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The effects of temporary states on helping behavior

Donna Mary Veraldi

The University of Montana

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THE EFFECTS OF TEMPORARY STATES
ON HELPING BEHAVIOR

By

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B.A., Eastern Montana College, 1971

Presented in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

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Approved by:

[Signatures]

Chairman, Board of Examiners
Dean, Graduate School
Date Dec 9, 1976
The present study was designed to provide an explanation of differences in helping rates among success, failure, and guilt states. It was based on Zellner's (1970) influencibility hypothesis. Subjects were run in a 4 (Control, Success, Failure, and Guilt) x 2 (Request and Requirement) x 2 (Male and Female) design. The study found that different rates of helping behavior were effected by an interaction between internal and external events. As well, information from pre- and post-manipulation questionnaires provided some new information concerning the feelings of subjects in the various states. Methods of examining these findings more fully in future research were discussed.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Definition of the Problem

Altruism is difficult to define. In addition to being a complex concept and to having the imprecise common usage of any term, it has a number of ethical and philosophic associations. Webster's (1954) defines altruism as: "Regard for, and devotion to, the interests of others as an ethical principle—opposed to egoism or selfishness." The term has become entangled with many arguments concerning man's basic nature. Freud (1901) stated that individuals are hedonistic; to support his theory, it would be necessary to demonstrate that no matter how self-sacrificing people's actions may appear, they must fulfill, directly or indirectly, some selfish needs. In theoretical opposition, Roger's (1961) belief that man is innately good portrays man as being basically altruistic. Behaviorists would reject both arguments and maintain that altruism is a learned response, perhaps reflecting a past schedule of reinforcement, which has instated the behavior strongly enough so that it is maintained by secondary or minimal amounts of reinforces (Beaman, 1974), that it has become a reinforcer itself (Weiss, 1971) or that it is a
socially learned value (Berkowitz, 1968).

While it is interesting to be able to study an area with important implications, trying to relate the experimental study of altruism to the philosophical one places unnecessary and cumbersome restrictions on the term. Leed's (1963) definition proposed three criteria for altruistic behavior:

1) that it be an end in itself (not directed at gain)
2) was emitted voluntarily
3) did good.

Use of this definition might limit present research. Since both the state of the individual and his surroundings are frequently manipulated to produce different results, the voluntary nature of the subjects' actions is questionable. Furthermore, while some studies test the actual behavior of individuals, many studies test only the willingness to do the actions. Kazdin and Bryan (1971) found that when measuring willingness to donate blood, they could measure only the original volunteering, since few students ever obtained parental consent cards and were able to donate blood. The results of this, and similar studies, were in line with the research measuring actual behavior. Therefore, the stipulation that an altruistic act do good seems primarily to be an attempt to fulfill the demands of a philosophic definition.
Additionally, there is the issue of whether altruistic acts must be an end in themselves. It is probably safe to assume that a Kitty Genovese (murdered on a street in New York) or an Andrew Mormile (left to bleed to death on a subway) would not be concerned with why someone helped them. Any attempt to save their lives would probably have been appreciated no matter whether someone was out looking for excitement or assuming that he might get his picture in the paper. Similarly, the individual who asks a small favor of a stranger or the young lady with a flat tire will probably not question a helper's motives. Their primary concern is whether they receive assistance.

Darley and Latane (1970) saw the study of altruism as involving two basic questions which should be looked at separately. The first is the issue of why mankind is altruistic. The second is "more specific . . . [and] more amenable to research analysis. . . . What determines in a particular situation whether one person will help another?" The issue is not a moral, but a psychological, one.

Consequently, while it is sometimes desirable to study the moral questions, there are many helping behaviors that do not fit this definition. Yet they also have value to society and are considered important to research. This paper will then be concerned with actions that fit under the broader category of helping behavior. For convenience, both terms will be used interchangeably.
Although research in altruism is presently receiving much attention, interest in the area was minimal until the mid 1960s. The area is a difficult one to study because it is complex and lacks an easy definition. Despite these problems, interest in the area was dramatically rekindled by the murder of Kitty Genovese. Although her cries for help alerted a neighborhood of 38 people to her peril, no one gave any aid. This, and a number of similar incidents, caused expert and amateur alike to wonder whether and why people had stopped helping each other.

Many opinions were offered: "I would assign this to the effect of the megalopolis in which we live, which makes closeness very difficult and leads to the alienation of the individual from the group"; "A disaster syndrome that shook the sense of safety and sureness of the individual involved and caused psychological withdrawal from the event by ignoring it"; "The gratification of unconscious sadistic impulses"; "Lack of concern for our fellow men"; or simply "apathy" and "indifference." (From Darley and Latane, 1970).

Notably, while providing few answers about the bystanders' inaction, the statements agreed on one thing: in an emergency situation, people are thought to have a strong moral obligation to aid others, and if they do not, they are considered partly responsible for the victim's fate.

Darley and Latane's book, The Unresponsive Bystander: Why Doesn't He Help (1970) was a collection of the first
studies on bystander intervention. While providing new answers to the questions raised, it supported the idea of moral obligation. Its approach was to discover why people do not help—the implication being that they should. Moreover, it reported that the subjects in the experiments might share this attitude. When they "did" nothing, their reaction to the situation was not indifference, but rather attentiveness, concern, discomfort, and finally, distress:

Subjects who failed to report the emergency showed few signs of the apathy and indifference thought to characterize "unresponsive bystanders." When the experimenter entered the room to terminate the situation, the subjects often asked if the victim was all right. . . . Many of these subjects showed physical signs of nervousness; they often had trembling hands and sweating palms. If anything, they seemed more emotionally aroused than did the subjects who reported the emergency. (p. 100)

Darley and Latane suggested that the state of arousal characteristic of the "unresponsive" subjects might show that they were still in a state of conflict because they had not yet decided not to help. Possibly, they were still looking for cues to define their role in this ambiguous situation.

Social Norms

Since people seem to believe strongly that help should be given in emergency situations, some researchers became concerned with the way social norms might affect helping behavior. Berkowitz and Daniels (1963) found that in situations in which one individual is dependent on another, the latter will show increased helping behavior. They interpreted this finding to
mean that part of the moral code of society prescribes such helping behavior. The problem with using the social norm explanation is that different norms apply in different situations and that norms are so vaguely stated that the predictive ability of this approach is seriously limited. Darley and Latane (1970), in applying a normative interpretation to some of their studies, found that although these explanations could be added to the findings, they were cumbersome and did not provide new information. Moreover, subjects did not report thinking about norms when trying to make their decisions. Finally, the presence of other people often makes individuals act less, rather than more, in accordance with norms, which would suggest that societal pressures do not force people to behave altruistically but rather force them to conform to the behavior of the group.

If the individual does not rely on social norms, there ought to be other information on which he bases his behavior. Darley and Latane (1970) proposed a model of intervention as a process or series of decisions. This process can be seen as consisting of roughly three stages: noticing the incident, interpreting it, and deciding whether and how to act. These stages are affected by social and physical cues as well as the state the individual is in at the time he is involved in the event. Physical and social cues are generally external or environmental factors while the individual's state can be considered an internal factor affecting this decision-making.
Environmental Factors

Noticing the actual event seems to be the least difficult step in the process. Darley and Latane (1970) found that both the individual's reactions and his later reports showed that most of them quickly saw something was happening. The stages most affected by environmental factors were interpreting the event as an emergency and deciding whether to intervene. Individuals in a room that started to fill with smoke reported it 75 percent of the time if they were alone. However, if they were in the presence of two passive confederates, they reported it only 10 percent of the time. This suggests that the two passive individuals were providing cues to indicate that the situation was not really an emergency and should be ignored. In fact, when the experimenter entered the room and asked the subjects why they had said nothing, they stated that they did not believe there was any danger. Physical cues may also determine the subjects' interpretation of an emergency. Clark and Word (1974) found that helping rates are directly related to the level of ambiguity in the situation. Subjects able to clearly hear and view an accident helped 96 percent of the time. If able to hear sounds only, they helped only 29 percent of the time. And the presence of others (social cues) inhibited helping only in a moderately ambiguous condition.
In situations in which an individual cannot see other people (to depend on cues from them for interpreting the situation), the knowledge that they are present may still prevent the individual from helping by making him feel less responsible to help. Darley and Latane (1970) isolated subjects in booths. When these subjects heard a neighbor having an epileptic attack, their helping rate was 85 percent if they believed they were alone compared to 37 percent if they believed four other people to be nearby in booths.

Internal States

Whatever the external feedback, the individual's perception of this information will be heavily affected by his own temporary affective state. A great deal of research has been directed at the effects of three temporary states on helping behavior: success, failure, and guilt. While the results on each state are fairly consistent, it is difficult to combine the data on all three and achieve a comprehensive explanation. Consequently, theoretical explanations have aimed at explaining the results of particular experiments or of one of the three areas, but none have been able to successfully integrate any major portion of the data on all three states.

Positive States

One of the first studies testing the effects of positive states on helping behavior was done by Berkowitz and
Conner (1966). They tested the interaction between the subjects' having succeeded or failed on a simple task and their willingness to help an individual who was 80 percent, 50 percent, or 20 percent dependent on them. At the high level (80 percent) of dependency, success subjects worked significantly harder than failure subjects. Moreover, the interaction on the two conditions (success and high dependency) increased helping over the controls at lower levels of dependency. Although no conclusions were drawn as to why success made people help more or failure less, a post-experimental questionnaire offered some information. There was a significant difference between the way success and failure subjects perceived the situation:

... there was even a greater tendency for the frustrated men to deny the dependency relation the more their peer needed their help, so the failed-80% group said there was a significantly lower need for their effort than did the successful-80% group. (p. 668)

The failure subjects reported disliking the experiment more, the more dependent their peer was on them. These strong feelings of obligation seemed to annoy them, while the control and success subjects felt a stronger obligation to the more dependent peers.

In trying to discover why successful subjects help more, Isen (1970) studied the attention paid the situation by the success and failure subjects. Again, she found that successful subjects helped significantly more than the
failure or control groups. (There was no significant difference between the helping rates of failure and control subjects in her experiment.) Furthermore, she found that successful subjects could recall more of the details of the situation than the failure group. The obvious conclusion would be that the subjects' paying attention to the situation caused them to help more. However, no relationship was found between attention and helping so that attention and helping were assumed to be independently influenced by the treatment conditions.

The discovery of a well-substantiated relationship between success and failure led to attempts to find other positive states which might influence helping. Kazdin and Bryan (1971) chose to study competence, which they felt might be the most important aspect of success. They found that subjects who had been given feedback that they were competent on both relevant and irrelevant tasks volunteered more often to do a physically demanding task (donate blood). As well, they rated themselves as being happier, although there was no relationship between happiness and volunteering.

Isen and Levin (1972) found a relationship between "feeling good" and helping. People who had received cookies volunteered more time to help and less time to distract other subjects in an experiment. In a second study, they found a significant relationship between subjects' finding a dime and helping pick up spilled papers (without being requested

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Aderman (1972) had subjects read statements intended to place them in either an elated or a depressed mood. Elated subjects had a higher volunteer rate than depressed ones when asked to sign up for a noxious experiment. Attempting to discover the reason for the relationship, he also found that requiring elated subjects to do the task decreased their rate. Post-experimental questionnaires indicated that elated subjects felt freer to turn down the request and that depressed subjects resented the pressure and performed reluctantly.

In general, the positive states seem to increase helping rates. This may be related to a general good feeling, a feeling of increased competence, or a different way of attending to or perceiving cues from the environment. On the other hand, the negative states so far mentioned do not increase helping behavior over control rates and may, in some cases, decrease it. Individuals in the negative states seem to feel more vulnerable to societal pressures and may lower their attention to environmental cues as a means of escape. However, research concerning other negative states has produced contradictory results.

**Negative States**

Darlington and Macker (1966) found that subjects who had failed to earn points for their partners were more willing
to volunteer to donate blood than control subjects, whose partners earned points regardless of performance. (This difference was significant only after three requests.) Regan and Williams (1972) found similar results. Individuals who believed they had broken the experimenter's camera were more likely to help a female confederate pick up spilled groceries than were individuals who believed the malfunctioning camera was not their fault. Wallace and Sadalla (1966) worked with subjects who were told either that a broken machine was the result of their carelessness or that the broken machine was not their fault. The "responsible" subjects, when asked to volunteer for the most stressful of three experiments, did so more often than the "not-responsible" subjects. This result seems to appear consistently in the research. Unlike the negative states associated with failure, failure which harms another leads to increased helping (Berscheid and Walster, 1967; Rawlings, 1963; Regan, 1966). Failure which harms another, along with any situation in which one individual feels he has caused harm to another, is commonly referred to in the literature as guilt.

Freedman, Wallington, and Bless (1967) studied the effect of harm caused by the subjects' failing to report relevant information to the experimenter. In their first study, subjects were placed in a situation in which they lied to the experimenter by telling him that they had no previous knowledge of the experiment, when they did. The
experimenter made it clear to the subjects that if they did know about the study, he should be told so he would not use them. When asked to take part in a second study, they agreed more often than the control group. In a second study, the subjects unwittingly spilled a set of carefully organized note cards. When asked to volunteer to help a graduate student, their rate of agreement was higher than the control group only when it was not the graduate students whose note cards they spilled.

Carlsmith and Gross (1969) forced subjects to harm another by making them the "teacher" who was to help a "student" learn by shocking him. They found that the highest helping rate occurred when someone who had witnessed the event asked a favor of the subject. The next highest helping rate was for subjects asked for help by the learner (whom they had shocked). Finally, the subjects who had only observed the learner being shocked had a lower helping rate than the control group. Other studies failed to replicate this last finding; instead, they showed that observers of harm help as much as individuals who actually do harm.

Rawlings (1968) found that the helping rate was higher than control for both subjects whose partners were shocked for the subjects' errors and whose partners were shocked randomly (observed harm). Konecni (1972) replicated these findings in a field study. He found that individuals who believed they had bumped into the experimenter and forced him to drop his
cards were more likely to help him pick them up than controls. As well, if they had bumped into a confederate (generalized guilt condition), they were still more likely than controls to help the experimenter. Finally, if they had merely witnessed this situation (sympathy condition), they had a higher helping rate than any of the other groups. Regan (1971) also found that both those who harm and those who only witness harm will show similar helping rates. But she felt that there might be some differences in their motivation for helping. Subjects in an experiment believed either that a ruined experiment was their fault or a machine's fault. Afterwards, they were given a chance to talk to an interviewer about this experience. Allowing the guilty subjects to "cathart" lowered their helping rate below that of the other guilty subjects. The subjects who only witnessed the harm were not affected by the interview. Regan interpreted this to mean that "guilt is the source of altruistic acts in subjects who cause harm, and perceived injustice is the motive in witnesses."

One final aspect of the guilt literature that should be considered is that of reciprocity. Goranson and Berkowitz (1966) showed that subjects worked hardest for individuals who had worked for them before. They felt that in many situations, helping behavior could be explained by the reciprocity norm. Some guilt studies have supported this notion. Berscheid and Walster (1967) found that subjects who set too high a quota and caused their partners to lose green stamps
were more likely to donate their winnings (green stamps) to the partner only if they could pay back exactly the same amount as was originally lost. In another experiment (Lerner and Matthews, 1967), subjects drew slips to see who would be in the shock group. Non-shock subjects were more likely to aid another subject who had drawn a shock slip only if their having drawn the non-shock condition first caused the individual to be in a shock group (fates interdependent).

These studies provide four theories about the increased helping behavior by individuals who have caused or witnessed harm. The Social Justice Theory assumes people need to believe that social interactions are governed by a sense of justice or equity. This theory can account for much of the guilt literature and also explain why people who merely view harm also help. Still, it does not effectively incorporate information such as Regan's (1971) finding that guilty subjects and observers are probably acting from different motives. The Guilt Theory presents the harm-doer as someone who is penitent about his actions and wants to expiate his guilt by helping. While this theory explains the data that the social justice theory cannot account for, it does not address the question of why people who only view harm are motivated to help. A number of researchers present evidence that harm-doers are altruistic because they want to increase their lowered self-esteem (Carlsmith and Gross, 1969; McMillen, 1971). This approach probably explains less of the data than the guilt approach.
and certainly does nothing to handle the reactions of observers to harmful situations. Finally, the concept of reciprocity seems relevant only to a few experiments (Berscheid and Walster, 1967; Lerner and Matthews, 1967). It does not explain why guilty people help others whom they have not harmed and why they sometimes will not help individuals whom they have harmed (Freedman, et al., 1967). And it, too, fails to account for the literature best explained by the Social Justice Theory.

Cialdini, Darby, and Vincent (1973) proposed that a Negative State Relief model will handle all the data on guilt:

> altruism is one technique, among many, which people use to make themselves feel good; . . . the sight of a harmed other caused one to feel bad. . . . The reason that many studies have shown altruism to follow transgression is that the first opportunity the experimenter affords the subject to restore his affective positivity is the opportunity to be charitable. (p. 505)

They devised an experiment in which subjects who had either witnessed or caused harm were given "relief" -- that is, they were given either money or praise. They found that both harm-doers and harm-witnesses did not differ in their helping responses and that their rate of helping was higher than that of controls (at a marginal level). In contrast, the "relief" groups of both harm-doers and harm-witnesses did not differ from the controls in helping rates.

Although this explanation may be a parsimonious handling of the guilt literature, it provides no help in relating
guilt to success and failure. Successful subjects, and those in other positive states, cannot be assumed to be in a negative state, yet they do show high rates of helping. And if helping is a way to offset bad feelings, failure and depressed subjects ought to show increased willingness to help. Finally, by concentrating on one state, the Negative State Relief model can probably not handle the numerous inconsistencies in the literature.

For every temporary state, there is at least one contradicting situation in which there is increased or decreased helping. The exception in positive states is that of Aderman (1972) who showed that elated subjects will decrease output if required to work. The reason that other positive state studies show increased helping may be that they dealt with situations in which the subjects were free to choose whether or not they wanted to help. Literature on negative states shows some studies in which helping rates are not decreased below control levels (Isen, 1970; Kazdin and Bryan, 1971). Others show that failure subjects who have other people dependent on them (Berkowitz and Conner, 1966) help less than controls. Finally, requiring failure subjects to help increases their helping rate over that of success subjects required to help (Aderman, 1972).

The literature on negative states involving harm (guilt) is the most inconsistent, possibly due to the greater variety of situations which have been studied. Guilty subjects will usually help more, except when this helping forces them to
have further contact with the person they have injured or when they feel that helping the injured person will not be equal to the amount of harm caused, or when they are forgiven for the harm, allowed to talk about their negative feelings, or something good happens to them. Moreover, individuals who merely witness harm are similar to guilty subjects in some ways—they show increased helping and this effect is negated if something good happens to them—but are different in that they are not "relieved" like guilty subjects by merely talking about their experience.

Possibly, in studying temporary states, most studies have failed to account for the interaction between internal and external conditions, which both provide important cues to help the individual decide how to act. Therefore, although all of the explanations may be accounting for some of the processes involved, so far only a few (Aderman, 1972; Regan, 1971) have attempted to account for the interaction between internal and environmental cues on the individual's perception of the situation.

In a related study, Zellner (1970) studied the effect of various levels of self-esteem on reception and influenceability. In his review of the self-esteem literature, Zellner was faced with inconsistencies similar to those in the helping behavior literature. Different studies reported high, low, or medium self-esteem levels as the most susceptible. Zellner proposed that there is an optimal level of influenceability for
adequate adaptation to the human environment. High self-esteem individuals are also most able to understand complex messages; persuasion works best for them. Low self-esteem subjects are least resistant to pressure but can best understand simple messages; commands work best for them. Finally, the most common forms for communication are probably somewhere between orders and highly persuasive messages, so that the most susceptible individuals will probably be somewhere between the two extremes; they react to messages of medium difficulty and pressure that require conforming behavior.

Zellner designed an experiment using three levels of self-esteem (high, medium, and low) and three levels of message complexity, which he termed suggestion, conformity, and persuasion. In the suggestion condition, individuals were required to copy statements of facts; this was considered a simple message that put obvious pressure on the individuals. In the conformity condition, the individuals were given a list of 15 facts to read and learn; this was considered a message of medium difficulty. In the persuasion conditions, individuals were given an essay to read; this message was considered highly complex and highly persuasive. Zellner found that high self-esteem subjects were influenced more by persuasion than were any of the other groups. Middle and high self-esteem subjects were both equally influenced by conformity messages. Suggestion produced the maximum influence on the low self-esteem subjects.
Hypothesis

The data on the effects of temporary states on helping behavior suggests that these effects may be caused by interactions similar to those studied by Zellner. Individuals in positive states seem to respond to requests of high and medium difficulty while decreasing their responses to commands. Studies of positive states have used either a request or have placed the individual in a situation in which they saw an individual who needed help (Isen and Levin, 1972; Kazdin and Bryan, 1971; Berkowitz and Conner, 1966; Isen, 1970). The one exception is Aderman (1972). Although he found high rates of helping for subjects in positive states if they were requested to help, when he required them to help, they worked less than failure subjects required to help. Notably, this research is also the only one in which failure subjects were required rather than requested to do work and the only one in which helping rates were increased over success.

The data from the guilt literature suggests that guilt subjects are responding to the messages of medium difficulty, which would place them in the middle level of influenceability. This placement is supported by Back and Bogdonoff's (1964) work using physiological responses as a measure of stressful social situations. Subjects were told either that they had done better, worse, or the same as the rest of the
group they were in and that the groups were either highly cohesive or poorly matched (or no feedback on cohesiveness was given). The two sets of subjects that had the strongest physiological reactions and conformed the most were the success/high cohesive and failure/low cohesive. In both cases, conforming reduced stress (lowered physiological response). Guilt, or failure which harms another, may also be seen as a situation in which the individual feels both that he has failed and that he is isolated from others. This might indicate why the individuals are eager to respond to messages requiring conforming behavior.

Additionally, since witnesses of guilt help at a similar rate, they might be compared to the success/high cohesive group. They are successful in comparison to the luckless individual they are observing and at the same time may feel empathy (or closeness) to the individual. Although a different social situation from failure/low cohesion, success/high cohesion places the individual under stress also and makes him react to messages requiring conforming behavior.

A more reasonable explanation of the effects of temporary states on helping behavior might be that instead of any one state increasing an individual's willingness to help, each temporary state changes the individual's level of influenceability. Consequently, each temporary state changes the way an individual will react to a given message or situation. The reason that guilt, observed harm, and positive states
have increased helping behavior so far is that typically messages of medium complexity have been used in research. If both requests (medium complex messages) and requirements (low complex messages) are used, different helping rates might be observed.

Subjects in a positive state should respond as much as guilt subjects to requests and less than guilt or failure subjects to requirements. Guilt subjects should respond as much as success subjects to requests and more than success (or positive state) but less than failure subjects to requirements. Failure subjects should respond less than success and guilt subjects to requests but more than success or guilt subjects to requirements.
CHAPTER II

METHODS

Subjects

The subjects were 131 college students from two introductory Psychology classes. They ranged in age from 18 to 42. Approximately two-thirds were female and one-third were male. They were run in a 4x2x2 design having four groups (success, failure, guilt, and control), two conditions (request and requirement), and both sexes as subjects.

Apparatus

The experiment was conducted in two rooms. The first room contained a table, several chairs, and a box (in which to place finished questionnaires). The second contained a table, two chairs, a box for questionnaires, and some stacks of IBM answer sheets.

A "problem-solving test" consisting of 30 difficult, easy, or ambiguous questions was administered to the subjects. Each of the questions was written on an index card so that the questions could be presented individually at 45-second intervals.

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Check on the Manipulation

Subjects were administered a questionnaire to check for the effectiveness of the success, failure, and guilt manipulations (see appendix A). Each of the eight groups was divided in half so that the subjects could be placed into two different subgroups. Subgroup 1 received the check before the manipulations. Subgroup 2 received the check after the manipulations. Results from these two checks were compared to find how effectively the manipulations had changed the temporary states of the subjects. The reason for administering the questionnaire to one-half the subjects before and the other half after the manipulations was that otherwise all the subjects would have to have taken the questionnaire twice within half an hour. This might arouse suspicion in the subjects, and they would probably recall the questions and feel that they should be consistent on their answers.

Procedure

The subjects came to the experiment one at a time and were met by the experimenter's assistant, who took them to the first room, gave them an answer sheet (see appendix B), and asked them to fill in the top part of the sheet while waiting for the experimenter. At this time, one-half the subjects were asked to fill out the questionnaire.

After several minutes, the experimenter entered the room and explained the "purpose" of the study:
This is a problem-solving experiment. We don't tell you too much about it before you arrive because it's important that it's a new experience and one that you aren't necessarily prepared for. Our purpose is to try to standardize a problem-solving test so we have to give the test to large numbers of people. Then, once that's done, we can establish norms for various groups. After that, problem-solving ability can be related to other measures of intellectual ability, such as IQ scores and school success. While we cannot make any definite statements now, we do assume that problem-solving ability is, in fact, highly related to intelligence and that if you do well in one of these measures, you will do well in another.

The tests consist of 30 questions. I'll hand them to you one at a time and make sure you understand the instructions. Then, it's a timed test so you'll have 45 seconds to work on the question. At the end of that time, I'll say, "time," and you can still write down the answer, but you'll be expected to go on from there. By the way, feel free to ask questions, but try not to cut into your 45 seconds any more than you have to. Also, feel free to use the blank parts of your paper as scratch paper.

Unless the subject had questions, the experimenter proceeded to present the series of questions one at a time at 45-second intervals. The questions varied according to the subject's group and reaction to the test. Control, success, and guilt subjects were given ambiguous or easily answered questions. Failure subjects were given a mixture of easy, ambiguous, difficult, and impossible to answer questions to make them believe that they were missing many questions but that the test was legitimate.

At the end of the test, the experimenter left the room to "correct" the test. When she returned, she provided different feedback to subjects in each of the four groups:
Control: "I can't tell you specifically how you did on each question, but I can tell you generally how you did. Would you like to know? Well, you got most of the questions correct, which is considered good. Of course, I'll be able to let you know more about the test later."

Success: "I can't tell you specifically how you did on each question, but I can tell you generally how you did. Would you like to know? You did extremely well. In fact, your score placed you in the top 10 percent of the people that have been tested so far. Moreover, many of your answers to the last set of questions were scored as "extremely creative" when compared to answers typically given in response to these questions. Finally, as I said before, we are not yet sure that doing well on this test is related to high IQ scores, but it is quite likely this is so--I assume that you probably do well in school and at tasks requiring abstract, creative, or problem-solving ability. Of course, I can tell you more about this when we've finished with our testing."

Failure: "I can't tell you specifically how you did on each question, but I can tell you generally how you did. Would you like to know? Well, you scored somewhat lower than I would have expected from your grade in school and your grade point. Did the timing bother you or did you find some of the problems very difficult? I thought that was so. Well, I've kept your address so that I can tell you more after the testing is finished."

Guilt: "I can't tell you specifically how you did on each question, but I can tell you generally how you did. Would you like to know? Well, you got most of the questions right, which is considered good, but I would like to ask you one question. You're not a junior [senior, freshman, sophomore], are you? Oh, no, didn't you see on the sign-up sheet where it said freshmen [seniors] only? You didn't? Oh, . . . I thought you were a freshman [senior] so I gave you the wrong test--I'm not even sure I can use your test at all. I thought I'd get all my freshmen [senior] subjects run today and be able to run the information on the computer. Well, I was sure something would go wrong. Since you came, I'll give you credit, but I don't think I can use your test."
The purpose of these statements was to provide the control subjects feedback that they had done adequately and the success subjects feedback that they had done extremely well. The failure subjects received feedback that they had done poorly (after taking a test on which they were unable to solve many of the questions). Finally, the guilt subjects received feedback that they had done an acceptable job but that they had harmed the experimenter.

Thirty questions were chosen to provide a reasonable task for the subjects and yet not take the whole hour. This allowed them to be detained longer in the experiment so that their willingness to help could be measured.

After the experimenter gave the subjects the appropriate feedback, she asked them to go to the next room to get their experimental credit card from her assistant because she had to meet her next subject. When the subjects went to the next room, the assistant asked the half who had not yet filled out the questionnaire to do so. He then explained to them, "We have a rule at the clinic that you have to be in an experiment a full hour to receive credit." In the request condition, he continued:

I have these tests that I have to correct by tomorrow, but I have to help with this experiment, too. I don't know if I'll get them finished on time. You know, you could just sit here for the rest of the hour, or you could help me if you like.

If the subject agreed to help, the assistant handed him a stack of 100 IBM answer sheets. These sheets had
already been graded, but there was an error in correction on one-fifth of the sheets. The assistant explained that there were so many errors, the tests needed to be rechecked. He explained that the subject was to write the names, on a separate sheet of paper, of the people whose tests had been incorrectly marked. Therefore, both the number of tests corrected and the accuracy of correction could be checked.

In the requirement condition, the assistant again told the subjects that they must remain for the full hour and proceeded to assign them some work:

Since you have to be here anyway, I'll have you do some work. Correct these tests until your hour is finished.

He then explained how he wanted the tests corrected and left the room.

The subjects were left alone in the room for 20 minutes. After this time, the assistant returned to the room and gave the subjects their credit card. He also debriefed the failure and guilt subjects by telling them that they had been given a harder version of the test, by mistake, or that he had forgotten to write seniors (freshmen, etc.) on the sign-up sheet and the error had been his fault. A more complete statement was prepared and sent to the subjects after the completion of the experiment.
CHAPTER III
RESULTS

Helping Behavior

A 4x2x2 (Condition x Pre/Post x Request/Requirement) analysis of variance was performed on the number of tests corrected by each group. Table 1 shows the results of the analysis.

TABLE 1
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF NUMBER OF TESTS CORRECTED FOR CONDITION X PRE/POST X REQUEST/REQUIREMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>f</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Condition (C)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>544.46</td>
<td>4.47*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre/Post (P)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>57.31</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request/Requirement (R)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.91</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C x P</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>77.64</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C x R</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1650.78</td>
<td>13.56**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P x R</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>244.06</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C x P x R</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17.94</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05
**p < .01

This analysis was performed to ascertain whether there were differences between any subgroup as a function of when they completed the check on the manipulation (either pre or post).
The check on the manipulation should not have any effect on the dependent variable. The results supported this contention in showing no significant main effects for Pre/Post nor any significant interactions of other variables with Pre/Post. Hence, the Pre/Post check on the manipulation was nonreactive. Thus, a second analysis of variance was conducted to test the dependent variables relevant to the hypothesis. The second analysis of variance was a 4x2x2 (Condition x Sex x Request/Requirement). Table 2 shows these results.

### Table 2

**ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF NUMBER OF TESTS CORRECTED FOR CONDITION X SEX X REQUEST/REQUIREMENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>f</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Condition (C)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>544.46</td>
<td>4.67*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex (X)</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>7.14*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request/Requirement (R)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C x X</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>117.15</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C x R</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1650.78</td>
<td>14.16**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X x R</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>144.24</td>
<td>1.24</td>
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<tr>
<td>C x X x R</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>49.08</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05  
** p < .01

Three significant findings emerged from the analysis. Those were the main effects for Conditions (p .05), Sex (p .05), and the interaction of Conditions X Request/Requirement (p < .01).
A Newman-Keuls was performed on the means combined for Pre/Post. Table 3 shows the mean number of tests corrected by subjects in each of the eight conditions. As can be seen from the table, the number of tests corrected by the two guilt groups, the success/request group, and the failure/requirement group were not different from the control groups. The two groups lower than the control groups were the success/requirement and the failure/request groups.

A record was kept of the accuracy of correction for the eight groups, as an additional dependent variable. Few errors were made by any of the subjects in the control, success, or failure groups (the mean number of errors for each of these groups were .09, .12, and 0, respectively). The Newman-Keuls analysis of these data showed that the guilt groups (mean number of errors = 1.89) found a significantly (p < .05) higher number of errors than the other groups.

Check on the Manipulation

A 4x2x2 (Condition X Pre/Post X Request/Requirement) analysis of variance was performed on each of the 15 word pairs from the questionnaire. While only two of the pairs (successful/unsuccessful and guilty/not guilty) described states actually being studied, the other pairs provided information about related feelings. Thus, in addition to enabling a check on the effectiveness of the manipulations, the questionnaire also made it possible to study the patterns
### TABLE 3

**MEAN NUMBER OF TESTS CORRECTED BY SUBJECTS ACCORDING TO CONDITION AND TYPE OF APPEAL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
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<th>$\bar{x}$</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Control</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>42.47a</td>
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<tr>
<td>Requirement</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>40.31a</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>41.42A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Success</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>40.94a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requirement</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>26.61b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>33.35B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Failure</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>25.13b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requirement</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>45.06a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>35.09B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guilt</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>40.94a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requirement</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>40.76a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>40.84A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Means having different lowercase subscripts were significantly different at the .05 level. Means having different uppercase subscripts were significantly different at the .05 level.

of affective reactions in the four groups. The mean ratings by the subjects of their feelings of success is shown in table 4. On a scale of one (unsuccessful) to seven (successful), success subjects administered the post-manipulation questionnaire had a mean of 6.06. While this rating was not
TABLE 4
MEAN SCORES OBTAINED BY SUBJECTS ON THE SUCCESSFUL/UNSUCCESSFUL WORD PAIR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5.35ab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4.71b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failure</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5.31ab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guilt</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.94ab</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Means having different lowercase subscripts were significantly different at the .05 level.

different from the guilt or control subjects, it was significantly higher (p<.05) than the success pre group, which indicates the success manipulation was effective.

The failure post group had a mean rating of 3.25. This was lower than the failure pre group (p<.05), which again shows that the manipulation worked. In addition, the failure post group was lower than all the success, guilt, and control groups (p<.05).

The guilt subjects did not change from pre to post measure on success ratings and were not different from the control or success groups. Moreover, their rating on the

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guilty/not guilty word pair was 5.37 on a scale of 1 (guilty) to 7 (not guilty). This rating was not different from the guilt pre (5.31) rating or from the ratings of any of the other groups on this word pair (mean ratings ranged from 4.71 to 5.94). Consequently, it is not clear from this data whether the guilt manipulation made the guilt subjects feel any different from the success and control subjects.

On several of the other word pairs, the guilt post and the success post subjects were not different from the control post subjects, but they were different from the failure post (p< .05) group while the control post subjects were not. Guilt post and success post subjects were higher on the favorable/unfavorable and positive/negative word pairs than the failure post group (p< .05). Notably, control post subjects were not higher on these pairs than the failure post group. Finally, success subjects were happier and more pleased (p< .05) than the control and failure groups but not the guilt groups. In general, success and guilt groups showed one pattern of responses and failure and control another. While this trend was not significant in the present analysis, less conservative post hoc tests might point out these differences.
CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

The first hypothesis that successful subjects would respond as much as guilt subjects to requests but less than guilt or failure subjects to requirements was supported.

The second hypothesis that guilt subjects would respond as much as success subjects to requests and more than success subjects to requirements was supported. Part of this hypothesis, that guilt subjects would respond less than failure subjects to requirements, was not supported.

The third hypothesis that failure subjects would respond less than success and guilt subjects to requests and more than success subjects to requirements was supported. The prediction that failure subjects would correct more tests than the guilt subjects was not supported.

This provides support for the primary contention of this paper: that perceptions of individuals can be influenced by temporary states enough to create differences in their responses to information from the environment. In this case, different types of appeals effected different rates of helping behavior according to the state the subjects were in.
Several questions about the data need to be considered. The first is whether all groups were effectively manipulated into the appropriate temporary states.

The results indicate that both the success and the failure groups were in the desired states. The responses of the subjects to the critical word pair (successful/unsuccessful) as well as many of the other related feelings support this conclusion and fit well with information from previous research. Feelings of success or increased helping rates have been related to feeling "good" (Isen and Levin, 1972), to feeling "elated" (Aderman, 1972), to feeling more "competent" and "happier" (Kazdin and Bryan, 1971), and to feeling more "alert" (Isen, 1970). Similarly, failure subjects' negative reactions fit well with previous research by Berkowitz and Conner (1966), who found that failure subjects "disliked" the experiment more and Aderman (1972), who used "depressed" subjects. Thus, it seems reasonable to assume that an individual in a particular state may experience a number of related feelings and that increasing any of these feelings may have the same result on his behavior.

The reactions of the guilt group are somewhat more difficult to interpret. Since they show no increased feelings in their reaction to the guilty/not guilty word pair, the guilt manipulation may not have worked. Nevertheless, there is other evidence to the contrary. First, the subjects' statements during the experiment seemed to reflect regret for
their actions. Of the 32 guilt subjects, seven offered to return at another time or suggested that the experimenter need not give them credit for their time. Another 10 made comments during the debriefing that showed some relief:

That's good. I was just sure I'd read those sheets carefully.

Well, I'd rather it was your fault than mine.

I know. I'm bad. I'm bad. Oh, ... so you're bad, you're bad.

Only four said they felt no guilt; that is, they believed they had not misread the sign or that the experimenter should be able to use their results.

Second, studies on guilt typically do not use a manipulation check but rather infer that the subjects' reaction to the situation shows guilt. In fact, only one other study (Peters, 1973) reports using a questionnaire to check for the effectiveness of a guilt manipulation. While his study used another type of manipulation to create the states of guilt, failure, and success, he found results similar to those reported here. There were no differences among the guilt, success, and control groups on the success/failure and the guilty/not guilty word pairs. It may be that even if guilt manipulations work subjects may be reluctant to record feelings on a guilty/not guilty dimension. It may also be that guilt and success feeling states are more similar than had been expected. In many ways, failure may more appropriately be labeled a negative state.
Third, two other measures obtained during the experiment suggest that rather than talking about their guilt, the subjects tended to be pleasant and cooperative and particularly careful about the next task required of them. The guilt subjects were the only ones that consistently made errors in reporting which tests had been incorrectly graded. Closer inspection showed that the errors were usually due to reporting more incorrect tests than were there, often the same two tests. If looked at carefully, these tests had some of the answers marked part way between the spaces. The "errors" in reporting these tests, then, may not have been caused by haste, but rather, over-attention to detail.

Even more interesting is the pattern in which the guilt subjects responded to the word pairs. It is similar to that of the success subjects rather than the failure subjects. It should be noted that part of the feedback given the guilt subjects ("You got most of the problems correct, which is considered good.") could be considered success feedback. However, this same feedback, given the control subjects did not increase their positive feelings over those of the failure group. Therefore, if the guilt subjects did perceive this information as positive, it is possible that this perception was colored by their feelings of guilt and need to emphasize their good qualities.

The results from this experiment are made more difficult to interpret by their not always being consistent with
previous work. The greater helping rates by females in response to a request by a male assistant have been demonstrated (Berkowitz and Conner, 1966). However, none of the present groups helped at higher rates than those of the control group. Not only have success and guilt subjects typically helped at higher rates than control, but also it was predicted that the helping rates of the success/request and both guilt groups would show these increased helping rates. They did not.

This absence of increased helping rates may have been caused by the manipulation of the control group. The feedback was appropriate in that it affected the state of subjects very little. Still, the control subjects came to the experiment feeling somewhat positive and successful and while the feedback lowered the level of their feelings slightly, they were still feeling relatively good. In fact, the control subjects were usually one point lower on the scale than the success subjects and this difference was not great enough to be significant.

It is possible, then, that if the control group had been feeling somewhat more "neutral" and had scored between 3 and 4 on the word pairs, their helping rates would have been lower and the helping rates of the other groups would have been higher in comparison. But this raises several questions about what constitutes a control group. The type of influence that would be necessary to exert on control
subjects to lower their scores to this level would certainly be different from the usual notion of providing equal attention to but otherwise not interacting with these subjects.

Future research may need to use different types of control. The pre/post manipulation check allows half of each group to act as its own control. Moreover, controlling levels of affect of the use of internal analysis to assign subjects to groups would allow for comparison of high failure, neutral, high success, and guilt subjects.

Conclusions

There were unforeseen methodological problems in this study that will require more careful consideration in future research. However, the results give support for the use of Zellner's influenceability hypothesis to explain the inconsistent information on helping rates in temporary states.

This conclusion is supported by the lack of a direct relationship between the subjects' states and rates of helping. Instead, there is an interaction between the state of an individual, an internal event, and, in this case, the message given him, an external cue. The differences between success and failure point out this interaction: success subjects help more than failure subjects if requested to work and less than failure subjects if required to work.

These results are similar to Zellner's (1970), in which high self-esteem subjects responded best to complex
messages and low self-esteem subjects responded best to simple messages. That individuals have an optimal level of influenceability, according to their feeling at a given time, is a useful way of describing these data.

Guilt is somewhat harder to fit into this framework. Although the results were as predicted, the reason that guilt subjects help at high rates is unclear. Guilt would seem to be a negative state, but none of the information available on guilt can explain why this "negative" state makes people report themselves and behave as if they are in a positive state.

Possibly, guilt is a negative state of such power that individuals experiencing it are highly motivated to reduce or transform their feelings. The literature reports several methods guilty subjects use to try to handle their feelings: making up for the harm (Darlington and Macker, 1966); confessing the guilt to another party (Regan, 1971); obtaining positive reinforcement (Cialdini, et al., 1973); and avoiding the harmed victim (Freedman, et al., 1967). In fact, after the guilt manipulation was performed in this experiment, the subjects attempted to use many of the same methods. They would apologize and try to get the experimenter to say that their mistake had not been harmful. Then, they would frequently change the subject and be concerned about their performance on the test, which they interpreted as fairly good. Finally, they might offer to help the experi-
menter by returning at another time or by not requiring credit for the experiment. In order to maintain the guilt feelings, it became very important to get the subjects away from the harmed experimenter as quickly as possible and place them in the helping situation so that this would be the only method available to them to reduce their feelings of guilt.

Understanding the motives of guilty individuals, however, is made extremely difficult by their apparent unwillingness to be open about their feelings. If guilt subjects report themselves as feeling positive and act in a pleasant, cooperative manner, it is hard to be sure that they are feeling guilty, let alone determine their reasons for behaving in this manner. Therefore, Back and Bogdonoff's (1964) study provides both a possible explanation and a logical starting place for understanding guilt. If guilt subjects are feeling both failure and low cohesiveness, then their tendency to conform would be much higher than either failure or success subjects. This tendency to conform might be so strong that it would prevent them from discriminating between different types of messages, as was shown in this study.

Moreover, using a physiological measure, as was done in the Back and Bogdonoff (1964) study might provide a more sensitive and accurate estimate of the subjects' reactions during the experiment. If this measure were
combined with a self-report measure similar to the one used in this experiment, more information about the differences between success and guilt might be learned. It is possible that guilt subjects are reporting their feelings as more positive than they actually are. This discrepancy would probably not be present in the success subjects.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

A review of the literature shows that there is much interest about the effects of temporary states on individuals' willingness to help when asked. Temporary states of success and guilt have been found, generally, to increase rates of helping behavior while failure tends to decrease it. Unfortunately, few explanations exist about why people will help more in one state and less in another. The present study was designed to provide an explanation as to why these different rates are seen using Zellner's (1970) influence-ability hypothesis.

One hundred, thirty-one subjects from two introductory Psychology classes were randomly assigned to conditions and run in a 4 (control, success, failure, and guilt) x 2 (request and requirement) x 2 (male and female) design. Success and failure were manipulated by feedback concerning their performance on a "problem-solving" test. Guilt was induced by telling subjects they had signed up under the wrong group. Control subjects received feedback that did not alter their success or guilt feelings. After the manipulations, subjects were either asked or told to grade tests. This served as a
dependent measure. Pre and post experimental questionnaires were also completed by the subjects to provide a check on the manipulation.

An analysis of variance was performed on both the dependent measure and on the self-ratings from the questionnaires. Significant interactions were checked with the Newman-Keuls. It was found that the control groups, the success/request group, the failure/requirement group, and the guilt groups did not differ in helping rates but that the success/requirement and failure/request groups helped less. Differences among the groups in patterns of responses to the word pairs on the questionnaire were also found.

The present study found that different rates of helping behavior were effected by an interaction between internal and external events. As well, the information from the questionnaires provided some new information concerning the feelings of subjects in the various states. It is possible, for example, that guilt is a more positive state than was previously believed. Methods of examining these findings more fully in future research were discussed.
Problem-solving ability is influenced by many situational factors. Some examples are the room you take the test in, the people around you, and the way you feel. We try to control as many of these influences as possible and like to be aware of those we cannot control.

Please help us by reporting your feelings at this present time. Your report will be used to average together with information from the other people taking these tests to help us understand how people feel, generally, while taking tests. Therefore, feel free to report your feelings honestly. When you are finished, leave your sheet in the box on the table. Thank you.

My feelings are best described:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hi</th>
<th>Med</th>
<th>Lo</th>
<th>Neut</th>
<th>Lo</th>
<th>Med</th>
<th>Hi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>Pleasant</td>
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<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>____</td>
<td>___</td>
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<td>___</td>
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<td>___</td>
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<tr>
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</table>

Unpleasant
Unfavorable
Negative
Unsuccessful
Pleased
Bad
Respected
Tense
Unfriendly
Incompetent
Happy
Warm
Wide awake
Not guilty
Emotional
APPENDIX B

Name ______________________________ Address ______________________________

Telephone ______________________ Year in School _______________________

Most Recent Grade Point Average _______________________________________

1. 22.
2. 23.
3. 24.
4. 25.
5. 26.
6. 27.
7. 28.
8. 29.
9. 30.
10.
11.
12.
13.
14.
15.
16.
17.
18.
19.
20.
21.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY


