory or volitional, and whether the purchase was an experience versus a product). Another such study asked participants to recall a time that they spent a certain amount of money (US$20 versus $100) on themselves or on someone else (Aknin, Dunn, & Norton, 2012). The researchers again found that recalling an instance of prosocial giving led to increased levels of happiness relative to thinking about personal spending. Again, this effect seemed to exist regardless of the amount that participants recalled giving.

Interestingly, this study also examined the consequences of such happiness for later prosocial giving. At the end of the study participants could choose to spend money ($5 or $20) given to them by researchers on either themselves or others. Those who were initially asked to think about giving to others experienced more happiness, and this higher happiness predicted more prosocial giving. In other words, there was modest evidence for a positive feedback loop such that giving led to happiness which led to more giving. However, one alternative explanation is that this additional prosocial giving is explained by simple priming; it is possible that thinking about spending money on others primed participants to subsequently spend more money on others.

Moreover, the psychological consequences of giving to others seem to depend on the relationship between the giver and the recipient (Aknin, Sandstrom, Dunn, & Norton, 2011). In a guided recall experiment, participants were asked to report a time when they spent $20 on a close other (close friend, partner) or a less close other (acquaintance, classmate). The researchers found that participants who recalled spending on a close other felt more positive affect compared to those who recalled spending the money on a weaker emotional tie. Without a control group it is impossible to know if spending money on acquaintances would be better than spending money on oneself. In addition, the study did not assess whether the spending was voluntary or obligatory, and this remains an important confound to be addressed in future research. Still, the implication of this research is that

when choosing to spend money, spending money on one's close ties seems to have more beneficial effects for wellbeing.

Overall, the experimental studies on giving money provide very strong evidence that giving money to others, or spending money on others, makes people happier. But are people intuitively aware that if they give their money away they will feel happier? In one interesting experimental study, researchers found that when participants were asked to imagine spending money on someone else versus spending it on themselves, participants guessed that spending it on *themselves* would make them happier (Dunn et al., 2008). In other words, they were dead wrong about the actual consequences of giving to others.

Experimental Studies on Giving Time

Experimental studies examining the effects of volunteering on wellbeing are extremely rare, which is not surprising considering that by definition volunteering is voluntary. However, there have been a few promising studies that have partially addressed this issue in creative ways. For example, one study found that older adults who participated in Experience Corps, an intensive volunteering program, had lower depression over a 2-year period compared to a demographically matched control group over the same time period (Hong & Morrow-Howell, 2010). Although this study is not a true experiment, it does offer some evidence that intensive volunteering may be good for wellbeing. A true experiment in which participants were randomly assigned to a volunteering or control (waiting period) group did not assess psychological wellbeing, per say, but did find improvements in physical, cognitive, and social variables that may help to explain some of the psychological benefits (Fried et al., 2004).

Another study used a pre–post quasi-experimental design to examine the effects of unexpectedly losing one's volunteer position on later wellbeing (Meier & Stutzer, 2008). Using data from the German Socio-Economic Panel, researchers compared the wellbeing of people in East Germany who had lost the opportunity to volunteer (because of the collapse of organizations during the reunification of Germany) to those who retained volunteering. They found that life satisfaction decreased less over time for those who were still able to volunteer after the reunification, compared to those who had lost their volunteering position. This effect remained when including covariates, and was not explained by a loss of employment status, since respondents did not lose their jobs.

A small experimental literature examines the effects of everyday acts of helping on mood. Although this is not the same as long-term volunteering behavior, it does provide clues to potential benefits experienced from regularly helping others. These studies find that participants who are randomly assigned to help others experience immediate short-term bursts in their happiness (Harris, 1977; Williamson & Clark, 1989). Another study experimentally examines longer term effects of such behaviors, and thus better approximates the true experience of regularly volunteering (Tkach, 2005). In this study, students were randomly assigned to perform small acts of kindness per week over a 6-week period (compared to control group), and then were followed up one month later to examine longer term effects of the intervention. The frequency (low versus high) and variety (low versus high) of the kind acts was also varied in the study. The researcher found that there was an increase in wellbeing over time (e.g., higher levels of self-acceptance, happiness, and subjective wellbeing, and less self-reported stress and negative affect) for those who performed small acts of kindness, but only under certain conditions. In order to experience these psychological benefits, participants needed to vary their acts of kindness (i.e., different acts to different people) throughout the study time period, and perform more (i.e., nine) rather than fewer (i.e., three) weekly acts of kindness. Giving in a wide variety of ways likely allows each act of giving to remain fresh and enjoyable, rather than becoming routine. Another important finding of this study was that individuals who scored low in dispositional empathy, the tendency to readily experience and care about others' feelings, were most positively impacted by the intervention. This suggests that attempts to increase psychological wellbeing via giving interventions should either: (1) target those who are less likely to give in the first place (i.e., those lower in empathy), or (2) focus on increasing empathy as a mechanism to increasing wellbeing via giving. Participants in the control group exhibited a decrease in wellbeing over the period of the study.

One study actually randomly assigned people to either volunteer or not and then measured their wellbeing over time (Switzer, Simmons, Dew, Regalski, & Wang, 1995). In this study, seventh-grade students were randomly assigned by homeroom to a volunteer group ($N = 85$) and a demographically matched control group ($N = 86$). Students in the volunteer group were required to volunteer in some capacity for the full school year (about 1 hr per week), and their volunteer service was verified and monitored. They also attended a weekly seminar to discuss their

voluntary activities and kept a weekly journal. The researchers found no differences between the two groups on pre-intervention measures. Nor were there any main effects of the volunteering intervention. However, there was an interaction with gender such that boys in the volunteering group had higher self-esteem, less depressive affect, more school involvement, and fewer problem behaviors after the intervention. There was no effect of volunteering on girls. This study again suggests that giving interventions will likely be most effective at increasing psychological wellbeing on groups (like males) that typically score lower on empathy (Eisenberg & Lennon, 1983). However, it is unclear whether the volunteering itself helped the boys or whether there was some benefit of the weekly group seminars in themselves. Future studies need to carefully address such potential confounds.

Other-Focused Traits

Several studies find that those who score high on other-focused traits, such as compassion, altruism, or empathy, experience benefits to their wellbeing. For example, in several studies examining different populations (e.g., high school students, college students, people with chronic illnesses), researchers have found associations between these traits and low levels of anxiety, hopelessness, and depression (Au, Wong, Lai, & Chan, 2011; Ironson et al., 2002; Steffen & Masters, 2005). This relationship persists even when confounds such as coping styles and social support are taken into account (Au et al., 2011). Moreover, even in high-stress occupations like health care, which are susceptible to compassion fatigue, people with other-focused traits experience high job satisfaction and low stress and burnout (Burtson & Stichler, 2010; Dyrbye et al., 2010).

Longitudinal evidence provides some support that the direction of causality goes from other-focused traits to improved wellbeing: a longitudinal study found that adolescents with altruistic personalities reported better mental health 60 years later, even when considering their baseline health and social class (Wink & Dillon, 2002). Since other-oriented people tend to seek out opportunities to help others (Davis, 1983; Smith, 1992; Steffen & Masters, 2005) and also are comfortable in accepting others' help (Cosley, McCoy, Saslow, & Epel, 2010; Steffen & Masters, 2005), it is likely that these effects exist in part because of strong social support networks. Since dispositional empathy is declining over time in the United

States (Konrath, O'Brien, & Hsing, 2011) while anxiety and neuroticism are simultaneously rising (Twenge, 2000), the issue of how empathic traits are related to wellbeing will likely become more important in the future.

Corporate Philanthropy

The majority of the literature on giving and wellbeing has focused on individual-level volunteering, but there is an emerging scholarly interest in skills-based, or corporate, volunteering. Most Fortune 500 companies (90%) sponsor volunteering activities through their companies, donating employees' time and skills to charitable and community causes (Boccalandro, 2009; Grant, 2012). In addition, corporate philanthropy in the form of financial donations or sponsorship is quite commonplace. Employees express deeper connection and commitment to companies that have active corporate volunteering programs (Grant, Dutton, & Rosso, 2008). In anecdotes and case studies, work-based volunteering programs seem to fulfil individuals' deeper needs for meaning and purpose in their lives (Grant et al., 2008), but no known study has directly assessed the possible effect of such programs on wellbeing. One study randomly assigned employees to receive either a "prosocial bonus"—a sum of money to donate to a charity of their choice—or a control condition (Norton, Anik, Aknin, & Dunn, 2012). The researchers found that employees who donated the money felt happier and expressed higher job satisfaction compared to controls, but only for relatively large sums of money (equivalent to $100, and not $50). A second study in the same paper found that prosocial spending led to better team performance compared to spending on oneself. Overall, there has been limited research on the association between corporate-based giving and employee wellbeing, and this is an important area for future research.

Summarizing Effects of Giving Money and Time

Taken together, this research literature provides pretty strong evidence that feeling happy causes people to give and help more, and that giving and helping cause increases in happiness and subjective wellbeing, and decreases in negative affect. In fact, there seems to be a positive feedback loop such that happiness begets giving and giving begets happiness and so on. The next section examines whether there is evidence that these results extend across cultures.

Question 2: Where Do these Effects Exist? Do these Effects Exist Across Cultures?

The vast majority of the literature cited above unfortunately restricts analyses to an examination of the effects of giving money and time within a single culture, and often only among Western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic populations (Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010). What evidence is there that these effects extend across human societies? Are these results simply a reflection of particular religious or cultural values that encourage a particular form of moral behavior?

The best known cross-cultural study on the association between giving *time* and wellbeing examined this question in a sample of 23 European cultures using data from the Wellbeing Module in the European Social Survey (Plagnol & Huppert, 2010). Importantly, this study examined two different conceptualizations of wellbeing, both more *hedonic*, or focused on pleasant feelings (e.g., happiness, life satisfaction, positive emotions, and the absence of negative emotions), and more *eudaimonic*, or focused on fulfillment and personal meaning. It also examined two different conceptualizations of volunteering, both more *formal* (i.e., for an organization) and more *informal* (i.e., everyday acts of helping toward non-relatives). Given that it was cross-sectional, it also importantly controlled for demographics, health, psychological resources, social integration, and cultural values. The researchers found that formal volunteering was generally associated with higher wellbeing (both hedonic and eudemonic), and that this was especially true in cultures that had relatively lower rates of volunteering. Informal volunteering seemed to be especially beneficial in cultures with middle-level frequencies of volunteering. Although both types of volunteering were associated with positive indicators of wellbeing in certain cultures, neither type of volunteering was associated with lower negative affect.

Another study finds that the psychological benefits associated with giving *money* to others exist in an even wider variety of cultures worldwide (Aknin et al., 2013). Over 230,000 respondents who were taken from nationally representative samples in 136 countries were asked about whether they had donated money to a charity in the past month and were also asked to report their subjective wellbeing. The researchers found that giving money to charities was positively associated with subjective wellbeing in 122 of 136 countries (90%) and that the correlation reached significance in 81 (60%) of them. Even though a greater proportion of individuals from richer

countries reported charitable donations as compared to those from poorer countries, it was found that the relationship between donating money and subjective wellbeing was similar *regardless of the average income* of a country, and that the effect remained even when controlling for individual demographic information (e.g., age, gender, individual income, whether respondents had trouble paying for food in the last year). Importantly, when the same researchers examined these questions experimentally across cultures, they found that participants from both Canada and Uganda who were randomly assigned to recall a time of prosocial giving experienced higher levels of happiness compared to those who were asked to recall an instance of personal spending (Aknin et al., 2013).

From this study it can be concluded that prosocial spending is associated with increased wellbeing even in poor countries, but future studies would need to explore relative levels of giving. Are there limits in the percentage of giving that is associated with happiness in higher poverty countries? Also, although the correlations were in the expected direction in 90% of the countries worldwide, what about the 10% of countries in which this relationship was not found?

There is strong cross-cultural evidence that giving time and money is related to psychological wellbeing, but this does not seem to be a human universal. It would be very interesting to try to understand more about the cultures in which giving is *not* related to wellbeing, in order to better understand why such an effect should exist at all.

Question 3: When, or in Which Circumstances, Do these Effects Exist?

In order to design effective interventions it is important to understand whether and how other factors might influence the relationship between giving and psychological wellbeing. The review below focuses on motives for helping others, the helper's available resources, and features of the giving situation.

The Role of Motives

There are many reasons that people give their time and money to others. Many people give time and money for *other-oriented* reasons, for example, because they are genuinely concerned about others in need, or because

their loved ones value a particular charitable organization (Clary & Snyder, 1999). However, people may also have more *self-oriented* reasons for giving, for example, wanting to look good to others (Harbaugh, 1998), or to feel good about oneself (Clary & Snyder, 1999). Other self-oriented reasons for volunteering one's time might be to escape one's troubles and problems, to learn new skills, or to promote one's career (Clary & Snyder, 1999).

There are not many studies examining the role of motives for giving and helping on psychological wellbeing. One study found that college students who volunteered for altruistic reasons (i.e., because of compassion for needy people) were more likely to have secure attachment styles and also experienced less loneliness (Gillath et al., 2005). However, those who volunteered for a different other-oriented reason, because loved ones cared about a cause, actually had less secure attachment styles. Finally, students who volunteered to receive some sort of personal benefit also had less secure attachment styles. The correlational nature of the study does not allow us to determine whether the motives for volunteering led to these outcomes, or whether people with particular psychological profiles are more likely to volunteer for specific reasons. Moreover, I know of no studies that track people's changes in motives across time and situations. Another important point is that people can hold multiple types of motives at the same time, so studies should control for different types of motives to examine specific effects of each one.

Another correlational study found that volunteers and staff who reported self-oriented reasons for working with elderly clients experienced higher levels of caregiver stress (Ferrari, Luhrs, & Lyman, 2007). On the other hand, those who worked with these clients for more other-oriented reasons experienced greater satisfaction with their positions. Again, this study is correlational, but does allow for the possibility that the psychological benefits of giving and helping may only be experienced when people give for more altruistic reasons.

Finally, another correlational study found that people with more extrinsic goals in life (i.e., those who value money and career over family and friends) benefit less from volunteering (Meier & Stutzer, 2008). This may be taken as indirect evidence that motives for volunteering affect wellbeing, but it is also possible that more extrinsic individuals are simply choosing different volunteer placements (e.g., political organizations) compared to more intrinsic individuals (e.g., nursing home).

Some of our own research is applicable to this question, but examines physical health outcomes (i.e., mortality) rather than psychological wellbeing

(Konrath, Fuhrel-Forbis, Lou, & Brown, 2012). In a longitudinal study of older adult volunteers, we find that individuals who volunteer for more other-oriented reasons have a lower risk of mortality 4 years later, whereas those who volunteer for more self-oriented reasons experience no such benefit, and at times, might actually experience an increase in mortality risk. Since individuals can simultaneously hold both self and other-oriented motives, we entered both types of motives into statistical models to examine independent effects of self-oriented versus other-oriented motives in a single study. Importantly, the longitudinal nature of the design allows us to establish the direction of causality (i.e., that motives lead to later mortality risk), and we also rule out a number of potential third variables (e.g., demographic variables, health, wellbeing, personality traits), thus strengthening the potential that these motives directly cause positive health outcomes.

In an unpublished study, the author of this chapter randomly assigned participants to either think about *how others benefited* from (or would benefit from) their volunteering efforts, or *how they personally benefited* (or would benefit) from them (Konrath, 2012). Individuals who were assigned to focus on how others might benefit from volunteering experienced immediate boosts to their happiness compared to those who focused on how they might personally benefit. This effect was only significant for those participants who were currently regular volunteers. Moreover, the effect was especially pronounced for those who were low in dispositional empathy. Taken together, this study provides the only known evidence that other-oriented motives for volunteering actually cause increased psychological wellbeing, whereas self-oriented motives cause decreased psychological wellbeing.

More research is needed to better tease apart the potential short-term and long-term psychological consequences of different motives for giving time and money to others. This is an essential step that is needed before interventions can be tested, because interventions that do not account for people's self-oriented desire to *feel good by doing good* have the potential to backfire and ultimately decrease wellbeing.

The Role of Resources

One issue that needs to be more carefully addressed in the giving literature is whether giving time and money to others is still beneficial when people give beyond their capacity. Everyone has limited time, energy, and money,

and it is possible that there may be critical thresholds after which giving will no longer be beneficial. Moreover, people with less time or money should find it more costly to give and this might perhaps attenuate potential psychological benefits of giving. People who are exhausted, depressed, or otherwise emotionally depleted should also be less likely to benefit if they give beyond their capacity. These hypotheses are theoretical and speculative at this point, but important to consider (S. Brown, Brown, & Preston, 2012).

There is not much of a literature to draw on in terms of research evidence for these hypotheses. In one study of charitable donations, there was no cutoff point after which the benefits of giving declined: giving any amount of money had linear effects on later psychological wellbeing (Choi & Kim, 2011). In addition, prosocial giving of money had psychological benefits even in poor countries (Aknin et al., 2013). However, both of these studies relied on absolute monetary values, rather than relative values (e.g., percentage of disposable income). It would be important to see if benefits were reduced at specific relative levels of giving.

In terms of giving one's time to others, there do seem to be cutoff points after which there are no additional benefits, or there are even sometimes harms, associated with giving. For example, although not designed to examine psychological wellbeing specifically, one study found that although there are physical health benefits of volunteering up to 40 hr per year, volunteering more than 40 hr per year does not add any additional health benefits (Musick, Herzog, & House, 1999). Another study found a curvilinear relationship between hours spent volunteering and psychological wellbeing (Windsor, Anstey, & Rodgers, 2008). Respondents who volunteered between 100 and 800 hr per year (2–15 hr per week) experienced the highest psychological wellbeing. Those who volunteered less or more than this had low psychological wellbeing.

Taken together, these studies confirm the benefit of moderate levels of volunteering, and future research is needed to examine whether and how available time and money influence the potential benefits associated with giving to others. In particular researchers should attend to both objective indicators (e.g., income, employment status) *and* subjective perceptions (e.g., feelings of being too busy or burdened) of available resources. It is likely that both of these would predict whether people are likely to experience benefits of giving time and money to others. In addition, studies would have to simultaneously compare the relative effects of giving time versus giving money, since they are positively related (Amato, 1985; Apinunmahakul &

Devlin, 2008; Bryant, Jeon-Slaughter, Kang, & Tax, 2003; Duncan, 1999; Farmer & Fedor, 2001; Feldman, 2010; Matsunaga, 2007; Reed & Selbee, 2001; Schervish & Havens, 1997). In addition, researchers should examine the *fit* between the giver's resources and the type of giving. It is possible that people who have a lot of money, but less time, will benefit more from giving money compared to volunteering. On the other hand, those who do not have much money, but have more available time, might benefit more from giving their time, since time is a more abundant resource for them. There is indeed evidence for the latter hypothesis (Morrow-Howell, Hong, & Tang, 2009), but more research is needed to better understand how available time and money impact the benefits associated with giving.

Features of the Giving Situation

Another factor that may influence the potential benefits of giving to others is the giving situation. There would likely be different outcomes associated with different modes of giving time and money. For example, volunteers who directly interact with recipients should be more likely to experience benefits compared to those who do not directly interact with those for whom the help is intended. This is because such personal interactions may trigger biological mechanisms (e.g., the olfactory system; see Question 5) related to evolved caregiving systems. Indeed, a meta-analysis of 37 correlational studies of volunteering and wellbeing found a substantially larger relationship (double the effect size) between volunteering and wellbeing for those whose positions involved directly helping others compared to those who had more indirect helping roles (Wheeler et al., 1998). I know of no similar study in the literature on giving money, but would posit that there would be a more pronounced psychological benefit associated with donating money in person as compared to mailing a check or making an online contribution. This should especially be true in cases where there is no existing close relationship between the giver and the recipient. Based on this, it is likely that prosocial interventions may be enhanced if they are also designed to bring givers and recipients in proximity to one another. However, researchers should consider cultural and individual differences in this. For example, some religions view anonymous giving as a higher form of charitable activity because recipients cannot receive praise for their actions (e.g., Judaism, Christianity). In addition, some people might find it stressful or embarrassing to directly interact with recipients of their generosity.

Question 4: Who Benefits Most from Giving, and When Giving to Whom?

This section is an extension of the previous one except that instead of exploring which situations or contexts are most beneficial, it explores intrapersonal and interpersonal factors that may be associated with the most benefits from giving to others. It is important to be cognizant of whether there are boundary conditions of the positive effects of giving time and money to others.

The Role of Individual Differences

Age and life stage.

We have already established that people from various cultures around the world experience psychological benefits when giving to others. What about people of various age groups? The literature is predominantly focused on older and middle-aged adults, leaving open an important gap in the literature. When the effects of volunteering on younger versus older adults are directly compared, researchers typically find greater effects for older adults (Musick & Wilson, 2003; Van Willigen, 2000). However, volunteering is still associated with benefits for younger people, even if the benefits are smaller. For example, other work finds that the relationship between volunteering and psychological wellbeing also exists among adolescents (Schwartz, Keyl, Marcum, & Bode, 2009; Switzer et al., 1995). What remains to be seen is whether there are psychological benefits associated with giving in very young children, or whether these benefits only accrue after several years of cultural socialization on the importance of giving and sharing. These are important questions for future research.

One's stage of life may influence whether people volunteer, how often, and why. Studies find, for example, that people with full-time jobs and preschool-age children are less likely to volunteer (Oesterle, Johnson, & Mortimer, 2004). Parents of older children more commonly volunteer, but often for their children's organizations (Sundeen, 1990), and it is unclear whether this family-motivated type of volunteering has similar effects on wellbeing as volunteering for other reasons. Younger adults tend to volunteer to make new friends or to help their career, whereas older adults report volunteering to strengthen existing relationships or to help and serve others (Okun & Schultz, 2003; Omoto, Snyder, & Martino, 2000).

Gender.

There seem to be different effects of giving for males versus females, however, overall patterns would become more apparent with a more thorough review or meta-analysis. For example, recent studies have found that the adverse *physiological* consequences of being self-centered were worse for men compared to women (Edelstein, Yim, & Quas, 2010; Reinhard, Konrath, Lopez, & Cameron, 2012). Men who scored high in the personality trait narcissism had higher baseline cortisol concentrations than women who scored high in the same trait. This was especially true for more interpersonally relevant aspects of narcissism (e.g., manipulating others) compared to more intrapersonal aspects of it (e.g., vanity or extreme self-sufficiency). This makes the results of another study less surprising. Boys who were assigned to a long-term volunteering intervention experienced improvements to their wellbeing over time, whereas there was no effect of the intervention on girls (Switzer et al., 1995). Giving and caring are to some extent stereotypically gendered activities, so it is possible that for females, these expectations and norms increase the obligation or external motivation to help, thus reducing potential benefits.

Other studies find that helping behavior is associated with increased wellbeing for both males and females, but it really depends on the type of helping (Schwartz et al., 2009). For example, males seem to benefit most from helping family members, whereas females benefit most from more general helping behaviors. In much of the literature, gender is included as a covariate rather than a moderator, and future studies should consider examining the patterns between giving and psychological wellbeing among males and females separately.

Social connectedness.

The literature on various types of social embeddedness suggest that giving to others is most beneficial to those who are less socially connected. For example, those who scored low on dispositional empathy were found to benefit most in terms of their happiness after a kindness intervention (Tkach, 2005) and after they were induced to focus on other-oriented, rather than self-oriented, reasons for volunteering (Konrath, 2012). In both studies, high empathy participants had higher levels of happiness regardless of their experimental conditions, so there was not much higher to go. Low empathy participants "caught up" to the happiness levels of their higher empathy counterparts only under conditions of other-oriented behaviors or thoughts.

This is likely because giving and focusing on others is more common among people higher in empathy, so they may becontinually reaping the benefits in terms of psychological wellbeing.

Other research confirms the general principle that people who are lower in social connectedness experience more benefits from giving to others. For example, one study found that older adults who had suffered from a loss of role identity benefited more from volunteering in terms of their psychological wellbeing (Greenfield & Marks, 2004). Another study found that the relationship between volunteering and psychological wellbeing was moderated by levels of social integration, such that those who had lower integration benefited the most from volunteering (Piliavin & Siegl, 2007). Taken together, these results suggest that volunteering has potential to be a powerful intervention for wellbeing for those who may need it the most.

Religion.

Most religions strongly encourage caring for the poor and needy as part of religious devotion. Indeed, people who are religious tend to volunteer more and make more charitable donations (Monsma, 2007; Morgan, 1983; Regnerus, Smith, & Sikkink, 1998; Wilson & Janoski, 1995). At the same time, meta-analyses have found that religion is associated with improved wellbeing (Hackney & Sanders, 2003; Witter, Stock, Okun, & Haring, 1985). This association between religion and wellbeing is present in many different cultures worldwide (Inglehart, 2010; Ruiter & De Graaf, 2006), although the specific routes from religiosity to wellbeing are unclear. It would be interesting to directly compare the effects of participation in religious volunteering or charitable activities compared to secular ones, however, I am not aware of any studies that do so. One study finds that simple membership in religious organizations has the largest effect on wellbeing compared to membership in other nonreligious organizations (e.g., professional societies, political clubs, hobby clubs; Cutler, 1976). It is possible that religious givers receive an extra boost to their wellbeing after giving, perhaps because there are added social or psychological rewards that come with fulfilling one's religious worldviews. However, it is possible that giving time and money could be seen as required and obligatory, and thus, there may be reduced benefits associated with giving for religious people. It is also possible that religious people might benefit more from volunteering in religious organizations compared to secular ones. Future research should more carefully unpack specific effects of different types of giving on different types of people.

Does the Target of Giving Matter?

One question that is often ignored in the literature is whether there are stronger effects for giving to certain people (or organizations) rather than others. There is some evidence that the relationship between the giver and recipient may matter in terms of predicting outcomes. For example, one study found that giving money to closer others had a more powerful effect on wellbeing than giving to less close others (Aknin et al., 2011), however, future research needs to examine the role of obligatory versus voluntary giving in such relationships. We similarly find that older adults only experience the *physical health* benefits of giving social support to others when the recipients of such support are their own children, as compared to less emotionally and genetically close others (M. Liu & Konrath, 2013). Taken together, these studies suggest that although there are documented benefits to giving time and money more generally (e.g., in the Experience Corps studies), it is possible that the closer the relationship, the stronger those benefits are likely to be. It is rare for studies to directly compare the effects of giving to different types of recipients, so this hypothesis remains preliminary. Moreover, with volunteering it is possible for relationships to develop through repeated interactions with the same recipients (e.g., tutoring the same child over a long period of time), so it would be interesting to explore whether benefits of giving become stronger as relationships become closer.

Question 5: Why Should Giving Time or Money Have any Psychological Benefits at All?

The question of *why* giving money and time should affect wellbeing is an important one. There are a number of theories that have been posited in the literature, ranging from more social and psychological pathways to more biological ones. I first discuss some potential social and psychological pathways that have been presented in prior research. Our recent work examines more biological pathways (S. Brown et al., 2012; S. Brown, Konrath, Seng, & Smith, 2011), and thus I will next review a conceptual model that integrates a number of the findings presented above.

Social and Psychological Pathways

Past research has posited several social and psychological reasons why giving time and money should benefit givers psychologically. These psychological factors may work with, or independent of, biological systems designed for parenting (see next section). For example, it is hypothesized that giving one's time is associated with increased psychological wellbeing within older adults because volunteering helps to maintain important social identities and roles while other roles are becoming less salient (Krause, Herzog, & Baker, 1992). Related to this, *response shift theory* suggests that giving to others can help to change people's views of themselves over time, and can increase their confidence, self-esteem, and self-awareness, and reduce their depressive symptoms (Schwartz & Sendor, 1999). These changed views of the self are particularly adaptive when people experience challenging life circumstances such as chronic physical illnesses.

Other work suggests that giving to others can help people to realize their existential needs for meaning, purpose, and fulfillment in life, each of which are needed to experience optimal psychological health (i.e., eudaimonic wellbeing; Krause et al., 1992; Morrow-Howell et al., 2009; Musick & Wilson, 2003; Thoits & Hewitt, 2001). In addition, one practical way that giving to others might ultimately lead to improved wellbeing is that it can increase one's social network, and thus one's access to informal social support (Greenfield & Marks, 2004; Krause et al., 1992; Li, 2007; Li & Ferraro, 2005; Musick & Wilson, 2003; Wilson & Musick, 1997).

Biological Pathways

Although not models of psychological wellbeing per se, animal models of parenting (Numan, 2006) provide some insight into how giving time and money may be related to improved stress regulation, faster recovery from depressive symptoms, reduced symptoms of inflammation, and better physical health. These models seem especially important in light of longitudinal studies that find giving (but not receiving) instrumental (including financial) and emotional support to others predicts reduced mortality risk (S. Brown, Nesse, Vinokur, & Smith, 2003), even among caregivers who are presumably stressed or strained by their giving experience (S. Brown, Smith et al., 2009). An independent laboratory study conducted with older adults demonstrated a similar pattern in which giving, but not receiving, predicted reduced morbidity (W. M. Brown, Consedine, & Magai, 2005).

Attempts to understand the mechanism for these beneficial health associations suggest a stress-buffering feature of giving behaviors. For example, giving behavior predicts accelerated recovery from depressive symptoms that accompany spousal loss, but only among those with a heightened stress response (S. Brown, Brown, House, & Smith, 2008). In a direct test of the stress-buffering hypothesis, giving behavior was only associated with reduced mortality risk among those who had been exposed to a stressful life event (Poulin, Brown, Dillard, & Smith, 2013). Among those who had not experienced a stressful life event, there was no association of giving and mortality risk. Importantly, all of the studies reviewed above routinely controlled for a variety of factors that could influence the giving/stress/health relationship, including preexisting health, personality, health behaviors, and social variables such as social integration, equity, or social contact.

Given these findings, an attempt to describe the underlying neural circuitry that links giving and stress regulation was recently advanced (S. Brown et al., 2012). In this model, neural circuitry that motivates parenting behavior was integrated with human studies of parental responses and social psychological approaches to prosocial behavior. The net result locates the motivational basis for some forms of giving within the medial preoptic area of the hypothalamus (MPOA). The general argument is that the neural circuits which evolved to motivate parenting behavior are recruited even in non-parenting circumstances to motivate *many forms of giving behavior*, especially those characterized by "other-focused" motivation (Figure 11.1).

The model is pretty theoretical at this point, with the majority of evidence being drawn from studies of parenting, caregiving, and giving social support, however, in our lab we are examining whether this model generalizes beyond these types of situations and into many types of giving behavior. We have

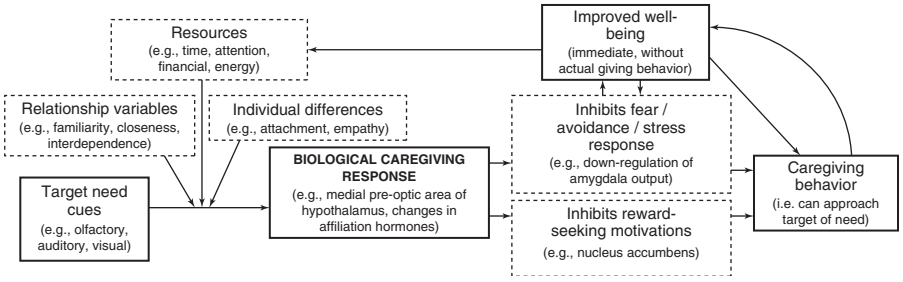

Figure 11.1. A Biological Model of Caregiving Motivation, Stress Regulation, and Psychological Wellbeing.

found preliminary evidence that those who are randomly assigned to give help to others in a laboratory setting experience physiological benefits (e.g., a rise in oxytocin and progesterone) that are consistent with this model (S. Brown, Konrath, Seng, & Smith, 2011). We believe that these hypothesized processes are also at play during philanthropic behavior such as giving money and volunteering one's time.

Similar to the animal model of parenting, we predict that whether giving occurs is a product of conflict between avoidance motivation, reward-seeking drives, and other-focused motivation. Whether the MPOA is strong enough to trigger motor programs for helping is theorized to depend on personality factors such as attachment style that indicate whether there are sufficient resources to invest, situational factors such as a preexisting social bond or interdependence that assures a low risk of exploitation (S. Brown & Brown, 2006), and genuine signals or cues for need, possibly mediated by the amygdala, the subgenual area of the anterior cingulate cortex (sgACC), and the medial orbital frontal cortex (mOFC). These factors are suggested to increase the signal strength of the MPOA either by releasing oxytocin (sgACC, mOFC) or by the transmission of olfactory cues (amygdala).

In this model, there are numerous ways that activation of the parenting neural circuitry could lead to improved psychological wellbeing (see Figure 11.1). For example, in order for the MPOA to trigger motor programs for helping it must interfere with avoidance motivation, which is effectively the stress response involving projections from the amygdala to the periaqueductal gray (PAG). In addition to regulating stress, MPOA-directed helping must also disinhibit the ventral pallidum by triggering dopamine release in the nucleus accumbens, a brain region that mediates hoarding, chemical addiction, gambling, sexual and food preferences, and other reward-seeking drives.

Most interesting for the purposes of discussing psychological wellbeing is that at least one study shows that the action of dopamine in the nucleus accumbens in this circuit is inhibitory, so giving that is under the control of the MPOA may effectively arise from upstream inhibition of reward-seeking motives. Moreover, a heightened sense of wellbeing in the case of helping could derive from its activation of the ventral pallidum, known to have receptors for opioids (Mitrovic & Napier, 1995).

Finally, at the neuroendocrine level, hormones such as oxytocin and progesterone, which are both known for their stress-relieving properties, appear to play an important role in giving (S. Brown & Brown, 2006;

S. Brown, Fredrickson, et al., 2009). For example, one recent study compared the donation behavior of participants who were given an oxytocin infusion to those who were given a placebo. The oxytocin infusion had no effect on whether or not people donated, however, it was associated with a 48% rise in donation amount in those who chose to give (Barraza, McCullough, Ahmadi, & Zak, 2011).

Question 6: What Next?

This chapter reviewed research on the psychological benefits of giving to others, and presented a neurobiological model of caregiving motivation that can help to account for why and under which circumstances these effects should exist. I now turn to potential implications of such research, both for givers themselves and for charitable organizations.

One exciting implication of this work based on other recent research is that giving should have effects on wellbeing that extend beyond individual givers. Recent work has found that happiness is "contagious," and can spread up to three degrees of social connection (i.e., to a friend of a friend of a friend (Fowler & Christakis, 2008; Hill, Rand, Nowak, & Christakis, 2010). In other words, giving time and money can reap psychological benefits to the recipients, givers, and to broader social networks connected to them. Considering the positive feedback loop between giving and happiness makes this an even more powerful potential intervention (Aknin et al., 2012; Thoits & Hewitt, 2001). Giving makes people happier, and happy people give more, with rippling effects on other people's happiness extending beyond their own small circles.

Another implication of this work is that besides increasing psychological wellbeing, there is a large body of literature finding that giving to others is associated with a number of *physical health* benefits for givers, including stronger immune systems, a reduced risk of serious illnesses, and a lower mortality risk (Konrath & Brown, 2012). Although it is unclear whether these physical health effects exist because happier people have stronger immune systems (Dillon, Minchoff, & Baker, 1985), better cardiovascular health (Fredrickson & Levenson, 1998), and live longer (Chida & Steptoe, 2008; Danner, Snowdon, & Friesen, 2001; Ostir, Markides, Black, & Goodwin, 2000), the fact that there are physical health benefits associated with giving makes giving to others an even more exciting potential intervention.

A third implication that is that one does not have to have a preexisting trait of giving or generosity in order to receive psychological benefits. Experimental studies demonstrate the potential teachability of giving money and time to others, and therefore its strong potential as an easy-to-implement low-cost intervention (e.g., Dunn et al., 2008; Harris, 1977; Switzer et al., 1995; Tkach, 2005; Williamson & Clark, 1989). Although this review helps to clarify under which circumstances giving is likely to have the most benefits, it is clear that giving time or money can increase people's happiness and psychological wellbeing: even in people who may not normally practice such acts of giving. Future work should clarify the effects of giving on "skilled" or "practiced" givers compared to more "novice" givers.

Practical Advice to Givers

Based on the ideas presented in this review, here is some advice to givers on when they are likely to experience benefits:

- You do not have to give much to enjoy the benefits of giving. Even giving a small amount of money can increase the happiness of givers (Aknin et al., 2012; Dunn et al., 2008). As for time, there is some evidence that giving too little or too much of one's time as a volunteer can both be problematic (Windsor et al., 2008). It is also possible that giving too much money could also attenuate potential benefits to wellbeing, but future research will help to clarify this.
- It is (literally) the thought that counts (Aknin et al., 2012, 2013; Williamson & Clark, 1989). Although no studies have directly compared effects of thinking about giving to actual giving, studies do find that one does not need to actually give money or time to others to experience psychological benefits. It is sufficient to simply recall a recent time that one gave (Aknin et al., 2012, 2013), or to agree to help without actually helping (Williamson & Clark, 1989). It is likely that the simple act of shifting one's thoughts to focus on others makes people happier. Our pilot data on other-oriented motives for volunteering support this possibility (Konrath, 2012). Giving money and time can help us to shift our thoughts in an other-directed way, but many other behaviors can do the same thing (e.g., loving kindness meditation; Hutcherson, Seppala, & Gross, 2008).
- The effects of giving on happiness seem to be *immediate* (based on experimental studies of giving money), but it is unclear how long-lasting

they are. One study finds that practicing small acts of kindness for a period of 6 weeks has effects that last up to one month later (Tkach, 2005), and another finds that it has effects on happiness 6–8 weeks later (Dunn et al., 2008). Longer term follow-up studies should be undertaken in future research.

- Although the effects of giving money and time will likely be larger when such giving is voluntary, there is evidence that even when people are asked to do it (e.g., in a laboratory or classroom setting), they still experience some increases in wellbeing (Dunn et al., 2008; Switzer et al., 1995; Tkach, 2005).
- The social aspects of giving time and money seem to matter. Giving to *closer others* seems to have more powerful effects on wellbeing than giving to less close others (Aknin et al., 2011), and there is a larger relationship between volunteering and wellbeing for those who are *directly helping others* compared to those who have more indirect helping roles (Wheeler et al., 1998). Moreover, helping for *other-oriented reasons* is associated with more positive effects than helping for self-oriented reasons (Ferrari et al., 2007; Gillath et al., 2005; Konrath & Fuhrel-Forbis, 2011).
- Is all lost because you have read this chapter and now *know* about how good it is to give? No! Giving may be beneficial even when one is aware that giving is beneficial (Anik et al., 2009). However, it is unlikely to beneficial when one gives *in order to receive* the benefits. In other words, givers can still become happier after giving if they know this can happen, but not if they give in order to receive a "warm glow" (Andreoni, 1989, 1990).

Practical Advice to Nonprofit Organizations

The entire focus of this chapter has been on psychological benefits of giving time and money to others. What has not been discussed thus far is the obvious difficulties that nonprofit organizations face in recruiting reliable and long-term volunteers and raising money for their cause. If giving time and money is so beneficial to individuals, then why do people regularly fail to do so when given the opportunity (Andreoni, Rao, & Trachtman, 2011; Dana, Cain, & Dawes, 2006)?

One reason may be that individuals do not realize that giving time and money to others has such beneficial effects when compared to spending time and money on oneself. They may indeed realize that there *can sometimes be*

a warm glow associated with giving (Andreoni, 1989, 1990), but may not realize that this is the norm rather than the exception. One study directly addresses this issue. When participants were asked to directly compare which is likely to make them happiest, they incorrectly guessed that spending money on themselves would make them happier than spending it on others (Dunn et al., 2008).

We recommend that organizations share the good news that there are positive benefits associated with giving. In fact, there is evidence that telling potential donors that giving will make them happy actually increases their donations (Benson & Catt, 1978). A similar rise in donations occurs when charities give small gifts to potential donors (Falk, 2007). However, organizations must remember that the benefits that givers experience from giving may dissipate if the motives to give become focused on these personal benefits. Recruitment efforts should be strategically designed to address these issues. Without maintaining this other-oriented focus on giving, volunteers and donors may become more easily depleted, and thus in the long run, they may give less. Organizations should also remember that happier people are likely to give and help more (see Question 1 for a review). Thus, recruitment efforts should attempt to elicit positive emotions in potential givers in the hopes that these positive moods will translate into willing helpers with open checkbooks.

Another thing to consider is that time and money have different automatic meanings to people. Thinking about giving time activates more emotional mindsets in individuals while thinking about money activates more utilitarian and individualistic mindsets (W. Liu & Aacker, 2008; Vohs et al., 2006). One way to increase voluntary donations of both time and money is to use careful wording of volunteer and charitable donation requests. Studies have found that if people are first asked how much time they would be willing to give, and then later asked about possible donations, they give both more time *and* more money (W. Liu & Aacker, 2008). Asking for the money first can backfire and lead to less of both.

Finally, organizations should be aware that giving both time and money increases when participants communicate with or empathize with recipients (Andreoni & Rao, 2011; Xiao & Houser, 2005). Nonprofit organizations might focus on creating such bonds between givers and recipients both because they seem to be associated with greater psychological wellbeing in givers, as we reviewed in the current chapter, but also because givers will likely give more when they feel a personal connection to recipients of their help.

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Abstract: This chapter reviews research on the relationship between giving money (i.e., philanthropy) and time (i.e., volunteering) and givers' psychological wellbeing. It summarize a wide body of research literature suggesting correlational, longitudinal, and experimental links between giving time and money to others and psychological wellbeing. The chapter examines the extent to which these effects generalize across cultures, circumstances, types of givers, and types of recipients. Because most of the literature also does not offer explanations as to why giving should improve psychological wellbeing, it also outlines a potential neurobiological model that may help to explain such an effect. This theoretical model of caregiving motivation can help to specify under which situations, and why, giving should lead to better living. The chapter ends with a discussion of practical implications of this review for both givers and nonprofit organizations.