CHAPTER 4

Perceived Inadequacy and Help-Seeking*

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A PREVIEW

Assuming we perceive our own resources to be inadequate for the pursuit of a desirable objective, a straightforward alternative would be to enlist the help of capable others. Yet the facts of the matter are that such a causal linkage between perceived inadequacy and help-seeking is neither so simple, nor so obvious. In the pages that follow we explore the possible nature of that linkage, and some of its personal and situational moderators. We also explore briefly some alternative styles of help-seeking and outline a model of the help-seeking process by way of summary. First, however, it is useful to explain what is meant here by perceived inadequacy and some forms it may take.

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THE MEANING AND FORMS OF PERCEIVED INADEQUACY

Terminological Distinctions

A Working Definition of Perceived Inadequacy

In choosing a definition of *inadequacy* one could characterize it in affective terms, in cognitive terms, or in both. We choose the cognitive, mainly because it appears to have potentially greater theoretical scope. *Perceived inadequacy* is considered here as a *ratio* involving two sets of cognitions: In its numerator is the level of resources regarded as needed for accomplishing a given task unaided, whereas in its denominator is one's available relevant resource level, as perceived by the potential help-seeker. Perceived inadequacy may be said to exist to the extent that this *needed resource/available resource* ratio exceeds 1.00.[1] Presumably the perceiver's determination of its magnitude is based on internal feedback deriving from present goal-directed efforts; past successes and failures in similar contexts (Gerdes, 1973); social-comparison processes based on direct observations of (Festinger, 1954; see also Wills, in press), or normative information regarding, others' actions; and/or evaluative judgements received from others (parents, teachers, peers, employers, etc.). One might also suppose that there exists some zone of uncertainty around that hypothetical baseline of 1.00 whose range depends partly on the extent to which the task appears ambiguous or the goal remote, and on the extent to which the perceiver is unsure of his or her existing resource level. Presumably, conflict as to whether to seek help would be most intense within that zone of uncertainty.[2]

Its Relation to Low Self-esteem

According to Rosenberg (1979), self-confidence is a component of, but not to be equated with, self-esteem. Self-confidence is the anticipation of

[1]*Perceived inadequacy,* as defined here, is probably correlated in nature with feelings resulting from inadequacy. According to Csikzentmihalyi (1975), when one's ability level is insufficient for the task at hand, one feels anxious; when it is oversufficient, one feels bored. It is interesting to note, too, that Glidewell *et al.*(Vol.3, Chapter 8, in press) define *stress* as a psychological state of tension produced by the conflict between demands of the task and one's resources. We have chosen to substitute *needed resource* for *task difficulty* or *task demands* in the present context, simply because it reduces the representation of the notion of perceived inadequacy solely to resource terms.

[2]Because the ratio formulation is at present little more than a heuristic, we will skirt the question of how to deal with negative (i.e., negative resource) denominators. Readers are invited to apply their favorite correction factor, or to employ difference scores instead of ratios.

success in meeting challenges, a definition that bears a family resemblance to perceived inadequacy as defined here. Self-esteem, however, is the acceptance of one's virtues *and* shortcomings. Investigators of help-seeking have not made this distinction. Instead, they differentiate between situational (acute) self-esteem or related notions (e.g., Morris & Rosen, 1973; Nadler, Altman, & Fisher, 1979), and dispositional (chronic) self-esteem (e.g., Broll, Gross & Piliavin, 1974; Tessler & Schwartz, 1972). The situational variants are manipulated by such means as inducing an unexpectedly superior or inferior performance, whereas the dispositional variants are measured, usually beforehand, by means of some paper-and-pencil instrument. With regard to the situational variety, Fisher, Nadler, and associates have used both self-confidence and self-evaluation scales as dependent variables, with some variation in component items. Overall, their self confidence scales have fared better than their self-evaluation scales, although the patterns of results have been similar. As to dispositional self-esteem, some have found evidence for (Tessler & Schwartz, 1972; Uhl, 1974; Wallston, 1976) and some against (Broll, *et al.* 1974; La Morto-Corse & Carver, 1980) its association with help-seeking. Despite this mixed evidence, we are still inclined, as an article of faith, to regard perceived inadequacy and low self-esteem as related predictors.

Its Relation to Dependency.

The more recent view of dependency is of a behavioral construct (e.g., Maccoby & Masters, 1970; Shaffer, 1979), which would make it conceptually closer to our dependent variable of help-seeking than to our independent variable of perceived inadequacy. For the most part, dependency seems to have fallen into disfavor because it is too poorly defined (e.g., see Nelson-Le Gall, Gumerman, & Scott-Jones, Chapter 11, this volume) and because its subcategories are difficult to distinguish empirically (Maccoby & Masters, 1970).

Some Weighting Factors

Resource Centrality or Goal Importance

Some resource areas play a more central role in the view of the perceiver than do other resource areas. Of particular significance are those resources that contributed heavily to one's self-definition. Because the relevance of resource centrality for help-seeking has been demonstrated (DePaulo & Fisher, 1980; Tessler & Schwartz, 1972; Wallston, 1976), we might suggest that resource centrality acts as a multiplier of perceived in-

adequacy. The perceived importance of some specified goal might be considered to function as a similar weighting factor. (Hypothetically, a goal's perceived importance need not necessarily always make it appear more self-relevant.)

Chronic versus Acute Inadequacy

Chronicity refers here to the extent that the perceived (mis)match of needed to own resources remains stable over time. Theoretically, the ratio could remain stable regardless of whether both numerator and denominator have increased (as when an older child is confronted with more difficult versions of an earlier task) or both have decreased (as when an elderly person faces cognitively simpler problems than heretofore, but no longer owns the needed resources). We know of no data that bear explicitly on this notion of chronicity, much less how it impacts on help-seeking. In practice, however, there are numerous problems that recur in daily living where not only the ratio but also the numerator and denominator, respectively, could be said to remain unchanged over the series of situations, and where the two notions of chronicity would therefore be interchangeable. It is not known whether chronicity, as a weighting factor applied to perceived inadequacy, functions like task importance, or whether its relative impact tends to taper off eventually (as through habituation).

Types of Inadequacy

The search for a definitive system for classifying specific inadequacies is likely to be a vain pursuit because such a system would imply that one could account for every conceivable goal or need. Attempts at classification at a rather global level have proven much more feasible. Here we will mention a few, by way of illustration. For example, Curran and Wessberg (1981) distinguish between *social inadequacy* (i.e., social-skills deficits) and what might be called *technical inadequacy*. The distinction is quite similar to the familiar one between social versus "thing" skills. A somewhat similar, once fashionable, distinction between *emotional* and *instrumental* dependency (Heathers, 1955) proposed, in essence, that the goal in the former case was to seek others out for interpersonal closeness or approval, whereas the goal in the latter case was to secure help in pursuing some relatively neutral objective. Empirically, it has proven difficult to distinguish the two in research on child development (Maccoby & Masters, 1970).

A more differentiated but essentially descriptive typology was advanced by Goldin, Perry, Margolin, and Stotsky (1972); namely, chronic behavioral dependence on others for help on social, emotional, financial, institutional, or psychomedical matters. Concerning social dependency, for

example, they note that some individuals repeatedly need others to make appointments and first contacts for them, although they feel adequate in the company of similarly handicapped others. By institutional dependency they mean a kind of institutional climate whose routines reinforce dependency, especially in females, partly by discouraging self-help. Of these five pragmatically derived classes, social and emotional dependency were regarded as more transituational than situationally induced.

The resource typology of Foa and Foa (1974) is especially noteworthy. This model is based on two orthogonal dimensions, namely, particularism (i.e., the resource given or sought is specific to the interacting parties) versus universalism (where the resource is impersonal, transrelational), and concreteness versus abstractness. The dimensions are used to derive six classes of resources arranged in a circle, namely, love, physical services, material goods, money (the polar opposite of love on the particularism–universalism scale but both money and love located midway on the concreteness–abstractness scale), information (of a neutral nature), and status (admiration, respect, prestige). Unlike the previously mentioned typologies, the Foa approach is potentially more useful here partly because it is theory based and partly because that theory is directly concerned with social exchange. Among its empirically supported propositions are two that have particular relevance because they involve reciprocity. The first asserts that reciprocation in kind is most preferred: Thus when love is received, the recipient expects that the donor would most like to be repaid with love. The second proposition holds that when reciprocation in kind appears unfeasible, a close neighbor on the resource circle is preferred to a distant one. For instance, status or physical services would make more satisfactory substitutes for love than would information or goods; least satisfactory would be money.

The applicability of the Foa approach to the linkage between perceived inadequacy and help-seeking is much deserving of exploration. It might be fruitful, for example, to design help-seeking studies in which anticipated opportunity to reciprocate, as a potential moderator of help-seeking, is systematically varied in terms of degree of substitutability of the resource of reciprocation for the resource presently needed by the help-seeker. Some (as, perhaps, Clark & Mills, 1979) might maintain that the outcome of such studies would not generalize to intimate ("communal") relationships because reciprocity as a dominant theme is inappropriate in intimate relationships. In response, we might note that intimate relationships typically implicate a greater variety of resource areas, over time, than do nonintimate relationships. Furthermore, reciprocal affection could be said to be a defining characteristic of intimate relationships. That being the case, transactions between intimates, in other resource areas, may be of lesser importance to them, and the anticipated opportunity to reciprocate in kind in some

other resource area might then have little impact as a determinant of help seeking.[3]

We might speculate further that acquisition of such specific resources as money, goods, information, or services, is less dependent on the good graces of potential donors than is obtaining love or status. If true, how could a person who wishes greater status or who desires to be loved, go about acquiring such ascribed resources? Blau (1963) might say that to acquire status one should offer some resource that the recipient could not possibly reciprocate (assuming the offer was then accepted). Perhaps that might hold if one offered valuable information, money, goods, or services. But it is implausible that one would deliberately plan to acquire status by offering unrequitable love.[4]

ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES FOR COPING WITH INADEQUACY

Let us now consider in greater detail how an individual might go about coping with inadequacy. First, we outline some behavioral alternatives, namely: (1) help-seeking, (2) procrastination, (3) refusal of unsolicited help, (4) attempted self-help, and (5) persistence. Then we distinguish several cognitive alternatives.

Behavior Alternatives

Seeking Help

It may be correct, but not particularly illuminating, to suggest as we did at the outset that the causal linkage between perceived inadequacy and

[3]DePaulo (1982) suggests that reciprocity concerns may be more important in informal relationships, especially if the resource reflects on one's perceived skills.

[4]To become loved, on the other hand, the attraction literature suggests one pathway, namely, that giving love may beget love. We would propose that money, goods, services, or information, can be obtained directly, either by requesting them or by self-help. Or, they can be obtained indirectly, by the two-stage process of offering one such acquired resource in return for another such resource. On the other hand, love and status can *only* be obtained by indirection. Status can be "earned," for example, if our unaided acquisitions of money, goods, services, or information are judged by others as having reached impressive proportions and/or one were to offer such resources under unrequitable conditions. Love may be "earned" either through first offering love, or through the judicious allocation of one's other existing resources. Even here, however, as with disclosure of information about the self (Archer & Berg, 1978), there are limits to reciprocation. Granted, this lesson may escape some adults, such as the "moving toward" neurotic described by Horney (1945) and the affiliation-oriented persons studied by Terhune (1968)in a mixed-motive context.

help-seeking is complex. Present knowledge only leads us to speculate that the relationship is nonmonotonic. Where the level of inadequacy, that is, the ratio of needed to own resources, is perceived to be distinctly below 1.00, we might expect relatively little help-seeking on the problem in question, except for reasons of convenience (DePaulo, 1982), or in the service of some ulterior objective (e.g., see (DePaulo, 1982; Nadler, Shapira, & Ben-Itzhak, 1982), or where delegation of task execution is normative. Instead, we would anticipate self-help activity, and refusal of "misguided" offers of unsolicited help.

Within that zone of uncertainty that surrounds a ratio of 1.00, perceivers would be maximally undecided as to whether they can persevere unaided. Here, some, especially the achievement-oriented (see Tessler & Schwartz, 1972), might persist longer than others before abandoning the goal, or seeking help; others might turn to self-help to increase their present resource levels. As the magnitude of perceived inadequacy increasingly exceeds 1.00, the likelihood of help-seeking increases. Beyond some maximum level of perceived inadequacy, however, the likelihood of help-seeking will decrease. Suggestive of a *direct* relationship are findings in the developemental literature (see Nelson-Le Gall *et al.*, Chapter 11); also evidence pointing to level of psychological distress as the best predictor of help-seeking for psychiatric and physical health problems (Mechanic, 1978). An *inverse* relationship is suggested by the frequently reported regularity that many students with diagnosable psychiatric illness don't even contemplate seeking treatment (e.g., Rimmer, Halikas, Schuckit, & McClure, 1978). This *therapeutic paradox* (Allerton, 1969) is also reflected indirectly in the negative correlations reported between perceived problem severity and favorability of attitudes toward seeking professional help (Calhoun, Dawes, & Lewis, 1972; Calhoun & Selby, 1974) and in the negative evaluations of discharged servicemen regarding physical help for their visible injuries (Ladieu, Hanfmann, & Dembo, 1947). Unfortunately, lacking a common metric of perceived inadequacy, we cannot be certain that such studies fall on the appropriate sides of the inflection point.

According to DePaulo (1982), help-seeking is a nonlinear function of an objective's perceived importance or centrality, such that no help would be sought either for trivial matters or for very important matters because to do so might be an imposition. The exceptions to this might be where the helper is a paid professional, or where the public is fully aware of one's inadequacy and would condemn one's failure to seek help. If so, this suggests that, in general, help-seeking reaches a maximum at an intermediate level of inadequacy for moderately important problems.

An experiment explicitly concerned, in part, with the effects of perceived inadequacy on help-seeking was conducted by Morris and Rosen

(1973), based on the Greenberg and Shapiro (1971) physical-disability paradigm. All subjects were led to believe that their "motor handicap" made it impossible for them to meet the quota, that is, rendered them inadequate. They were further told that their performance on a practice task was either much better or much worse than that of most similarly handicapped subjects. In other words, they were characterized, privately (to minimize embarrassment; see Shapiro, Chapter 6, this volume), either as "moderately inadequate" or as "highly inadequate." The Highly Inadequate were clearly less likely than were the Moderately Inadequate to ask a confederate, who suffered from a different "disability," for help. We might consider this manipulation to have produced different levels of *internal* attribution for failure. In support of this, the Highly Inadequate rated their chances of succeeding alone on the critical task as even poorer than did the Moderately Inadequate. The results may be regarded as exemplifying the descending portion of the proposed curve linking inadequacy to help-seeking. Obviously, however, a convincing experimental demonstration will necessitate multiple levels of (in)adequacy, to encompass both sides of the inflection point.[5]

Certain peer-tutoring experiments with grade-school students are suggestive of the ascending side. Same-sex pairs of classmates were formed, with one member of each pair randomly assigned to tutor his or her partner in mathematics. After 2 weeks of tutoring, the tutors rated themselves as more adequate, so to speak, performed better, and expressed far less desire to exchange roles, than did their tutees. In short, both parties recognized correctly that it was more fruitful for them to extend help than to receive it (Rosen, Powell, Schubot, & Rollins, 1978).

Also suggestive of the positive side of the help-seeking function are certain experiments on desired collaboration. In one study, college freshmen were led to believe they had high or low "creative empathy." They were then offered the option of working alone or with a fellow student in a relevant competition. The lower their own alleged creativity, the more the subjects chose collaboration, and indicated that they did so because the major contributions would probably come from the partner (Rosen, Case, & Reed, 1979). A second experiment added a manipulation of partner's creativity and one of plagiarism by the partner (who brazenly copied the subject's practice responses). Once again, own creativity inversely affected

[5]More typical normative or task-difficulty manipulations have produced inhibitory effects in some experiments (e.g., DePaulo & Fisher, 1980; Tessler & Schwartz, 1972), but not in others (e.g., Shapiro, 1980). Shapiro, (Chapter 6, this volume) is correct in urging further study to reconcile these discrepancies. It is conceivable that different studies have addressed different portions of the inadequacy continuum; this in itself may add to the problem of interpretation.

the decision to collaborate; partner's creativity inversely affected the decision to collaborate; partner's creativity had the complementary effect. Plagiarism amplified the effects of creativity: those of low creativity looked forward eagerly to collaborating. Perhaps, being thus imitated is flattering to those of low creativity, but distressing to those of high creativity (Case, Rosen, & Reed, 1982).

Procrastination

Procrastination usually is taken to mean that a person intentionally puts off doing or completing some activity. If considered excessive by observers, it would probably be seen by them as more symptomatic of low task-motivation than of low ability. Although both procrastinator and observer may agree that the task activity and/or the immediate consequence of its completion may be aversive to the former, they may disagree over the importance of engaging in it. If this view is correct, a person harboring perceptions of high inadequacy may attempt to dissemble and to invite the label of procrastination, when necessary, to conceal that inadequacy. Of indirect support are findings (Covington, Spratt, & Omelich, 1980) that low-effort expenditure by "students" over a series of imagined failures elicited higher self-ratings of ability *and* of procrastination, than did high-effort expenditure. Subjects who took the role of "teacher" of these hypothetical students, made comparable attributions regarding the students, as a function of student effort; they also "administered" more punishment to low-effort students.

In principle, one might differentiate between procrastination on the task proper and procrastination with regard to help-seeking. We might speculate that those Highly Inadequates for whom help-seeking is particularly aversive may feign procrastination on the task proper, as a cover. In general, anything that renders the attributional process more complex for the observers, such as attribute ambiguity (see Darley & Goethals, 1980), may be welcomed by the Highly Inadequate. They delayed significantly longer before asking for help than did the Moderately Inadequate in the Morris and Rosen study. Because the task was neither particularly noxious nor pleasant, the procrastination may have been principally with regard to help-seeking. No determination, however, was made of actual effort exerted prior to seeking help.

Refusal of Unsolicited Help

A person with high perceived inadquacy might refuse unsolicited help because its acceptance, if public, might be embarrassing and damaging of public esteem (see Shapiro, Chapter 6, this volume); accepting unsolicited

help might reflect adversely on private self-esteem; or its acceptance might be an imposition on the helper (DePaulo & Fisher, 1980). In the Morris and Rosen study, the Highly Inadequate who anticipated having an opportunity to reciprocate and who then acepted help was more likely than a moderate counterpart to refuse further help once the required quota was reached; perhaps this is more indicative of a concern with public than of private self-esteem (which had already suffered). Possibly, too, the Highly Inadequate would be especially concerned and perhaps more sensitive (DePaulo & Fisher, 1981) about imposing, for to accept help that constitutes an imposition would be an open admission of desperation. Conceivably, too, this would be especially the case when an offer of help is inferred to be prompted by the helper's pity or sense of duty (Hastorf, Northcraft, & Picciotto, 1979).

Attempted Self-Help

Instead of seeking help, the highly inadequate might attempt self-help. One form might entail observational learning, as in studying the task-relevant actions of a potential helper or third party, then modeling those actions. Such an alternative might be optimal for the Highly Inadequate who is concerned that being directly helped might reflect on one's private or public esteem. Another form is self-instruction through the use of impersonal manuals, tapes, and so forth. Hill and Harmon (1976) found that people needing mental-health counseling were more likely to consult relevant self-help tapes than to phone human counselors. A similar preference for an impersonal source of needed information is shown in an experiment on young adolescent males (Shea, 1970). Those who got help on an insoluble task by pressing a button showed the same help-seeking rate over trials; those whose source of help was another person showed a declining rate.

Some experiments by Fisher and associates provide indirect support; their paradigms did not actually offer a choice between help-seeking and self-help. The investigators predicted and found that unsolicited prior help from a low-resource donor, compared to help from a high-resource donor, produced *less* self-help. The self-help in these experiments was interpreted as an independence-seeking reaction to the esteem-threatening effects of prior help (Fisher & Nadler, 1976).

A long-term form of self-help might entail the development of resources appropriate for different problem areas to compensate for perceived inadequacy in existing areas. Recourse to such a strategy seems more likely if one were convinced that the present inadequacy was insurmountable or too costly to overcome, even with help. Unfortunately, evidence for the existence of such an Adlerian strategy (1930) is largely

impressionistic. At any rate, one implication is of turning the tables by being in the eventual position of offering help (e.g., Ladieu *et al.*, 1947). Adler considered the development of social interest and performance of humanitarian acts as the ideal compensation for existing inadequacy. Less constructive is the self-enhancing diversion of others' attention to irrelevant attributes, especially when one's present inadequacy is public knowledge (Baumeister & Jones, 1978; Jones & Berglas, 1978; Schlenker, 1980).

Persistence

Instead of requesting or accepting help, one might persist in trying to cope with the task. Such a strategy would seem to be more forthcoming from a Moderately Inadequate who (compared to a Highly Inadequate) believed that there was still a reasonable possiblity of succeeding unaided (DePaulo, 1982) and regarded the task as a challenge. This is the principal reason given in the Morris and Rosen study by the Moderately Inadequate who did not seek help; their actions resemble those of subjects whom Tessler and Schwartz (1972) had identified as having high achievement-orientation. Other evidence of persistence is provided by Harris, Tessler, and Potter (1977). Subjects who had received brief rather than extensive help following a failure came to believe they were self-reliant (i.e., adequate), then persisted longer before again seeking help.

According to Carver, Blaney, and Scheier (1979) self-attention is an important moderator of persistence. Subjects were given a failure experience, then led to expect failure or success on a later task. Self-attention (induced through the presence–absence of a mirror) increased persistence under expected success, but reduced it under expected failure. Conceivably, this pattern might be reversed if the dependent variable were help-seeking.

Cognitive Alternatives

We limit our examination of cognitive alternatives for coping with inadequacy to the following: (1) denying, biasing, or discounting the inadequacy; (2) considering it incorrigible; (3) misattribution; and (4) reliance on faith.

Denying, Biasing, or Discounting the Inadequacy

If the situation following failure permits no behavorial withdrawal, one alternative is psychological withdrawal, either by not dwelling on one's inadequacy, or by not thinking about the task (Carver *et al.*, 1979). We suspect the latter option may only be a temporary expedient that can be

sustained only if enough external diversions are available, or the person is adept at imaginary diversions. A more extreme form would be to deny one's inadequacy in the face of evidence to the contrary. It seems doubtful that denial would normally be practiced by the average adult, except where the evidence is incomplete or faulty. A long-retired athlete may attempt what his or her bodily state no longer permits. Ordinarily, one might expect that initial denials of present athletic inadequacy would give way to the reality constraints that a few trials would impose, assuming that effective performance levels are not restored with practice. Perhaps a more likely response is to bias the perceived inadequacy in a less unfavorable direction. The retired athlete's "body image" may a true version of the past and or a rosier version of the present. In the Morris and Rosen study, the Moderately Inadequates estimated their chances of meeting the quota unaided as much better than did the Highly Inadequates, even though this was unlikely in either case.

The athlete might, instead, discount the basis for the present inadequacy, on coming out of retirement, especially if there are multiple sufficient causes for an unfavorable showing in his or her first comeback engagement (Darley & Goethals, 1980; Snyder, Kleck, Strenta, & Mentzer, 1979), such as declining skills, lack of practice, an unreasonable athletic commission, or biased referees. A prime candidate for discounting might be any basis for inadequacy that would otherwise be self-esteem threatening, if advocated. Thus, the athlete might be more inclined to discount a decline in skills in favor of the other plausible alternatives. This line of reasoning suggests that a situation that permits such "esteem-supportive" discounting of the basis for one's inadequacy, would facilitate help-seeking more than does a situation that is less permissive.

Considering the Inadequacy Incorrigible

The cognition of the incorrigible inadequacy signifies in the extreme that one's perceived inadequacy is beyond anyone's control (Weiner, 1980). Severe depressives, and those perhaps who manifest learned helplessness, are prime exemplars. One would little expect such convictions to elicit help-seeking; the validity of such an entrenched belief would first have to be successfully challenged. A less-extreme version might be the judgment that the costs of overcoming the inadequacy far exceed the value of the objective in question. A possible consequence of putting certain tasks outside of our realm of relevance is that our perceived level of adequacy could remain unscathed, provided that our associates did not believe or demonstrate that the effort needed was less than we thought. If they did believe this and we made no effort, we would risk being attributed with low motivation or of feigning low motivation to conceal our inadequacy (Covington *et al.*, 1980).

Professions of low motivation lose credibility if they were offered in connection with many different tasks or if we were seen engaging in task-relevant self-help or help-seeking (Darley & Goethals, 1980).

Misattribution

People are more likely to take credit for successes than for failures (e.g., Ross & Sicoly, 1979; Schlenker & Miller, 1977) and to make self-serving attributions for failure (Schlenker & Miller, 1977). These biases are tempered, however, by such factors as one's actual "track record" (Feather, 1969), especially if it is public (Baumeister & Jones, 1978; Schlenker, 1975); the prospect of taking further tests on which failure was likely (Wortman, Costanzo, & Witt, 1973); task centrality (Miller, 1976); and self-esteem (Fitch, 1970; Maracek & Mettee, 1972).

The first study linking self-attribution explicitly to help-seeking conceptualized that linkage as a two-stage decisional process, in which the prime intervening variable was threat to self-esteem (Tessler & Schwartz, 1972). The initial stage was a causal analysis of whether one's task failure was due to internal or external circumstances, such that the greater the self-ascription of responsibility, the greater the threat. As to the second stage, the greater the threat, the less likely was the decision to seek help because help-seeking after a self-ascribed failure would affirm one's perceived inadequacy. As predicted, relatively more help was sought when the manipulated locus of failure was external. No direct attempt was made to measure perceived threat. However, suggestive of its presence was the fact that no subjects with dispositionally high self-esteem sought help under conditions in which help-seeking would imply an admission of weakness with regard to the central attributes of intelligence and mental health, and would therefore be dissonant with these subjects' characteristically positive self-image. Also consistent with this threat rationale, is the fact that Highly Inadequate subjects in the Morris and Rosen study acknowledged being more ashamed of their failure than did the Moderately Inadequate.

Thus far, there has been little sustained attempt to extend this attributional perspective empirically to help-seeking. Ickes and Kidd (1976), after generalizing the attributional framework developed by Rosenbaum (1972) to help-giving, suggest that extrapolation to the help-seeking context should be simple because the same attributional processes prompt both helpers and help-seekers. We suspect that such extrapolation may prove difficult because the principal parties may well have a conflict of interest (Covington *et al.*, 1980) and may generate dissimilar attributional patterns needing reconciliation (Darley & Goethals, 1980). A student might believe that his or her low effort is unintentional because he or she lacks ability to proceed further. The teacher, however, judging the student's low effort to be due

to laziness, might become angry (Weiner, 1981). Such an attributional stand off would not be conducive to help-seeking (see also Ladieu *et al.*, 1947). Yet, as Dweck (1975) has shown, attributions are not set in concrete.

Placing Reliance on Faith or Faith Healers

Instead of believing that one's inadequacy was incorrigible by any instrumentality, one might believe that the inadequacy is controllable, but not by (ordinary) humans. What attributional or reattributional processes transpire in those handicapped who visit such shrines as Lourdes, or who seek the laying on of evangelical hands? Does this source of help-seeking represent a court of last resort, after a period of shopping around for mundane healers? What social networks support such processes? These remain empirical questions.

We recognize, in passing, that a partial inventory of behavioral and cognitive strategies for coping can only be regarded as a beginning, at best. A systematic analysis would need to determine whether certain behavioral strategies (e.g., procrastination and persistence) are incompatible with one another and/or with certain cognitive alternatives (e.g., seeking help and considering the inadequacy incorrigible; see also Greenberg & Westcott, Vol. 1, Chapter 4, 1983), at least at a particular point in the help-seeking process. We need to determine whether some of them will be found to constitute response hierarchies, and whether some strategies are likely to occur earlier and others later (e.g., persistence, then help-seeking) in the help-seeking process.

SOME POSSIBLE MODERATORS OF THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN INADEQUACY AND HELP-SEEKING

In considering moderators of the inadequacy–help-seeking linkage, we touch both on some personal and situational examples. Discussion of personal moderators is limited to three clusters, namely, perceived control, self-reflection, and gender. For more extended treatments the reader is referred to that section of chapters in this volume that deals explicitly with individual differences.

Some Personal Moderators

It was noted that the construct *self-esteem* plays a central role in certain approaches to our problem area (e.g., Fisher, Nadler, & Whitcher-Alagna, 1982; Tessler & Schwartz, 1972), although dispositional measures of self-

esteem have produced mixed results. Because other chapters deal in depth with this important construct, we offer some other varieties of grist for the mill. First we touch on a factor that might be generically labeled *perceived control.*

Perceived Control

Although its applicability seems intuitively obvious, the empirical literature has yet to show interaction effects of perceived control and perceived inadequacy, or even main effects of control on help-seeking (e.g., Singer, 1974). One suggestive study found that distress level, which was negatively associated with perceived control and self-efficacy, was the best predictor of help-seeking by college students (Mechanic, 1978; see also Leavitt, 1979, on perceived vulnerability and use of ambulatory care). Both generalized and goal-specific locus-of-control measures have been found to moderate the effects of stress on level of mood disturbance, with externals tending to be the more disturbed (Lefcourt, Miller, Ware, & Sherk, 1981). However, the further link between mood and help-seeking was not investigated.

Self Reflection

Some investigators emphasize what might be called *self-reflection* as a coping mechanism. For instance, Langer, Janis, and Wolfer (1975) trained patients facing elective surgery to think positively about the operation (i.e., encouraged patients to engage in biased cognizing for dealing with anticipated inadequacy). Others were only, or also, given objective information about what to expect, or given neither preparation. During postoperative convalescence, the "think positively" group was least likely to ask for medicinal help, whereas the control group was most likely to do so.

Other investigators have examined the impact of individual differences in self-reflection, notably that of *private self-consciousness* (Fenigstein, Scheier, & Buss, 1975; Scheier & Carver, 1981), that is, the extent to which a person generally attends to his or her thoughts, feelings, and mood changes. Conceptually, high private-self-consciousness is regarded as the dispositional analog of high situational-self-awareness, and as functioning like the presence of a mirror (Carver *et al.*, 1979) in amplifying the effects of outcome expectancy (perceived adequacy) following success or failure. In one recent study, people high in private self-consciousness subsequently reported fewer illnesses than did their low counterparts, after both had experienced a comparable degree of aversive, uncontrollable stresses (Mullen & Suls, 1982). This was interpreted to mean that because the *highs* reflect more closely and accurately on their own symptoms and bodily reactions

to the stresses, they are more likely to achieve some control over those stresses through such subsequent coping activities as seeking informal support or viewing the stressors in a positive light.

Perhaps so. Yet experimental evidence linking self-consciousness explicitly to help-seeking is sorely needed. In one isolated attempt, subjects were exposed to failure and a donor-versus-recipient-initiated manipulation of access to help. Under external attribution of failure (moderate inadequacy?) those who had initially registered high private-self consciousness were equally likely to seek as to accept help, whereas their *low* counterparts were distinctly less likely to seek than to accept help. The investigators attributed these differences to greater sensitivity of the *highs* to the attributional contingencies and their self-threatening potential (La Morto-Corse & Carver, 1980).

People high in private self-consciousness are alleged not be concerned about self-presentation—perhaps they are better able to discern when help-seeking would threaten their private self-esteem and to act accordingly (see Brockner, 1979). Unfortunately, a dispositional measure of self-esteem showed no interaction effects in the La Morto-Corse and Carver study; this failure was interpreted as possibly due to the absence of the moderating influence of task centrality, whose importance was noted in the experiment by Tessler and Schwartz (1972).[6]

Gender

The literature implicates gender as a relevant moderator. Because other chapters also overlap in this regard (see especially McMullen and Gross, Chapter 10, this volume), our comments are brief. By and large, it appears that males more than females are expected (at least in some Western societies) to avoid the public acknowledgement of needing help, especially of an instrumental sort (e.g., Bottinelli & Weizmann, 1973; D'Arcy & Schmitz, 1979; Fischer & Torney, 1976; Horwitz, 1977; Hoyenga & Hoyenga, 1978; Langsam, 1973; Selby, Calhoun, & Parrott, 1978; see also DePaulo, 1982; Nelson-Le Gall *et al.*, Chapter 11, this volume). Although some studies fail to support this generalization for reasons that are unclear (Calhoun, Dawes, & Lewis, 1972; Greenberg & Shapiro, 1971; Morris & Rosen 1973), it should be noted that the exceptions show an absence of gender effects, not a reversal in direction.

[6]Also failing to yield effects were dispositional measures of public self-consciousness and of social anxiety, measures that presumably reflect concerns about one's public esteem and of being embarrassed.

Situational Moderators

In considering situational moderators of the inadequacy–help-seeking linkage, we focus on three broad classes, namely (1) the relationship between the potential seeker and helper, (2) the helper's characteristics, and (3) the context.

The Relationship between Seeker and Helper

There are, of course, numerous facets or dimensions for distinguishing among such relationships. We confine ourselves to three. Specifically, we touch on whether the relationship involves (1) friends or strangers; (2) parties who are attitudinally similar or dissimilar; and (3) parties who are similar or dissimilar in ownership of resources or status. Consider the case in which a friend and a stranger are equally capable of supplying an inadequate with the needed resource. Whose help would be more acceptable? By and large, it is more acceptable from a friend, partly because such a helper engenders relatively less indebtedness (Bar-Tal, Bar-Zohar, Greenberg, & Hermon, 1977; see also Clark, Vol. 1 Chapter 11, 1983; Greenberg & Westcott, Volume 1, Chapter 4, 1983); less threat to self-esteem (Weinstein, De Vaughn, & Wiley, 1969), and more expectations of entitlement (see Greenberg & Westcott, Vol. 1 Chapter 4, 1983). To this, Shapiro (1980; see also Chapter 6) would add perceived costs to the helper, as a qualifier: he showed that less help was sought from a stranger than from a friend, but only when the helper's costs were high.

One interpretation that Shapiro proposed for this finding was that people attach relatively greater importance to being indebted to a stranger. If indebtedness is more salient in connection with strangers, we might translate this into an expectation that, in addition to those resources needed for accomplishing the task proper, other resources are needed for purposes of reciprocation. In the event that such additional resources are unavailable, this could signify an increase in the numerator of the inadequacy ratio to the extent of inhibiting help-seeking from the stranger.[7]

The availability of an informal social network is often found salutory in meeting the needs of inadequates (Baker, 1977; Gottlieb, 1981; Grosser, 1979; Kadushin, 1966; Wilcox & Birkel, Vol. 3 Chapter 10). Yet some networks appear to sustain, if not reinforce, inadequacies (Alexander & Dibbs,

[7]For some reason, task difficulty, which would of course increase the numerator and therefore the overall level of inadequacy, failed to interact with the relationship factor in the Shapiro (1980) study.

1977; Green & Roberts, 1974; Wortman & Dunkel-Schetter, 1979); and other lay networks are a mixed blessing as a source of referrals.

It has been shown that alleged similarity to the helper in task-irrelevant attitudes or in task-relevant background, increases subjects' perceptions of their inadequacy after being given help, whereas dissimilarity reduces those perceptions (Fisher, Harrison, & Nadler, 1978; Fisher & Nadler, 1974; Nadler, Fisher, & Streufert, 1976). The rationale given was that because similar helpers are more relevant comparison persons, being helped by them is relatively more informative about one's inadequacy, hence that help is experienced as more threatening than supportive of one's self-esteem (see also Ladieu *et al.*, 1947).

Such findings, however, do not directly address the question of whether similarity would prompt inadequates to request or reject help. Some evidence of relatively greater help rejection from attitudinally similar helpers is provided by Clark, Gotay, and Mills (1974) under conditions of no anticipated opportunity to reciprocate. It is not apparent, however, how inadequate their subjects were induced to view their performance. The precise role of attitude similarity as a moderator in the present context remains to be determined.

Another potential moderator is the extent to which the seeker and helper differ in ownership of certain resources (Fisher & Nadler, 1976; Gergen, Ellsworth, Maslach & Seipel, 1975) that may or may not (e.g., DePaulo, 1978) be objectively task-relevant. Let us assume that consensus exists among the two parties not only that one owns more of the salient attribute than does the other, but owning it is to be valued; in short, theirs is (an unequal) status relationship. The pioneering field study of Blau's (1963) is illustrative of the moderator effects of a relevant status relationship. He documented the emergence of informal consultation patterns among fellow-agents in a federal agency, contrary to the dictates of official policy (which required that agents consult their superior). Furthermore, the more inadequate agents were relatively less likely to consult the recognized experts among them than they were to form mutual consultation pairs with one another. Their reluctance to approach the experts was interpreted as a desire to avoid publicly validating their own inadequacy, that is, their inferior competency status, relative to that of the experts (see also Rosen, 1980). For a striking generalization of such findings to the context of professional relationships among teachers, see the chapter by Glidewell, Tucker, Todt, and Cox (Vol. 3, Chapter 8) in press.

Such data notwithstanding, there remains an insufficiency of experimental evidence concerning the moderating role of relevant status relationships. Would one expect, for example, that people with high perceived-inadequacy are more likely to accept money (or information) from someone

of slightly superior status than from somebody of distinctly superior monetary or information status? The rationale for such a prediction might be derived from a study by Fisher and Nadler (1976), although that study was not directly concerned with this hypothesis. In their experiment, failure was imputed to reflect adversely on subjects' abilities, after which subjects did or did not receive unsolicited help. Those who received unsolicited help, compared to those who did not, from a donor of slightly superior means later engaged in relatively more self-help and rated themselves as more adequate. The reverse was found when the donor had greatly superior means.

The moderating function of irrelevant status relationships is especially elusive and intriguing. One theory holds that where group members differ on such diffuse status chacteristics as age, gender, or race, those with superior status (i.e., who are older, male, or white), come to be attributed with greater task-relevant status, often despite objective information to the contrary (Berger, Cohen, & Zelditch, 1972; Cohen, 1979). Accordingly, the acceptance of help from someone with lower, task-irrelevant status than oneself would threaten one's overall status and perceived adequacy. This is shown in the tendency for adults (especially male and/or "masculine" adults) to show greater receptivity to help from another adult than from an equally competent child (DePaulo, 1978; Druian & DePaulo, 1977).

So far, so good. Consider now that physical attractiveness, too, is an important status characteristic. Attractive females, for example, have greater dating popularity and manage to marry men of higher SES status than do unattractive females (Bar-Tal & Saxe, 1976). There are indications that such attractiveness is perceived as relevant for tasks reflecting social competence (Reis, Nezlek, & Wheeler, 1980), but not necessarily for tasks reflecting technical competence (Abbott & Sebastian, 1981). For example, a physically unattractive female author of a competent essay was judged, by males, to have more talent than a physically attractive but equally competent writer (Holahan & Stephan, 1981). Where help-seeking is concerned, females who find themselves technically inadequate are more likely to seek help from an unattractive than a highly attractive female who is at hand (Stokes & Bickman, 1974) or with whom further interaction is anticipated (Nadler, 1980). Assuming, then, that the subjects in these last two studies generally saw themselves as of intermediate attractiveness (a reasonable assumption: see Marks, Miller, & Maruyama, 1981), why is it self-threatening to solicit help from a younger person, but not from a homelier one?

To approach this seeming paradox, we offer the following hopefully converging observations. Age, considered alone, is accorded higher status, but when viewed conjointly with other status attributes age may be negatively associated with status (Pusateri & Latané 1982). Consider, too, that if a child's technical competence already exceeds ours, how much greater

will that competence level become when he or she reaches our mature years! Our greater present age-status advantage may therefore only be temporary, or at least of relatively short duration, compared to our advantage in physical attractiveness over the homely adult helper. Furthermore, whereas the child's superior competence is an uncomfortable disconfirmation of adult expectations, the superior competence of the unattractive female is not (Holahan & Stephan, 1981). The stereotype of the teacher–spinster probably epitomizes the latter case. Conceivably such teachers are regarded as compensating for those unattainable resources that their more attractive female counterparts enjoy and profit by. It has been proposed, too, that achievement-oriented behavior by many females is engaged in less for its own sake than for a desire to please (Hoffman, 1972). This suggests, in turn, the possibility that the unattractive female helper is perceived as motivated by a desire for acceptance, or to be of service, than by a desire to obtain a status advantage; such an eventuality, however, may be more likely in situations that minimize competition (e.g., job rivalry) between help-seeker and helper. Speculating in a different context, Blau (1964) suggested that a person secure in his or her high status can afford to accept help from a donor of lesser status because the help could be regarded as a form of "tribute" to the recipient (possibly for past services; see the Greenberg & Westcott chapter, Vol. 1, Chapter 4, 1983). To this we might add that the high-status recipient might view the acceptance of help as a magnanimous gesture prompted by a perceived desire to indulge the needs of the helper (e.g., by accommodating the do-gooder).

The status implications of physical attractiveness are further complicated when the sex composition of the pair is systematically examined. Neither the gender of the recipient nor of the helper was found to affect help-seeking from unattractive helpers. If the helper was attractive, however, gender had an appreciable impact. Thus, males were much less likely to solicit help from an attractive female than from an attractive male, and to have experienced the former situation as particularly unpleasant. In marked contrast, females were much more likely to seek help from the attractive male than from the attractive female (Nadler *et al.*, 1982), and to have enjoyed the situation more in the former case. These findings were interpreted as due to different sex-role imperatives. They can also be viewed in terms of status congruence. Namely, a male would be inviting status incongruence, by accepting help from a physically attractive female, whereas a female would experience status congruence in accepting the help of an attractive male.[8]

[8]There is the further possibility that the males were more preoccupied with task performance than were the females: when the helper of either gender was unattractive, the males sought more help than did the females.

The moderating effects of status congruence are also seen in the previously cited peer-tutoring experiments (Rosen *et al.*, 1978). After 2 weeks of in-role activity, tutoring partners were suddenly told that they were to exchange roles. In response, those former tutors whose preexperimental adequacy in mathematics exceeded that of their former tutees, experienced the greatest distress over the prospect of being demoted to the subordinate role, and expressed the greatest desire to return to their previous role of helping, instead of being helped. For them, the role exchange would have constituted a change from status congruence to one of incongruence. Because the pairings were all same-sex, it is not known whether variations in sex composition would have qualified the outcomes.

In retrospect, it is clear that our knowledge of the moderating function of both task-relevant and task-irrelevant status relationships is still limited. Much deserving of pursuit is the question of how *magnitude* of perceived inadequacy interacts with the nature of a status relationship in affecting help-seeking.

Characteristics of the Helper

While chronic inadequates, and people with considerable problems, rather infrequently seek the help of professionals, some turn instead to intimates (Grosser, 1979; Guerney & Drake, 1973). The nature of the problem may also determine who, if anyone, is approached (Hewitt, 1977). As to the qualifications sought for in helpers, undergraduates considered expertness to be of prime importance in choosing a mental health professional, attractiveness (likability) as most important in choosing a particular friend, and trustworthiness as equally important in either case (Corrigan, 1978).

Age of professional helper, more than age similarity, appears to be important, too, in governing the preferences for advisors, according to respondents ranging from older adolescents to elderly persons. The choices of the oldest and youngest cohorts converged toward advisors in the middle years, on an assortment of hypothetical problems.[9] On the other hand, sex of advisor produced clear cohort differences. Both males and females in the two oldest cohorts preferred a male advisor; those in the younger cohorts showed no overall preference (Clayton & Jellison, 1975). It is unclear whether these differences reflect a developmental increase or a secular change in the value of being a masculine helper.

The interpersonal style of helping may also function as a relevant situa-

[9]The preferences of the oldest cohort do not necessarily conflict with the results of the Druian and DePaulo experiments. In those experiments (but not in the Clayton & Jellison study, 1975), subjects had the option of not seeking help, and their potential helpers were not portrayed as professionals.

tional moderator (see Cohn & Erwin, Vol. 3, Chapter 3, in press). It has been proposed, for example, that forcing unsolicited medication on a psychiatric patient undermines the patient's sense of autonomy (Ford, 1980) and complicates the treatment process (Gutheil, Shapiro, & St. Clair, 1980). One would suppose that some helping strategies are more suitable for dealing with certain clients than with other clients. For instance, some suggest that one should avoid falling into the trap of conveying advice, optimism, or encouragement to the help-rejecting complainer (Peters & Grunebaum, 1977; see also Watzlawick & Coyne, 1980). Unfortunately, there are few systematic investigations of the effects of helper's style. A plausible hypothesis is that a helper who states that a recipient would be doing the helper a favor in accepting help, would find the inadequate more receptive than would a helper who characterizes the offer of help as prompted by desire to do the recipient a favor. An effective demonstration of this proposition may prove difficult, however, judging from the results of two attempts (DePaulo, 1978).

In principle, the contingencies that potential helpers place on the use of aid would qualify as appropriate moderators. It has been shown, for instance, that persons in need are likely to accept more help if they are relatively free to determine the manner of its use (Gergen, Morse, & Kristeller, 1973; Rosen, 1971). But whether the stipulations lead to perceived inadequacy (see Brickman, Robinowitz, Karuza, Coates, Cohn & Kidder, 1982), or interact with preexisting levels of inadequacy in affecting help-seeking, is not known.

Contextual Moderators

We touch lightly here on some of the ways in which contextual conditions under which help is available can serve as moderators, namely (1) the help-seeker's and the helper's anonymity, (2) the anticipated opportunity to reciprocate, and (3) whether one is offered or must solicit help. Concerning the matter of anonymity, Inadequates are more likely to seek help from impersonal than personal sources (Hill & Harmon, 1976; Shea, 1970), through indirect channels (Cather, 1976), and privately rather than publicly when their inadequacy is made public (Shapiro, 1978). Conceivably, the availability of an anonymous or unseen donor might engender more help-seeking by the highly inadequate even when the recipient remains anonymous, because a visible donor might induce greater evaluative concern and embarrassment and ultimately confirm if not increase that level of perceived inadequacy.

Despite the considerable research on the help-seeking effects of anticipated opportunity to reciprocate (see Greenberg & Westcott, Vol. 1, Chapter 4, 1983). a dependable answer on how expected opportunity in-

teracts with the level of perceived inadequacy is still lacking. The Morris and Rosen study (1973), which included independent manipulations both of perceived inadequacy and anticipated opportunity, produced two main effects, but no interaction effect. Perhaps a moderator effect would materialize if the inadequacy were represented as of central importamce to the self. Worth exploring, too, is the impact of degree of similarity between the resource needed and the resource available for reciprocation. If Donnenwerth and Foa (1974) are correct in stating that reciprocation in kind is most satisfying, it may be that the Highly Inadequate would be especially influenced by the relative similarity between the two kinds of resources in deciding whether to ask for or accept the needed resources.

Concerning the issue of whether one is offered or must request help, several laboratory studies (Broll, *et al.*, 1974; other studies cited in Gross, Wallston, & Piliavin, 1979; La Morto-Corse & Carver, 1980) and one field study (Gross, Wallston, & Piliavin, 1979) indicate that people needing help are more likely to get it if it is offered than if they must request it. According to Gross, Wallston, and Piliavin, getting help that is offered rather than having to seek it, reduces self-attributions of inadequacy (also feelings of indebtedness and reactance). However, a direct test of this rationale has yet to produce the expected effects (Broll *et al.*, 1974; see also la Morto-corse & Carver, 1980).

STYLES OF HELP-SEEKING

How does an Inadequate go about getting help? Four broad styles are touched upon here, namely, (1) whether the approach might be characterized as adaptive or nonadaptive; (2) the manner of attempting to influence potential helpers; (3) whether the inadequate is receptive to collaboration with a potential helper; and (4) whether the help-seeking is disguised.

Adaptive versus Nonadaptive Help-Seeking

In deciding whether a certain style of help-seeking activity might be regarded as nonadaptive, one plausible criterion would involve a judgment of the extent to which the magnitude of that help-seeking was unusually high or low relative to the level that would appear to be objectively called for; namely, whether the person seeks either more or fewer resources than are objectively needed, or in more general terms whether the magnitude of perceived inadequacy is discrepant from that of "actual" inadequacy. Evidence of overuse of help can be found in a study by Cotler, Quilty, and Palmer (1970), who noted that the rate of help-seeking by a female sample

on factual questions was unrelated to the subjects' knowledge of the answers; also, a relatively higher rate of medical-care seeking (by females than by males) that exceeded a medically defined criterion of need (Reed, 1976); and the relative independence of incidence of physical and emotional symptoms and the rate at which a campus health center was used by both males and females (Moos & Van Dort, 1977). The epitomy of overuse is the stereotype of the middle-aged, female hypochondriac of some affluence, who, whether because of a lack of meaningful roles or out of loneliness, taxes a medical facility and its staff. It may be that this stereotype will wane with increasing entry of women into autonomous work roles.

As for the underuse of help, this is suggested by the many instances in which help-seeking is inversely associated with magnitude of perceived inadequacy. For gender-related and developmental differences in relative underuse, see Nelson-Le Gall, Gumerman, & Scott-Jones (Chapter 11).

Another stylistic dimension concerns the appropriateness in the timing of help-seeking (see Harris, Tessler, & Potter, 1977); that is, whether help is sought too soon or too late, given the objective inadequacy level of the help-seeker. This could come about for several reasons. One possibility is that there is a mismatch between perceived and objective inadequacy during some phase of the help-seeking process, either because of motivational pressures from within or without, or because of insufficient self-assessment skills. It may be, too, that the relative accessibility of potential helpers is misread, or that the help-seeker has a distorted time perspective, or that the costs to the help-seeker and/or the donor (DePaulo & Fisher, 1980) are misperceived. Investigation of the timing issue may necessitate a relatively fine-grained analysis of the help-seeking process.

The Manner of Attempting to Influence Potential Helpers

Recipient-initiated help-seeking may be viewed within the broader context of attempted influence. People differ in how they attempt to influence others (Goodstadt & Hjelle, 1973). One such difference is the extent to which they request help in an assertive manner, that is, in the degree to which they communicate verbally, paraverbally, and/or nonverbally their expectations of donor compliance. It seems plausible that Inadequates, particularly those who are also chronically inadequate in social encounters, might encounter difficulty in enacting a consistently assertive style of attempted influence (see DePaulo, Leiphart, & Dull, 1980), even if they could steel themselves to ask for help. The existence of social support for expectations of entitlement ot certain kinds of help (e.g., welfare assistance) might serve to attenuate that strain (see Greenberg & Westcott, Vol.1, Chapter 4, 1983). So,

too, might an impression that the potential helper is shy or a compliant sort.

On the other hand, an assertive style may prove self-defeating if it induces reactance, or if the helper's status exceeds the help-seeker's. The latter case suggests that the Inadequate would do better to approach "hat in hand" (Blau, 1963). In a related vein, talking sadly about one's problems may elicit more help than angry talk (Haccoun, Allen, & Fader, 1976); acknowledging a physical handicap to a nonhandicapped other may be more effective than nonacknowledgement (Belgrave & Mills, 1981; Hastorf, Wildfogel, & Cassman, 1979); and highlighting one's plight may be more effective if the request appears legitimate than if it sounds nonlegitimate (Langer & Abelson, 1972).

Presumably, asking for help in a courteous manner will elicit more help than would a discourteous request. At least, such was the expectation of one team of investigators (Katz, Farber, Glass, Lucido, & Emswiller, 1978). Contrary to expectations, when the help-seeker was friendly, less help was forthcoming if the Inadequate was also wheel chair bound than if the Inadequate appeared nonhandicapped. The reverse occurred when the help-seeker was unfriendly. Apparently a disabled worker who is also friendly makes nonhandicapped prospective helpers angry. In short, certain styles of help-seeking are more suitable when practiced by help-seekers with certain other attributes; furthermore, style may interact with situational factors in affecting the likelihood of being helped.

Receptiveness to Collaboration with a Potential Helper

It is often the case that certain objectives are more attainable through pooled effort than through lone effort. Nevertheless, potential partners may not agree on the value of collaboration, as illustrated earlier. Subjects led to believe they were highly inadequate and/or that their potential partner was adequate were much more likely than were their counterparts to opt for collaboration and to state that their partners should receive the lion's share of any recognition that their joint product might win, if collaboration was made mandatory.

Disguised Help-Seeking

As noted earlier, recipient-initiated requests for help are more likely if the requests can be made indirectly. One form that indirection might take is through involvement of third parties. This could occur in a variety of ways. For instance, parent *A* might send child *B* to obtain help in his behalf

from some adult outsider, *C*, out of a conviction that a request by the child is more likely to elicit help than one made directly by him. Enzle and Harvey (1978) demonstrated that when people receive requests for help from an alleged third party in behalf of an alleged person in need, more help is forthcoming than when the request is made directly by the needy person.

Alternatively, party *B* may disclose a need to party *A*, who conceals the fact that he has a similar need but instructs *B* where to seek help, then to report back on the outcome. Either alternative might reduce some of the confrontational costs (e.g., embarrassment) for party *A*. The experiment of Enzle and Harvey suggests that if *A's* need remains effectively disguised, not only might *A's* costs be low, at least in the short run, but his or her intercession might even elicit an attribution of humanitarianism.

A request for help may be so camouflaged that it inspires an offer of help, at low cost to the inadequate. Blau (1963), for example, noted that inadequate federal agents would obtain help through "consultations in disguise" without thereby incurring indebtedness or enhancing the consultant's status (see also Glidewell *et al.*(Vol.3, Chapter 8, in press) on *experience swapping*). Such a strategy may critically depend, however, on whether the help-seeker can minimize leakage of deception cues, a feat that a person with high perceived inadequacy on an urgent matter might find especially difficult. Even if the camouflage fails, the attempt may be adaptive provided that the potential helper condones the attempt (Gruber, Brown, & Mazorol, 1978; see also Ostow & Cholst, 1970). On the other hand, successful camouflage may be nonadaptive if the target is insensitive to anything less obvious than a pointed request for help (DePaulo & Fisher, 1981; Wilson, 1980).

Finally, we might note that certain forms of covert imitation, enacted without the knowledge and consent of the model, can be considered a disguished form of help-seeking. Some inadequate students, whether because of low ability and/or low effort expended in studying, cheat on examinations by surreptitiously copying the written answers of classmates in the hopes of avoiding the costs of a failing grade. Plagiarism that succeeds can masquerade as self-help. Plagiarism that fails may bring intrapersonal, material, and interpersonal costs in its train.

SUMMARY

First we pull together here some of the threads advanced earlier, by reference to a model of the help-seeking process. (For an extensive treatment of help-seeking models, see Gross & McMullen, Chapter 3). We then conclude with a brief agenda of "unfinished business."

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Where help-seeking models are concerned, there appears to be an acute disparity between theory and fact. Models abound (e.g., DePaulo, 1982; Fowler, 1973; Green & Roberts, 1974; Hagedorn, 1977; Horwitz, 1977; Lau, 1977; McKinlay, 1973; Panagis, 1976; see also Glidewell *et al.*, Vol.3, Chapter 8, in press). With rare exceptions (e.g., Harris *et al.*, 1977; and the model tested by Glidewell *et al.*), convincing empirical support for the models is disappointingly scant. Multistage models, as most of these are apt to be, are inherently difficult and costly to test, except piecemeal. Further, as Silver and Wortman (1980) have observed (see also DePaulo, 1982), some models make erroneous or untested assumptions, such as whether the stages follow a linear sequence or whether it is realistic to posit a final, resolution stage.

For present purposes, we simply borrow some of the stages that seem to be common to numerous models (see DePaulo, 1982). Thus, an initial stage might focus on how soon, if at all, the person becomes aware of his or her inadequacy and its magnitude. Assessment of this stage by the investigator may not be easy because one would need to distinguish between recognition and public admission of that inadequacy (see also the previous discussion of *procrastination*). Assuming that some awareness has been registered, it seems plausible that the person will then embark on various attributional analyses about the origins, self-relevance, and controllability of that inadequacy. If, for example, it appears uncontrollable, further effort expenditure might cease (Nelson, 1980). In the event the inadequacy appears controllable through intervention by others, the perceived costs of seeking or accepting help may loom as major deterrents; of course, if the causal locus can be externalized, this might facilitate thinking about seeking or accepting help. Concomitant with such attributional ruminations and potential cost analyses, the Inadequate may engage in various behavioral alternatives other than turning for help, before deciding whether to seek or accept help. The Inadequate may persist or give up too soon, or may openly pretend to be unmotivated rather than unable to accomplish the task.

If the person has decided that the inadequacy is controllable with outside help and that the costs of such help are tolerable, the Inadequate may next contemplate whose responsibility it is for doing something about getting that help: Should a third party be expected to intercede on his or her behalf, or should the Inadequate signal directly a need for help? A next step might be to decide upon an appropriate source of help. In the world outside the laboratory, Inadequates differ considerably in knowledge of the relative competence, variety, and accessibility of different help-providers or appropriate third-party intermediaries (Bracken & Kasl, 1977).

It is disturbing to note that the rate of attrition prior to the point at which an Inadequate with psychological problems makes the first profes-

sional contact is great (Albers & Scrivner, 1977). We need to be reminded, therefore, that to label that contact as effective entry into the terminal stage may be illusory.

When one attempts to approach the underexplored relation between perceived inadequacy and help-seeking by means of so broad-gauged a framework as that employed in this chapter, it is inevitable that we will be left with an overabundance of questions and relatively few dependable answers. At this parting, it must suffice to reiterate, in more general terms, some of the problems laid bare that call for investigation.

Clearly, the full range of the perceived-inadequacy continuum needs to be sampled systematically, with careful attention given not only to its manipulation but also to its direct assessment. This should provide a clearer picture of its effects on help-seeking and facilitate direct comparisons of findings across relevant studies. It appears obvious, too, that the differential implications of various types of inadequacy for help-seeking, together with the general issue of resource substitutability, would constitute a fruitful pursuit. We know very little about the behavioral and cognitive alternatives for coping with perceived inadequacy, including the conditions under which they are compatible with one another. In touching upon a variety of both personal and situational moderators, it has become apparent that although evidence for the relevance of those moderators is often found, the full causal sequence from perceived inadequacy and moderators to help-seeking is seldom investigated directly in any one study; these gaps should be closed. Finally, the present state of the art pleads for the courageous, assiduous investigation of models of the help-seeking process, in their full spectrum, not only in the field but also in the laboratory.

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