Giving the Self: Increasing Commitment and Generosity Through Giving Something That Represents One’s Essence

Minjung Koo1 and Ayelet Fishbach2

Abstract

Prosocial actions often involve giving something that represents one’s essence, be it one’s name (e.g., signature), personal possessions, or body (e.g., blood donation). This research compares such “self-giving” to the giving of resources of comparable value that are less connected to one’s essence. We show in five studies that self-giving embeds givers with a sense of commitment and generosity. Specifically, giving endowed objects (vs. briefly owned objects), one’s signature (vs. anonymous support), and blood (vs. a comparable amount of money) all increased perceptions of commitment and generosity among givers. As a result, givers were more likely to continue supporting that cause in the long run.

Keywords

self, generosity, commitment, prosocial, charity

Giving, by definition, involves transferring one’s own resources to another person or people. However, different forms of giving vary by the extent to which people give something that represents their essence to them, that is, how much givers sense they are “giving the self.” For example, blood (or organ) and possession (e.g., clothes) donations feel more like giving one’s essence than a money donation of a comparable value, and signing a petition with one’s name similarly feels more “self-giving” than expressing one’s support by clicking an “I support” (or “like”) icon on an online petition.

This research explores whether self-giving, as opposed to an equally helpful contribution, makes givers experience themselves as (a) more generous and (b) more committed to the particular cause, because the gift appears more diagnostic of the giver. We explore several forms of self-giving: giving possessions (i.e., endowed items, Kahneman, Knetsch, & Thaler, 1990), signing with one’s name (Kettle & Häubl, 2011; Shu, Mazar, Gino, Ariely, & Bazerman, 2012), and donating blood. We further explore when self-giving translates into greater subsequent giving.

We define self-giving as contributions that, through transfer of ownership or physical contact, come to represent the essence of the self (Belk, 1988; Bloom, 2010). From the recipient’s perspective, whether the gift delivers the giver’s essence may be inconsequential for her positive experience. Indeed, beneficiaries have no reason to prefer items that are associated with the giver (e.g., used clothes vs. equivalent monetary amounts and, named vs. anonymous donations). Moreover, from a third-party perspective, people’s desire to give something that carries their personal mark might signal a need for social approval (bragging), which makes givers appear less (rather than more) generous. For example, naming (vs. anonymous) gifts can make donors appear to seek personal fame (Berman, Levine, Barasch, & Small, 2015), and a personal connection to a cause (e.g., knowing the beneficiaries) can decrease the perception of generosity among third-party evaluators (Lin-Healy & Small, 2012; Miller & Ratner, 1998). Because self-giving creates a bond between givers and receivers, external observers may therefore assume givers are less generous. In contrast to the beneficiaries and third-party observers, we propose that givers who give something that carries their essence will come to see themselves as generous and committed individuals and therefore, would be more likely to give again.

Self-Giving Increases Generosity and Commitment

We predict self-giving makes givers feel generous and committed to the cause. By generosity, we refer to an internalized

1 SKK Graduate School of Business, Sungkyunkwan University, Jongno-gu, Seoul, Korea
2 Booth School of Business, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL, USA

Corresponding Authors:
Minjung Koo, SKK Graduate School of Business, Sungkyunkwan University, 25-2 Sungkyunkwan-ro, Jongno-gu, Seoul, Korea 110-745.
Email: min.koo@skku.edu
Ayelet Fishbach, Booth School of Business, University of Chicago, 5807 South Woodlawn Avenue, Chicago, IL 60637, USA.
Email: ayelet.fishbach@chicagobooth.edu
perception of oneself as good, kind, altruistic, and, therefore, intrinsically motivated to help (Bandura, 1969; Batson, Fultz, Schoenrade, & Paduano, 1987; Thomas, Batson, & Coke, 1981). By commitment, we refer to one’s perception that the specific cause is important and one can meaningfully help (Fishbach, Koo, & Finkelstein, 2014; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1974).

We predict these effects on generosity and commitment partially because contributions appear subjectively more valuable when the self is involved. Indeed, the endowment effect refers to people’s tendency to value things that are part of their endowment (i.e., belong to the self) more highly than things that are not (Kahneman, Knetsch, & Thaler, 1990; Morewedge, Shu, Gilbert, & Wilson, 2009; Thaler, 2015; Van Boven, Dunn, & Loewenstein, 2000). Thus, contributions appear more valuable the longer they have been owned. For example, people who donate a piece of jewelry they have owned for a long versus short time should feel they are giving a more valuable item and will conclude they are more generous and committed to the cause. Similarly, whatever people associate with themselves becomes implicitly and explicitly more positive, because positivity is transferred from the self to the object of evaluation (Gawronski, Bodenhausen, & Becker, 2007; Greenwald & Banaji, 1995; Koole, Dijksterhuis, & van Knippenberg, 2001; Nuttin, 1985). If personal items acquire positivity, they are further likely to appear more valuable to the givers, thereby increasing givers’ perceptions of their own generosity and commitment.

Yet self-giving can also directly alter givers’ self-concept as committed and generous, without increasing the perceived value of the gift. Self-giving creates an association between the self and the act of giving, and between the self and the cause that is helped, such that people internalize the act of giving and the recipients of the help—these become part of who they are (Aron, Aron, Tudor, & Nelson, 1991; Greenwald & Pratkanis, 1984; Markus, 1983).

We experimentally distinguish between these effects of self-giving on generosity/commitment through (a) an increased perceived value of contributions and (b) internalizing giving into self-concept. Specifically, by having givers estimate the value of their gifts, we can test whether they feel generous/committed because they think they have given more or because giving more strongly reflects whom they are. We expect, for example, that people who give endowed items believe they are giving articles of greater value and are therefore more generous/committed. But whenever people’s contributions are of little monetary value, or whether the gift is self-associated does not affect this value, we would conclude self-giving operates through internalizing the charitable action into the self-concept. For example, people could feel more generous/committed if they donate blood versus money, even if they set the amount of money to be comparable in value to a blood donation, such that they do not think the blood donation is worth more. In this example, the person who donated blood is not giving more but is rather internalizing giving as part of her self-concept.

Related to self-giving is the notion of effortful giving and the finding that pain and negative feelings increase commitment to prosocial actions (Bastian, Jetten, & Ferris, 2014; Higgins & Lauzon, 2003; King, 2003; Olivola & Shafir, 2013). Indeed, charities commonly solicit contributions of effort, including dumping a bucket of ice water on oneself (i.e., amyotrophic lateral sclerosis [ALS] “ice-bucket-challenge,” Townsend, 2014), running and biking. We argue that effortful giving, like self-giving, requires personal involvement. However, self-giving is often not effortful. Giving one’s name (signing a petition) or donating used clothes are both forms of self-giving that require little effort. Further, effort justification and reduction of dissonance (Festinger, 1957; Harmon-Jones & Mills, 1999) are the leading explanations for the impact of effortful help on commitment, whereas we suggest self-giving works because it alters people’s self-concept to be more generous and committed.

Present Research

We predict self-giving increases people’s sense that they are generous and committed to a cause. We operationalize self-giving as giving an item that the person owned for a while (vs. only briefly), donating with one’s name (vs. unnamed gift), signing a petition (vs. anonymous support), and donating blood (vs. the equivalent amount of money). We further explore the two routes by which self-giving increases perceived generosity and commitment: first, by increasing the subjective value of the donation (Study 1) and second, through greater integration of the generous action into one’s self-concept (Studies 2–5).

We further test the effects on subsequent giving. Commitment motivates subsequent giving (Meyvis, Bennett, & Oppenheimer, 2011), and those who see themselves as generous may want to be consistent with their modified view of themselves through more giving (Batson, Harris, McCaul, Davis, & Schmidt, 1979; Goldstein & Cialdini, 2007; Zuckerman, Lazzaro, & Waldgeir, 1979). However, in the short-run, feeling generous as a result of self-giving can also license people to relax their efforts by behaving selfishly and giving less (Khan & Dhar, 2006; Mazar & Zhong, 2010; Sachdeva, Iliev, & Medin, 2009). Importantly, changes to self-perception are prolonged, whereas licensing effects—relaxing one’s efforts after making goal progress—are short lived (Fishbach, Dhar, & Zhang, 2006). Thus, we predict a null effect for self-giving in immediate decisions—the opposite effects (self-perception vs. licensing) may cancel each other out. But self-giving should increase giving in delayed decisions. Those who engage in self-giving will be more interested in giving again, though not immediately.

Study 1: Donating an Endowment

Participants in Study 1 donated a pen they had owned for the duration of the study or only briefly (Strailevitz & Loewenstein, 1998). We predicted that giving a pen that was owned for a longer time would not only make participants feel they were giving more (the endowment effect) but also lead them to infer they are more committed and generous (the self-giving effect).
Method

Participants

We predetermined a sample size of 50 participants per condition based on previous charitable-giving research (e.g., Lalin, Norton, & Ariely, 2014). We opened the study to 100 undergraduates at a South Korean university and ended up with 103 participants (56 female, Mage = 22.48) who were paid 3,000won (~US$33) each.

Procedure

The study employed a two (ownership: short vs. long) between-subject design. Participants’ task was to evaluate a ballpoint pen product (Stabilo Point 88) on a four-page paper-and-pencil survey (e.g., quality and liking of the pen, purchase intent toward it, and writing habits) for around 12–15 min.

To manipulate the duration of the ownership, all participants received a Stabilo pen at the beginning of the study and used it to complete the survey. Participants learned either before or after they started the survey (long-ownership condition) or after they completed the survey (short-ownership condition) that the pen was a gift from the manufacturer for them to keep.

Upon completing the survey, participants received a solicitation letter for an existing campaign that invited them to contribute to the cause. The letter stated, “Please donate a pen that is sleeping in your pen case”; http://pen.treeple.net). The letter stated, “Please donate a pen that is sleeping in your pen case!” and provided the campaign details, including how to donate and the beneficiaries (children in Sri Lanka and Kenya). Twenty participants who donated their pen (n = 83) proceeded to rate their perceived generosity: “I feel I am...” (a) “generous,” (b) “a good and kind person,” and (c) “a charitable person” (α = .95). They also answered questions regarding perceived commitment: “I feel...” (a) “committed to this cause,” (b) “donating to this cause is meaningful to me,” and (c) “this campaign is important for me” (α = .88). We counterbalanced the order of the measures (no effect for order).

Next, participants rated the perceived value of the pen: “the pen I donated seems like a valuable product” and “the donated pen will be a valuable gift to African children” (r = .51, p < .001). Lastly, as a manipulation check, participants rated the extent to which they considered the pen their own: “I feel I donated my pen, even though I just received it today” (for all ratings in this study; 1 = not at all and 7 = very much).

Results and Discussion

Confirming our manipulation, participants who had owned the pen for a longer time were more likely to consider the donated pen as their own (M_long = 4.50, SD_long = 1.95 vs. M_short = 3.47, SD_short = 1.91), r(81) = 2.45, p = .017, 95% CI [0.19, 1.88], d = .54. In support of the hypothesis, participants in the long- versus short-ownership condition indicated they were more generous (M_long = 4.23, SD_long = 1.40 vs. M_short = 3.50, SD_short = 1.44), r(81) = 2.31, p = .023, 95% CI [0.09, 1.34], d = .51. Similarly, participants in the long- versus short-ownership condition indicated they were more committed (M_long = 4.33, SD_long = 1.37 vs. M_short = 3.66, SD_short = 1.47), r(81) = 2.13, p = .036, 95% CI [0.04, 1.29], d = .47.

In addition, those in the long- versus short-ownership condition rated the donated pen as more valuable (M_long = 5.60, SD_long = .95 vs. M_short = 4.81, SD_short = 1.25), r(81) = 3.20, p = .002, 95% CI [0.30, 1.27], d = .71.

To assess whether valuation mediated the effect of ownership duration on perceived generosity/commitment, we first collapsed the generosity and commitment ratings (r = .67, p < .001). Using the PROCESS Model 4 (Hayes, 2013), we conducted a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 bootstrap samples, with ownership as the independent variable, perceived value of the product as the mediating variable, and generosity/commitment as the dependent variable. The mean indirect effects excluded zero for perceived value of the product, β = .20, 95% CI [0.06, 0.42]. Furthermore, the direct effect of ownership on the self-perception index was no longer significant, t = 1.06, p = .29, suggesting perceived value of the product fully mediated the effect of ownership duration on generosity/commitment.

Overall, ownership increased the perceived value of a pen and participants’ perceptions of themselves as generous/committed when they donated the pen. One limitation of this study is that not all participants donated their pen and therefore did not complete the postdonation items (although notably, attrition rate was similarly low across conditions). Accordingly, the following studies use settings in which everyone gives.

Study 2: Identifiable Versus Anonymous Note to People With Disabilities

A common form of self-giving involves giving one’s name, for example, when people sign a petition (vs. click the “like” icon). To test whether name-giving increases perceived generosity/commitment, we conducted a field study in collaboration with WECAN, a Korean foundation assisting in the rehabilitation of people with disabilities (www.wecan.or.kr). Specifically, we sold cookies that people with disabilities had made. Those who purchased cookies left a signed versus anonymous note to support the cause, before reporting their perceived generosity and commitment.

Method

Participants

We again predetermined a sample size of 100 students (50 per condition) at a South Korean university, and a total of 104 students participated in the campaign (40 women, Mage = 21.10).
We do not hire people with disabilities to make cookies.
We make cookies to hire people with disabilities.

WECAN cookies are made by those with developmental disabilities, with support from the Sisters of Charity of St. Paul.
We use only handpicked ingredients, including domestic wheat and butter, cage-free chicken eggs, and organic sugar.

All proceeds will be donated to a fund that assists people with disabilities in their rehabilitation and education.

![Poster](translated from Korean)

**Figure 1.** The poster used in Study 2 (translated from Korean).

**Procedure**

The study employed a two (name: included vs. not-included) between-subject design. Two experimenters who were blind to the hypothesis ran the campaign for 5 consecutive days (Monday to Friday). We set up a table in the lobby of university buildings, alternating between three different locations on campus. On the table, we displayed the cookie packages containing three cookies, which we sold for 1,000 won (≈USD$1) each, and a poster (Figure 1).

To attract the attention of passersby, the experimenters verbally announced, “We are selling cookies for people with disabilities at just 1,000 won. All proceeds will be donated!” Interested individuals approached the table and purchased the cookies. Once participants ordered their cookies (between one and five packages, 68% purchased one package), they received an envelope with a printed message. In the anonymous condition, the message read, “I support WECAN. The proceeds of the sale are donated to WECAN anonymously.” In the name-included condition, the message read, “I support WECAN. Supporter name: __________, the proceeds of the sale are donated to WECAN in your name,” and participants signed their names in the above line on the envelope. All participants put the money in the envelope and next rated their perceived generosity, using a 7-point scale: “I feel I am . . .” (a) “generous,” (b) “a good and kind person,” and (c) “a charitable person” (α = .89). They also rated their perceived commitment: “I feel . . .” (a) “participating in this campaign is important for me,” (b) “committed to supporting this campaign,” and (c) “helping the disabled by cookie purchase is meaningful to me” (α = .75).

**Results and Discussion**

In support of the hypothesis, those who listed their names perceived themselves as more generous (M = 4.73, SD = .89) compared to those who did not list their names (M = 3.99, SD = .99), t(102) = 3.99, p < .001, 95% CI [0.37, 1.11], d = .79. Although the overall effect on the commitment index was only directional (M = 5.49 and SD = .75 vs. M = 5.25 and SD = .94), t(102) = 1.40, p = .08 (one-tailed), we do find the predicted effect on the importance item (“participating in this campaign is important for me”). Those who listed their names indicated the cause was more important to them (M = 5.16, SD = .89) compared to those who did not list their names (M = 4.50, SD = 1.32), t(102) = 3.03, p = .003, 95% CI [0.23, 1.09], d = 0.60.

This semi-field study provides converging evidence that self-giving increases perceived generosity/commitment. Merely signing one’s name, even when doing so was a mandatory part of the purchase, increased perception of generosity and commitment to the cause. Interestingly, the number of packets purchased (i.e., the donation amount) did not predict generosity and commitment (r = .05 and r = .09, respectively), only signing one’s name did. Also, whereas signatures are more public than anonymous giving, publicity unlikely caused the effect, because only a few recipients were expected to see one’s signature, and other studies did not use public self-giving.

**Study 3: Donating Blood versus Money**

Blood donation is another form of self-giving. We tested whether donating blood leads to greater perceived generosity/commitment than donating the monetary value equal to the blood donation. To compare blood to monetary donations, we employed a matching procedure in which participants chose between two alternatives that they had previously equated in value (Slovic, 1975; Tu & Fishbach, 2015). Specifically, participants estimated the dollar amount they were willing to give (Slovic, 1975; Tu & Fishbach, 2015). Specifically, participants estimated the dollar amount they were willing to give to see one’s signature, and other studies did not use public self-giving.

**Method**

**Participants**

We predetermined a sample size of 80 US MTurk workers who had previously donated blood. This sample size was unintentionally set as slightly smaller than in Studies 1–2 and Study 4, we again recruited 50 participants per condition. MTurk returned 76 (35 female, Mage = 32.63) respondents, with 4 participants taking the credit but not completing the study.
Procedure

The study employed a two (donation type: blood vs. money) between-subjects design. Participants first read a description of an ongoing donation campaign conducted by the World Health Organization (Figure 2; from www.who.int/campaigns/world-blood-donor-day/2014/event/en/).

Next, participants completed the matching paradigm. They read that to participate in this campaign, they could donate either blood or money and that when donating blood, people typically give about 2½ cups of blood (17 ounces). They then indicated the indifference point between the two options—donating blood and donating money ("I am indifferent between donating 2½ cups of my blood and donating US$______")

Next, those in the blood condition imagined they ended up donating 2½ cups of their blood, whereas those in the money condition imagined they ended up donating money (the value they estimated as equivalent to donating blood). All participants then rated their perceived generosity, using a 7-point scale: "I would feel like I am ..." (a) "generous," (b) "a good and kind person," and (c) "a charitable person" (a = .92). They also rated their perceived commitment: "I would feel ..." (a) "committed to this donation campaign," (b) "donating to this cause is meaningful to me," and (c) "this campaign is important for me" (a = .89). We counterbalanced the order of the measures (no effect for order).

Results and Discussion

As expected, the estimated dollar amount (indifference points) did not differ across conditions (M_blood = $32.42, SD = 40.61 vs. M_money = $40.58, SD = 81.03), t < 1, and did not predict any of the dependent variables.

As predicted, considering donating blood made participants feel more generous (M = 5.75, SD = 1.19) than donating money (M = 5.17, SD = 1.19), t(76) = 2.13, p = .037, 95% CI [0.04, 1.09], d = 0.50.

Self-giving (i.e., blood donation) appears to increase perceived generosity/commitment more than giving the comparable amount of money, even when blood and money are equal in value, which suggests self-giving effects do not require that people feel they are giving more. However, blood donation is potentially more effortful (i.e., pain and fear inducing) than giving a pen (Study 1) or signing one’s name (Study 2). We next test whether effort justification can explain our findings.

Study 4: Choosing to Donate Blood Versus Money

We followed the procedure from Study 3, with one modification: instead of assigning participants to consider donating either blood or money, we had them indicate which was easier for them and then assigned them to their selected (easier) option. Using this procedure, we could test whether donating money is easier because physical pain and fear are not involved (we expected it would not), and whether our effects vanish when people are aware they are giving whichever is easier for them to give—blood or money (we expected they would not).

Method

Participants

We opened up the study to 100 US MTurk workers (50 per condition) who had previously donated blood (34 female, Mage = 34.38).

Procedure

After participants reported the dollar amount that matched a blood donation, they indicated their answer to the following:
between the two indifferent choices (donating 2½ cups of your blood or donating the estimated dollar amount), what would be easier for you to personally give?” They then imagined they were giving their easiest option and completed the generosity (α = .92) and commitment scales (α = .95) from Study 3. Lastly, we had participants report their intention to support this campaign versus another campaign at a next opportunity (1 = support this campaign again and 7 = support a different campaign; reverse coded). We designed this question to capture greater intention among self-givers to give in the future.

Results and Discussion

Out of 100 participants, 57 indicated donating blood would be easier, whereas 43 indicated donating the equivalent amount of money would be easier, χ²(1) = 1.96, p = .16. Thus, whereas blood donations are, by definition, more self-giving than money donations, they are not more difficult for people to give. Interestingly, the estimated matching dollar amounts were similar for those who chose to donate blood versus money (Mblood = $26.39, SD = 27.37 vs. Mmoney = $25.88, SD = 30.13), t(1) < 1, and did not predict any of our dependent variables.

The rest of the analyses replicated Study 3, although notably, this time participants self-selected to conditions. As before, those who considered donating blood felt more generous (Mblood = 6.00, SD = 0.98 vs. Mmoney = 5.46, SD = 1.25), t(98) = 2.35, p = .021, 95% CI [0.08, 0.95], d = 0.47, and more committed (Mblood = 5.78, SD = 1.17 vs. Mmoney = 5.08, SD = 1.75), t(98) = 2.40, p = .018, 95% CI [0.12, 1.28], d = 0.48. In addition, those who considered donating blood were more likely to support the same (vs. different) cause again (Mblood = 4.82, SD = 1.70 vs. Mmoney = 4.02, SD = 1.68), t(98) = 2.34, p = .021, 95% CI [0.12, 1.48], d = 0.47.

We find self-giving increases perceived generosity, commitment, and future intention to contribute to the cause, even when participants are aware they are giving whichever is easier for them—blood or money. Hence, effort justification (i.e., justifying pain and fear) does not seem a viable alternative for the self-giving effect.

Study 5: Consequences of Signing a Petition for Future Giving

Seeing oneself as generous and committed should translate into greater intention to help, however, not necessarily immediately, because those who feel they have just acted generously may feel licensed to relax subsequent efforts. Only for delayed decisions do we expect self-giving, and the resulting perceived generosity and commitment, to increase willingness to give. To test this prediction, we invited participants to sign their names to a petition versus submit their support anonymously. We next invited them to support another related petition immediately or on the next day.

Method

Participants

Based on the effect sizes so far,2 we set the sample size to be 30 participants per condition. One hundred and twenty students at a South Korean University (68 females, Mage = 23.18) participated in return for entering a lottery for one of ten 3,000-won (≈USD$3) gift certificates. The study employed a 2 (name: included vs. not-included) × 2 (participation time: future vs. now) between-subject design.

Procedure

We created an online “Petition Campaign for Establishing a Children’s Hospital School.” Participants signed a petition to request government approval and financial support for building schools inside children’s hospitals. The petition was delivered to the civil affairs authorities in Seoul’s metropolitan government (http://petition.seoul.go.kr). An experimenter invited individual participants at a university library or student lounge to complete the procedure on a tablet computer.

Participants viewed one of two solicitation letters (Figure 3), asking them to sign their names to a petition versus to submit anonymously.

In a follow-up survey, participants rated their perceived generosity, using a 7-point scale: “I feel . . .” (a) “I am generous,” (b) “I expressed my generosity,” (c) “I am a good and kind person,” and (d) “I am a charitable person” (α = .93). They also rated their perceived commitment: “I feel . . .” (a) “committed to helping sick children,” (b) “supporting this cause is a very meaningful action to me,” and (c) “this campaign is important for me” (α = .86). We counterbalanced the order of the generosity and commitment measures (no effect for order).

Participants also indicated how often they submitted petitions (1 = never and 7 = very often; M = 3.14, SD = 1.50; no difference across conditions). Finally, to assess participants’ subsequent donation behavior, we thanked them all and invited them to support another petition, which asked for government subsidies to support the management for Children’s Hospital School once it was established. Those in the “now” condition were invited to participate right then by clicking either a “Yes, I will participate now” box or a “No, I will not participate now” box. Those in the future condition read the campaign would launch the next day and they could participate in it via the link we would text message them the next day. They decided whether to participate later by clicking either a “Yes, I will participate tomorrow” box or a “No, I will not participate tomorrow” box.

Results and Discussion

In support of the hypothesis, those who signed with their name felt more generous (M = 4.48, SD = 1.11) than anonymous supporters (M = 3.68, SD = 1.10), t(118) = 3.98, p < .001,
95% CI [0.40, 1.20], $d = 0.73$. Similarly, those who signed with their name felt more committed to the cause ($M = 4.71$, $SD = .99$) than anonymous supporters ($M = 4.16$, $SD = .93$), $t(118) = 3.11, p = .002$, 95% CI [0.20, 0.89], $d = 0.57$.

Next, we analyzed participants’ decision to petition for the follow-up campaign ($yes = 1$ and $no = 0$) as a function of name ($included = 1$ and $not-included = 0$) and participation time ($future = 1$ and $now = 0$). We used a binary logistic regression with two independent variables and the interaction between the two. In support of the hypothesis, this analysis yielded the predicted interaction, $b = 2.41$, Wald’s $\chi^2(1) = 5.81, p = .016$, odds ratio = 11.15, 95% CI [1.57, 79.10]; see Figure 4. When considering a request for the next day, those who signed with their name were more likely to accept (36.6%) than anonymous supporters (6.6%), $\chi^2(1) = 7.95, p = .005$. However, when considering an immediate request, no statistical difference
When soliciting donations, organizations often offer the option to remain anonymous to lure people to participate. The assumption in these solicitations is that people prefer to engage in impersonal giving. Our studies find self-giving is not necessarily preferred less (e.g., blood vs. money donation, Study 4) and giving one’s name is actually an effective tool in building commitment to a cause. It follows that whenever people prefer to give something that is personal and to associate themselves with the charitable acts, or are at least indifferent, soliciting self-giving is likely to be effective.

Beyond giving, these results have implications for soliciting social participation more broadly, for example, in public opinion surveys or in voting. Often, the assumption is that people would prefer to stay anonymous and that, by emphasizing anonymity of the responses, participation rates will increase. Indeed, situations exist in which revealing one’s identity when expressing one’s opinion incurs an objective cost. However, we suspect that whenever the objective cost of revealing one’s identity is minimal, emphasizing anonymity might actually suppress participation in the long run, because people, who do not give the self, feel less committed. Our results thus shed doubt on the common practice of presenting surveys as anonymous, because such anonymity could undermine respondents’ motivation to reengage with similar tasks. To conclude, we find that in soliciting prosocial actions, emphasizing the identity of the giver in the gift is a useful tool for increasing perceived generosity and commitment, and for future engagement.

Acknowledgment
The authors thank Camilla Eunyoung Song for assistance conducting this research.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests
The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding
The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: This research was supported by the John Templeton Foundation, and Sungkyunkwan University.

Notes
1. We also had participants estimate the price of the pen on a 5-point scale (1 = 500won and 5 = 2,000won), and this variable was positively correlated with other value measures (r = .31, p = .005) but did not vary by condition.
2. To determine sample size, we conducted a power analysis using G*Power Version 3.1 (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009), which suggested 30 participants per condition to obtain adequate power (1 – β > .80; Cohen, 1992) to detect effect sizes obtained in the previous studies (averaged d = .60).
References


**Author Biographies**

**Minjung Koo** is an Associate Professor of Marketing at SKK Graduate School of Business, Sungkyunkwan University.

**Ayelet Fishbach** is the Jeffrey Breakenridge Keller Professor of Behavioral Science and Marketing at Booth School of Business, the University of Chicago.

Handling Editor: Jesse Graham