

Adolescents' and Parents' Evaluations of Helping Versus Fulfilling Personal Desires in Family Situations

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A sample of 118 predominantly European American families with early and middle adolescents ($M_{\text{ages}} = 12.32$ and 15.18 years) and 1 parent evaluated hypothetical conflicts between adolescents' and parents' requests for assistance versus the other's personal desires. Evaluations differed by level of need, but in low-need situations, adolescents viewed teens as more obligated to help parents than did parents, whereas parents rated it as more permissible for teens to satisfy personal desires than did teenagers. Justifications for helping focused on concern for others, role responsibilities, and among parents, psychological reasons. Middle adolescents reasoned about role responsibilities more and viewed satisfying personal desires as less selfish than did early adolescents, but satisfying personal desires was seen as more selfish by parents of middle than early adolescents. Implications for adolescent–parent relationships are discussed.

Developmental scientists have identified *connection* to family, *character* and moral commitment, and *caring and compassion* as three of the five characteristics that contribute to healthy adolescent development (Lerner, Fisher, & Weinberg, 2000). Moreover, Arnett (2003) found that the majority of young adults from diverse ethnic groups identified becoming less self-oriented and developing greater consideration for others as an important criterion that indicates a successful transition to adulthood. Yet despite its relevance to healthy adolescent development, there has been little attention to how adolescents conceptualize the need to be considerate and to help and care for others and almost no research that examines these issues in family contexts.

Reasoning About Interpersonal Concerns in Adolescence

Interpersonal caring has been described as a supererogatory expectation rather than a moral obligation—that is, nice to do but not morally required

(Gilligan & Attanucci, 1988; Nunner-Winkler, 1984). For instance, Kahn (1992) found that children and early adolescents evaluate helping another in need as virtuous and preferable but not obligatory. Although much research has examined prosocial responding (see Carlo, 2006; Eisenberg, Fabes, & Spinrad, 2006, for extensive reviews), substantially less research has focused on what has been referred to as “other-oriented,” positive, or prosocial moral reasoning (e.g., Carlo, 2006; Eisenberg, Cumberland, Guthrie, Murphy, & Shephard, 2005; Eisenberg et al., 2006). Furthermore, caring and compassion are proposed to have their origins in the family (Laible & Thompson, 2002; Thompson, 1999, 2000), although little research has examined adolescents' reasoning about helping and care in family contexts (but see Pratt, Skoe, & Arnold, 2004; Wyatt & Carlo, 2002). Contextual or situational variations in reasoning about helping and care also have not received much systematic attention.

It has been hypothesized that Americans have narrower and less stringent views of interpersonal responsibilities to help than do individuals in other cultures. Miller, Bersoff, and Harwood (1990) examined Indian and American children's and adults' judgments about situations in which a parent, spouse, or friend had to choose whether to respond to an extreme-, moderate-, or low-need interpersonal concern. Indian participants evaluated all situations as entailing objective obligations, whereas American

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participants only evaluated the extreme situations or moderate needs in the parent condition as obligatory. Miller et al. concluded that in contrast to Indian children and adults, Americans view individuals as being morally obligated to help only in extreme circumstances and in cases where children have more serious needs in the family. In the Miller et al. study, however, the alternatives to helping were explicitly selfish (e.g., not providing a ride because it might be boring to do so) and were not designed to present compelling personal desires.

In contrast, and drawing on social domain theory (see Smetana, 2006; Turiel, 2002, 2006), Killen and Turiel (1998) asserted that concerns with autonomy, personal choices, and personal jurisdiction develop in tandem with concerns about helping others and that from early ages on, children and adolescents evaluate a set of acts pertaining to preferences and choices (for instance, regarding dress, friends, and activities) and issues of privacy and control over one's body as within the realm of personal choice (Nucci, 1996; Smetana, 2002, 2005). Based on earlier research demonstrating that children differentiate positive or pro-social moral, conventional, and personal events much the way they do negative events (Smetana, Bridgeman, & Turiel, 1982), Killen and Turiel examined how American early and middle adolescents (seventh and ninth graders) and young adults weigh and coordinate personal, moral, and psychological components of helping situations in either close (mother-child or husband-wife) or distant (a new friend or a former sibling-in-law) relationships. They examined whether children view it as important and obligatory to help in situations depicting straightforward requests for help and when the same situations were in conflict with a personal choice (referred to as sacrifices for others). In contrast to Miller et al.'s (1990) conclusions, teens in the Killen and Turiel study viewed both helping and sacrificing as important to do, even when it involved giving up personal desires. They also judged it as more important to help and more wrong not to help in close than in distant relationships, although it was evaluated as more satisfying to help in distant than in close relationships.

Using similar methods, Neff, Turiel, and Anshel (2002) examined college students' judgments about situations in which parents, spouses, or friends had to choose between responding to an interpersonal concern (attending a significant event for the other) and fulfilling a personal desire. In this study, personal desires were either depicted as trivial (referred to as the *low-conflict* situation) or important (referred to as the *high-conflict* situation). Interpersonal responsibilities to help were greater in the low-conflict than in the

high-conflict situations, although most college students judged that it was prescriptive and obligatory to help in both situations. Thus, concerns with interpersonal responsibilities were evaluated as more important than fulfilling personal desires.

Although previous research has suggested that parent-child relationships differ in important ways from friend or spousal relationships, these studies have not examined how adolescents balance conflicting interpersonal needs and personal desires in the context of adolescent-parent relationships. Parent-adolescent relationships are bound in a system of mutual obligations and reciprocal duties that are defined by their power imbalance. Parents are obligated to nurture and care for their children, whereas children have rights to self-determination (Ruck, Abramovitch, & Keating, 1998). Thus, the parental role includes the expectation that parents will help their children, and parents may be evaluated negatively when they do not. There may be less of an expectation, at least in Western cultures, that children help their parents, especially in situations where their competence or ability to help is limited; however, parents' expectations for assistance from their children are likely to increase as children grow older. Whether adolescents believe that they are obligated to help their parents may depend on the nature of the demand, the cost of fulfilling the request, and the nature of the competing concerns. Furthermore, similar situations may be interpreted differently depending on who (parent or teen) is asking for assistance or expressing personal desires. Because of the salience of autonomy development during adolescence (Zimmer-Gembeck & Collins, 2003), adolescents may be seen as having more latitude to satisfy personal desires (particularly when others' needs are not great) than do parents. Furthermore, research to date has focused on children's perspectives and has not included parents. Given their different roles and power in the family, adolescents and parents may view the same situations in different ways, as research on adolescent-parent conflict has demonstrated.

Adolescents and parents have been found to differ in their interpretations of their everyday disagreements and conflicts (Smetana, 1989, 2000; Smetana & Asquith, 1994). Research with European American and African American families has indicated that parents typically reason about conflicts in terms of social conventions, or the arbitrary social norms that regulate social interactions in different contexts. In contrast, adolescents of different ethnicities (Fulgini, 1998; Smetana, 1989, 2002, 2005; Smetana & Asquith, 1994) and in different cultures (Yau & Smetana, 1996, 2003) have been found to view conflicts as matters of

personal choice or personal jurisdiction, and claims to personal jurisdiction have been linked to adolescents' developing autonomy. This suggests that appeals to personal choices and desires are not merely egoistic or selfish but reflect legitimate and developmentally important concerns that need to be evaluated in relation to requests to help or assist another. However, the research on adolescent–parent conflict does not focus specifically on situations where adolescents' personal desires are in conflict with parental requests for assistance.

The previous research (Killen & Turiel, 1998; Neff et al., 2002) suggests that American adolescents and parents also may have different evaluations of requests for assistance in everyday situations. Interpersonal needs may be less compelling than in the more extreme situations depicted in previous research. In daily life, parents or teenagers often request help or ask for assistance in situations where needs are minor or mundane; these situations may elicit care or sympathy or engender a duty to help primarily because of the interpersonal obligations of the parent–child relationship. In such situations, adolescents may evaluate fulfilling their own personal desires as more important than do their parents, whereas parents may view teenagers as more obligated to help than do teens.

The Present Study

The aim of the present study was to extend previous research on evaluations of interpersonal helping situations (Killen & Turiel, 1998; Miller et al., 1990; Neff et al. 2002) by obtaining both parents' and adolescents' evaluations. In addition, we systematically varied who (parents or teens) was requesting help or assistance and their level of need to examine parent–adolescent differences in obligations to help in varying circumstances. We used semistructured clinical interviews to examine adolescents' and parents' evaluations of hypothetical situations where teens' versus parents' requests for assistance in interpersonal situations were in conflict with personal desires. The hypothetical scenarios all depicted situations of power inequality (i.e., parent vs. adolescent), but the stories varied as to who made the request or needed assistance and who had a conflicting personal desire. The previous research (Miller et al., 1990; Neff et al., 2002) has shown that actors are nearly always obligated to help when the situations are dire and needs are great. Therefore, by design, the stories in the present study entailed situations of mild or moderate need, as we wanted to examine everyday conflicts or choices between interpersonal concerns and satisfying personal desires.

The participants evaluated two types of stories that varied the interpersonal concerns, which were depicted as in conflict with reasonable personal desires (competing, legitimate events or activities that the actors want to attend or in which they wanted to participate). One pair of stories described requests for help in what were considered low-need interpersonal situations. In these situations, help (specifically, attending an event or being available to help at a specific time) was requested, but the needs were minimized and were not great. Another pair of stories described similar requests for help or assistance, but the situations entailed greater need, although by design, the needs were not great (and less than in Miller et al.'s, 1990, moderate need condition). Rather, the stories reflected the types of familiar, everyday requests for assistance, in conflict with personal desires, that typically occur in family life. Although the scenarios studied here focused on everyday issues, they represented a small subset of the types of conflicts that adolescents typically have with parents (for instance, when parents request adolescents' help with chores; see Smetana, 1989) and expanded beyond them to include teens' (as well as parents') requests for assistance, with manipulations of the level of need and response to the request.

The sample for this study included early and middle adolescents (7th and 10th graders) and one parent. The aim of the present study was to determine whether adolescents and parents differed in their judgments about what protagonists should do, their justifications for their judgments, and their ratings of the permissibility and selfishness of actions according to who requested assistance (parent or adolescent) and their level of need. Grade and gender differences also were examined. Overall, and based on previous research (Killen & Turiel, 1998; Neff et al., 2002), we expected that both parents and adolescents would view hypothetical actors as relatively obligated to help based on concern for the other, interpersonal duties, and role responsibilities. We also hypothesized that parents' justifications for helping would focus more on facilitating psychological development and concern for others than would teens, and that teens would focus more on duty and respect than would parents.

Because parents have obligations to nurture their children (Ruck et al., 1998), we hypothesized that parents would be seen as more obligated to help their teens and more selfish when they did not than vice versa (teens helping parents) based on justifications regarding role responsibilities and concern for the other. We expected that due to older adolescents' greater developmental competence and autonomy,

parents would perceive parents as less obligated to help older than younger adolescents. We further hypothesized that parents of older adolescents would view it as more permissible (and therefore less selfish) than would parents of younger adolescents for hypothetical parents to fulfill their personal desires at the expense of helping their teens based on parents' personal choices.

We also hypothesized that both teenagers and parents would view it as more permissible and less selfish for teens than for parents to ignore requests for help in favor of fulfilling their personal desires but only when needs were low. However, we hypothesized that parents would view teens, especially older teens, as more obligated to help parents than would adolescents, particularly in the higher need situations, based on concerns with role responsibilities. As the previous research has shown that appeals to personal jurisdiction increase with age (Smetana, 1989; Smetana & Asquith, 1994), we hypothesized that middle adolescents would view hypothetical teens as less obligated to help parents and less selfish when they do not, particularly in low-need situations, than would early adolescents.

Gender differences in moral reasoning have been hotly debated based on Gilligan's (1982; Gilligan & Attanucci, 1988) claim that women are more oriented toward care, whereas men are more oriented toward justice. The empirical evidence using Kohlberg's moral judgment dilemmas has not provided strong support for this claim (see Walker, 2006, for a review), although in their recent meta-analysis, Jaffee and Hyde (2000) reported a small gender difference in care reasoning that favored girls, especially during adolescence and particularly when Lyons's (1982) Gilligan-based coding system was used. Furthermore, few consistent gender differences have been found in previous research from the social domain perspective (Killen & Turiel, 1998; Neff et al., 2002; Smetana, Killen, & Turiel, 1991). Therefore, gender differences in responses were examined here, but no specific hypotheses were tested.

Method

Participants/Sample

The sample consisted of 118 adolescents, fifty-seven 7th graders ($M = 12.32$ years, $SD = 0.51$; 30 boys and 27 girls) and sixty-one 10th graders ($M = 15.18$ years, $SD = 0.47$; 30 boys and 31 girls) and their parents (109 mothers and 9 fathers), who were recruited from a suburban middle and high school.

Adolescents were 88% European American, 9% African American, and 3% other. The majority of families were two-parent families with two biological parents (69%); 9% were stepparent families and 21% were single-parent families, of which most (17% of all families) were divorced or separated families. Family structure and adolescents' race/ethnicity (examined in terms of European American vs. all else) did not differ significantly by adolescents' grade or gender. Mothers and fathers were, on average, 42.47 and 43.92 years of age, respectively ($SDs = 4.69$ and 5.65 years, respectively). Nearly all mothers and fathers (85% and 93%, respectively) had at least some college education. Parents were primarily lower middle class, with most parents employed in blue-collar, clerical, or service jobs. Median annual family income was between \$40,000 and \$70,000/year.

Semistructured Interviews

Adolescents and parents were individually administered a 30-min semistructured clinical interview (the stories are presented in the Appendix). The interview included four stories describing situations where a parent (or adolescent) must decide whether to give up a personal desire to meet their adolescent's (or parent's) requests for help or assistance. In two stories, the adolescent was described as making a request or asking the parent for help in situations that conflicted with the parent's personal desires, and two stories described the opposite (the parent made a request or asked the adolescent for help in situations that conflicted with the adolescent's personal desires). Adolescents' and parents' requests were paired in two story types. One pair of stories (*Auction* and *Movie*) described situations where the protagonist asked for assistance or support in conditions of low need. (To minimize need, the auction story emphasized that the teen protagonist was involved in lots of other school events and had helped to organize, but was not a central participant in the event.) Another pair of stories described similar requests for help or assistance, but the situations (*Talent Show* and *Holiday Party*) entailed greater need. The stories were extensively pilot tested, and the interviewers received intensive training in conducting semistructured interviews. In each story, the age and gender of the teen protagonist were matched to the participant, and the stories were presented in counterbalanced order.

After participants read each story, they were asked whether the protagonist should fulfill the request at the expense of their personal desires, for example, "Should she ____?" (referred to as *initial judgments*) and then asked to justify their decisions, "Why (or

why not)?" (*justifications*). Responses to the initial judgment question were coded as 0 (*should not fulfill the request*) or 1 (*should help or fulfill the request*). Then, participants rated the *permissibility* of the protagonist pursuing their personal desires in the face of the request on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*not at all OK*) to 5 (*very OK*) and the story character's *selfishness* for fulfilling personal desires on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*not at all selfish*) to 5 (*very selfish*). Interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed; ratings were recorded on a checklist.

Justification responses were coded in 12 categories, described in Table 1, which were revised and expanded from previously developed coding systems (Killen & Turiel, 1998; Neff et al., 2002; Smetana, 1989). Individual coding categories were mutually exclusive in that each statement could be coded in only one category, but up to three justifications per story were coded. As participants gave varying numbers of justifications, responses were calculated as proportions of total responses to control for the differing numbers of responses. For analysis purposes, responses were collapsed into broader categories: conventional, role responsibility, moral, psychological, concern for others, personal, pragmatic/prudential, and other/uncodable. As described in more detail below, responses were analyzed separately for initial judgments to help or not to help.

Interrater reliabilities, calculated as kappa, were obtained by having two coders code 38 protocols for justification responses for all four stories ($n = 506$ responses). When coders agreed about the number of justifications to be coded from a particular response, kappa was .87 in applying the justification coding categories. When considering agreements and disagreements in coding as well as agreements and disagreements regarding the number of codable justifications from a particular response, kappa was .73.

Procedures

Families with 7th and 10th graders were recruited from a suburban school district as part of a larger study on adolescent-parent and sibling relationships (siblings were not included here). Researchers visited all 7th- and 10th-grade home base (homeroom) classes to tell students about the research, and then letters were sent home to parents. Interested parents returned an information sheet by mail and then were contacted by project staff to schedule an interview at our university lab. Adolescents and parents were individually interviewed during a 2-hr session at the university, and interviews were tape-recorded

Table 1
Justification Coding Categories

Moral

Fairness—References to the fairness or unfairness of the act or request, for example, "It wouldn't be fair for the parents to ask their kids to do it."

Instrumental reciprocity—Engaging in the act will result in rewards or benefits in the future: "If you do something nice for your mother, she might remember and do something nice for you."

Conventional

Authority/punishment avoidance—The actor should follow parental rules or expectations to avoid punishment or to obey parental authority, for example, "She'll get in trouble," "I don't think she should defy her parents' requests," "Because the Bible says so."

Tradition/respect—Focus on local or cultural customs or traditions and the need to be respectful or polite, for example, "If that's what they expect, then she should just do it."

Social (non)conformity—References to the personal-social consequences of acting contrary to group norms or the need to maintain conformity to group norms, for example, "She'll feel embarrassed."

Role responsibilities/social system perspective

Relationship or role responsibility—Concern with the roles and obligations stemming from relationships, for example, "That's what Dads are supposed to do," "Children have a responsibility to their parents."

Collective or social system perspective—Reference to meeting the needs of the family or the need to consider family obligations or duties, for example, "Your family is more important than friends," "Because your family is going to be there for you," "He's part of the family; it's his duty."

Psychological

Interpersonal/relationship maintenance—Appeals to friendship, affective bonds, the effects of acts on interpersonal relationships, or the need to have strong and healthy relationships, for example, "Because his friendships are important to him," "They need to have quality time together."

Psychological—Appeals to the effects of actions on individuals' psychological characteristics, development, or emotional maturity, for example, "She needs to learn to be independent."

Concern for others

Concern for others—Reference to caring or meeting others' needs, the importance of not harming others, or being selfless, for example, "It would hurt her feelings if he didn't go," "That would be selfish," "He should do it to show that he cares."

Interpersonal commitments—Appeals to the importance of responsibilities to the group, such as the book club, for example, "She made a commitment to the group."

Personal

Benefits actor/personal matter—Act is a matter of personal fulfillment, importance, choice, or privacy, for example, "She'll feel better if she relaxes," "It's up to him to decide if he wants to go or not," "It's a private matter."

Inconsequential—The decision (or the consequences) is unimportant or will not really affect others, for example, "Its no big deal whether she does it or not," "She's got other people there who can support her, so it doesn't matter if the parents are there."

Prudential/pragmatic—References to practical needs, consequences or to safety, comfort, harm to the self, for example, "It wouldn't be safe to let them into the house."

and transcribed. As part of the larger study, they completed other surveys and participated in family interaction tasks. Families were given \$45 honoraria for their participation.

Statistical Analyses

In the present design, adolescents and parents are nested in families. Multilevel modeling (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002) can be used to handle such dependencies in the data. However, for designs such as ours, mixed-model analysis of variance (ANOVA) with family as a within-subjects factor yields equivalent results to hierarchical linear modeling (HLM). Furthermore, mixed-model ANOVA allows for more efficient analyses of possible interaction effects than can be accomplished in HLM. Therefore, ANOVAs were used here. In addition, ANOVA has been found to be robust with dichotomous data (Lunney, 1970; Winer, Brown, & Michels, 1991; also see Wainryb, Shaw, Laupa, & Smith, 2001, for a comparison of the use of ANOVAs and repeated measures log linear models for dichotomous data). Therefore, we conducted ANOVAs on the initial dichotomous judgments.

For judgments and ratings of permissibility and selfishness, the ANOVAs consisted of 2 (grade) × 2 (gender) × 2 (respondent: parent vs. teen) × 2 (story actor: parent vs. teen) × 2 (level of need) mixed-model ANOVAs with grade and gender as between-subjects variables and respondent, story actor, and level of need as within-subjects measures. The analysis results are in Table 2, and means for judgments and ratings are in Table 3. The analyses of justifications are described in following sections. Significant interactions were further analyzed using either univariate ANOVAs or, where appropriate, paired sample *t* tests using Bonferroni corrections.

Results

Initial Judgments of Decisions to Help

First, we examined parent–adolescent differences in judgments of whether the actor should help. As can be seen in Table 3, both parents and adolescents overwhelmingly judged that family members should help in the higher need situations (0.81), but on average, obligations to help were more variable and much lower (0.41) in the lower need situations. Consistent with study manipulations, this was reflected in a significant main effect for level of need. As shown in Table 2, there were significant Respondent × Level of Need, Respondent × Story Actor, and Story Actor × Level of Need interactions, but the two-way

Table 2
Significant F Values (and Partial η^2) for Mixed-Model Analyses of Variance of Judgments, Permissibility, and Selfishness

	Grade	Level of need	Rater	Rater × Need	Rater × Grade	Rater × Gender	Rater × Actor	Rater × Need × Grade	Rater × Actor × Need	Rater × Actor × Gender	Rater × Actor × Need × Gender
Judgments	<i>ns</i>	149.13*** (.57)	3.44* (.03)	20.51*** (.15)	3.00* (.03)	<i>ns</i>	10.10** (.08)	5.27* (.04)	9.86** (.08)	<i>ns</i>	9.16** (.07)
Permissibility	<i>ns</i>	68.19** (.37)	<i>ns</i>	21.59*** (.16)	7.69** (.06)	<i>ns</i>	2.70 [†] (.02)	2.77 [†] (.02)	6.19* (.05)	<i>ns</i>	8.46** (.07)
Selfishness	3.98* (.03)	23.25** (.17)	<i>ns</i>	17.13** (.13)	7.26** (.06)	9.08** (.07)	7.26** (.06)	<i>ns</i>	<i>ns</i>	<i>ns</i>	8.46** (.07)

Note. Rater = parent versus teen. *df* = 1, 114.
[†]*p* < .10. **p* < .05. ***p* < .01. ****p* < .001.

Table 3

Adolescents' and Parents' Mean Judgments to Help (in Proportions) and Mean Ratings of the Permissibility and Selfishness of Asserting Personal Desires

	Adolescents' judgments and ratings		Parents' judgments and ratings	
	A requests/P decides M (SD)	P requests/A decides M (SD)	A requests/P decides M (SD)	P requests/A decides M (SD)
Judgments				
Low need	0.42 (0.50)	0.67 (0.47)	0.41 (0.49)	0.31 (0.47)
Higher need	0.82 (0.40)	0.76 (0.43)	0.84 (0.37)	0.82 (0.38)
Permissibility				
Low need	3.25 (1.28)	2.63 (1.40)	3.29 (1.47)	3.47 (1.47)
Higher need	2.54 (1.04)	2.66 (1.32)	2.38 (1.22)	2.26 (1.13)
Selfishness				
Low need	2.69 (1.28)	3.18 (1.30)	2.84 (1.35)	2.42 (1.32)
Higher need	2.88 (1.14)	3.06 (1.18)	3.23 (1.32)	3.39 (1.30)

Note. Permissibility and selfishness were scored on 5-point scales where 5 = *high*. A = adolescent; P = parent.

interactions were qualified by a significant three-way interaction of Respondent \times Story Actor \times Level of Need.

The results did not support our hypothesis that both adolescents and parents would view parents as having more of an obligation to help teens than for teens to help parents. Post hoc analyses indicated that parents viewed both hypothetical parents and teens as more obligated to help in higher need than in low-need situations. Adolescents also viewed parents as more obligated to help when needs were greater, but unexpectedly, adolescents viewed teens as relatively obligated to help their parents, regardless of their level of need.

The Respondent \times Grade interaction indicated that all story actors were seen as more obligated to help by parents of 10th than 7th graders ($M_s = 0.65, 0.54$; $SD_s = 0.21, 0.24$), $F(1, 116) = 6.92, p < .01$, but youth did not differ. Furthermore, in families with 7th graders, teenagers viewed hypothetical actors as more obligated to help than did their parents ($M_s = 0.66, 0.54$; $SD_s = 0.28, 0.24$).

Finally, there was a significant Respondent \times Level of Need \times Gender interaction, $F(1, 116) = 3.54, p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .03$, which indicated that parents of girls viewed story actors as more obligated to help in higher need situations than did their daughters ($M_s = 0.87, 0.72$; $SD_s = 0.24, 0.30$). Parents and their sons did not differ significantly, however ($M_s = 0.79, 0.82$; $SD_s = 0.31, 0.28$).

Ratings of the Permissibility of Asserting Personal Desires

As shown in Table 3, participants rated it as only moderately permissible for actors to assert personal

desires in situations where help was requested. The significant main effect for level of need indicated that overall, and consistent with study manipulations, participants viewed it as less permissible to assert personal desires when needs were greater.

Again, a significant three-way interaction of Respondent \times Level of Need \times Story Actor qualified significant two-way interactions. Similar to the findings for judgments, parents viewed it as more permissible for actors to satisfy personal desires in the low-need than in the higher need situations, as did adolescents when rating the permissibility of parents fulfilling personal desires. Adolescents, however, did not differentiate level of need in their ratings of whether it was permissible for hypothetical teens to satisfy personal desires; both were rated as not very permissible. Consequently, adolescents viewed it as more permissible for parents than for teenagers to satisfy personal desires when needs were low. Furthermore, parents also rated it as more permissible than did adolescents for hypothetical teens to satisfy their personal desires when parents' needs were low.

A significant Respondent \times Grade interaction indicated that parents of middle adolescents rated it as less permissible for all story actors to fulfill their personal desires when help was requested than did parents of early adolescents ($M_s = 2.65, 3.06$; $SD_s = 0.70, 0.72$), $F(1, 116) = 9.76, p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .08$. We had hypothesized that hypothetical parents and teens would differ, but the three-way interaction of Grade \times Respondent \times Story Actor was not significant. In addition, a significant Story Actor \times Level of Need \times Gender interaction was due to a Gender \times Actor interaction in higher need situations, $F(1, 116) = 5.57, p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .05$. Families with girls rated it as more permissible for teens than

for parents to assert personal desires when their help was requested and needs were greater ($M_s = 2.56, 2.34$; $SD_s = 0.64, 0.76$), but families of boys did not differ.

Evaluations of Actors' Selfishness in Asserting Personal Desires

As can be seen in Table 3, actors were rated as moderately selfish, although ratings varied by condition. Significant two-way Respondent \times Level of Need and Respondent \times Actor interactions were qualified by a significant three-way interaction of Level of Need \times Actor \times Respondent. In the low-need condition, adolescents rated hypothetical teens as more selfish than parents for asserting personal desires, but parents' ratings did not differ. Furthermore, parents rated actors as more selfish for satisfying personal desires in higher need than in low-need situations, but adolescents' ratings did not differ by condition.

A significant Respondent \times Grade interaction was qualified by a significant Respondent \times Level of Need \times Grade interaction, shown in Figure 1. In the higher need situations, all story actors were rated as more selfish for satisfying personal desires by 7th than by 10th graders, $F(1, 116) = 3.81, p < .05$, whereas all story actors were seen as more selfish for satisfying personal desires by parents of 10th than 7th graders, $F(1, 116) = 12.21, p < .001$.

Finally, a significant Respondent \times Gender interaction indicated that boys viewed all actors as more selfish than did girls ($M_s = 3.10, 2.80$; $SD_s = 0.75, 0.69$), $F(1, 116) = 4.73, p < .05$, whereas parents of girls viewed all actors as more selfish than did parents of boys ($M_s = 3.12, 2.83$; $SD_s = 0.87, 0.66$), $F(1, 116) = 4.09, p < .05$.

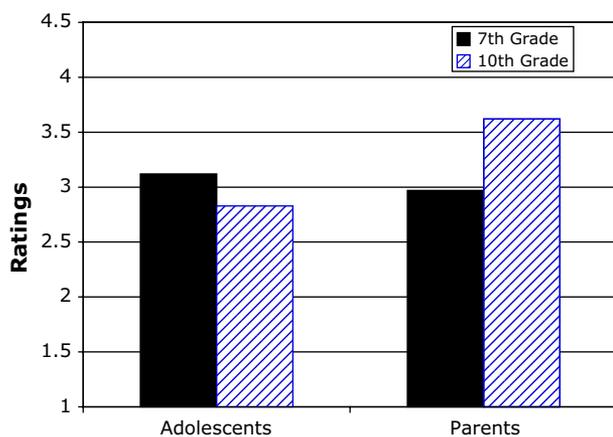


Figure 1. Ratings of selfishness for fulfilling personal desires in higher need situations.

Justifications for Initial Judgments

Justifications were analyzed separately for initial judgments of whether story actors were obligated to help or not. Means for justifications for both helping and not helping are shown in Table 4. Because participants could judge that actors should help for some stories but not for others (resulting in lower frequencies of responses in some cells), analyses were performed with the low and high needs stories combined. However, responses for the two stories where adolescents requested help or assistance from parents and where parents requested help from adolescents were kept separate. To ensure adequate frequencies for analyses, only justifications that accounted for 10% or more of responses were analyzed.

Decisions to help. Conventional justifications did not reach the 10% criterion, but as can be seen in Table 4, conventional justifications were primarily used (by both teens and parents) to justify why adolescents should help their parents rather than why parents should help their teens. Analyses were first conducted to compare the use of separate justifications across conditions. The analyses across conditions were followed by a second set of analyses that examined significant differences in each respondent's use of different justifications for why parents or teens should help. For the first set of analyses, separate 2 (grade) \times 2 (respondent: parent vs. teen) \times 2 (story actor: parent or teen) mixed-model ANOVAs were run on psychological, concern for others, role responsibility, and pragmatic/prudential responses. Gender was not significant in any of these analyses, either as a main effect or in interaction with other variables and thus was dropped from the final analyses.

A significant main effect for story actor for role responsibility responses, $F(1, 70) = 9.61, p < .01, \eta^2 = .12$, was qualified by a significant Respondent \times Story Actor interaction, $F(1, 70) = 6.28, p < .05, \eta^2 = .09$. Adolescents reasoned about role responsibilities more when justifying hypothetical parents' than teens' helping, whereas parents reasoned more about role responsibilities when considering hypothetical teens' than parents' helping. Furthermore, a significant Grade \times Respondent interaction, $F(1, 70) = 3.92, p < .05, \eta^2 = .07$, indicated that, as expected, 10th graders reasoned about role responsibilities more than did 7th graders ($M_s = 0.24, 0.16$; $SD_s = 0.30, 0.33$), but parents did not differ ($M_s = 0.33, 0.33$; $SD_s = 0.38, 0.36$).

A significant main effect for respondent in the analysis of psychological justifications, $F(1, 70) = 65.230, p < .001, \eta^2 = .48$, indicated that, as expected, parents used psychological reasons to justify helping

Table 4
 Mean Proportions of Justifications for Decisions to Help and Satisfy Personal Desires

	Adolescents' justifications				Parents' justifications			
	A requests help/P decides		P requests help/A decides		A requests help/P decides		P requests help/A decides	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Help								
Moral	0.02	0.02	0.06	0.15	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.13
Conventional	0.05	0.05	0.15	0.29	0.00	0.00	0.12	0.25
Psychological	0.24	0.29	0.07	0.14	0.23	0.29	0.14	0.12
Concern	0.38	0.36	0.38	0.35	0.39	0.33	0.32	0.33
Role respons	0.26	0.36	0.16	0.30	0.25	0.34	0.37	0.36
Prag/prud	0.10	0.25	0.17	0.28	0.11	0.23	0.10	0.21
Personal	0.08	0.05	0.01	0.07	0.02	0.09	0.01	0.08
Satisfy personal desire								
Moral	0.02	0.10	0.14	0.30	0.01	0.07	0.12	0.26
Conventional	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Psychological	0.02	0.08	0.02	0.08	0.12	0.23	0.09	0.21
Concern	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Role respons	0.03	0.15	0.03	0.15	0.02	0.13	0.14	0.27
Prag/prud	0.41	0.39	0.41	0.39	0.58	0.39	0.49	0.42
Personal	0.51	0.40	0.35	0.37	0.26	0.33	0.17	0.30

Note. A = adolescent; P = parent; prag/prud = pragmatic/prudential; respons = responsibility; Concern = concern for others.

more than did teenagers. The analyses of concern for others and pragmatic/prudential justifications did not yield significant effects.

In addition, to examine which justifications predominated in adolescents' and parents' reasoning, mixed-model Grade \times Gender \times Justification ANOVAs were run separately on parents' and adolescents' justifications for the two conditions. Again, only justifications that accounted for at least 10% of responses were analyzed.

The analyses of adolescents' and parents' justifications for parents' decisions to help each included concern for others, role responsibility, psychological, and pragmatic/prudential responses. The analyses yielded significant main effects for justification for adolescents' responses, $F(3, 309) = 9.95, p < .001, \eta^2 = .09$, and parents' responses, $F(3, 318) = 11.49, p < .001, \eta^2 = .10$. Bonferroni *t* tests indicated that adolescents and parents did not differ significantly in their use of concern for others, psychological, and role responsibility justifications, but teens used pragmatic/prudential justifications less than all these reasons, and parents used pragmatic/prudential justifications less than concern for others.

The ANOVA on adolescents' justifications for teens' decisions to help (which included concern for others, role responsibility, conventional, and pragmatic/prudential justifications) yielded a significant

main effect for justification, $F(3, 303) = 9.65, p < .001, \eta^2 = .09$. Bonferroni *t* tests indicated that adolescents' reasons for why hypothetical teens should help parents focused more on concern for others than anything else. The ANOVA on parents' justifications included these same four categories as well as psychological reasons and likewise yielded a significant main effect for justifications, $F(4, 408) = 24.67, p < .001, \eta^2 = .20$. In justifying why hypothetical teens should help parents, parents reasoned more about role responsibilities and concern for others than other reasons. Interactions with grade or gender were not significant in any of these analyses.

Decisions to satisfy personal desires. As can be seen in Table 4, adolescents and parents primarily justified fulfilling personal desires with pragmatic/prudential and personal reasons. Because fewer respondents judged that story actors should fulfill personal desires than help, analyses were conducted within respondent and condition to maximize responses, and again, only justifications that accounted for 10% or more of responses were included.

A 2 (grade) \times 2 (gender) \times 2 (justification: personal and pragmatic/prudential) ANOVA run on adolescents' justifications for why hypothetical parents would fulfill personal desires revealed a significant Grade \times Gender \times Justification interaction, $F(2, 104) = 4.84, p < .01, \eta^2 = .09$. Pragmatic/prudential

justifications were used more by 7th-grade girls than boys ($M_s = 0.60, 0.29$; $SD_s = 0.41, 0.39$), but 10th graders did not differ. A 2 (grade) \times 2 (gender) \times 3 (justification: personal, pragmatic/prudential, and psychological) ANOVA performed on parents' responses revealed a significant main effect for justifications, $F(2, 150) = 26.47, p < .001, \eta^2 = .26$. Parents used pragmatic/prudential reasons more than other reasons and personal reasons more than psychological reasons to justify why hypothetical parents would fulfill personal desires rather than help.

The 2 (grade) \times 2 (gender) \times 3 (justification) ANOVA on adolescents' justifications for why hypothetical teens would fulfill personal desires included pragmatic/prudential, personal, and moral justifications; the analysis of parents' responses included these three justifications as well as role responsibility responses. Significant justification main effects for teens' responses, $F(2, 104) = 4.81, p < .01, \eta^2 = .09$, and parents' responses, $F(3, 252) = 19.78, p < .001, \eta^2 = .19$, indicated that teenagers used pragmatic/prudential and personal reasons more than moral reasons, whereas parents reasoned more about pragmatic/prudential concerns than other reasons. A significant Justification \times Gender interaction in parents' reasoning, $F(3, 246) = 4.20, p < .05, \eta^2 = .06$, indicated that parents of boys used personal reasons more to justify why it was permissible for teens to fulfill personal desires than did parents of girls ($M_s = 0.23, 0.10$; $SD_s = 0.33, 0.23$), $F(1, 84) = 4.45, p < .05$. In contrast, parents of girls reasoned more about (the absence of) role responsibilities than did parents of boys ($M_s = 0.20, 0.08$; $SD_s = 0.34, 0.20$), $F(1, 84) = 3.90, p < .05$. Grade was not significant in any of the analyses.

Discussion

Little research has examined adolescents' reasoning about interpersonal obligations in the family, and even less research has examined this reasoning in the context of parent-adolescent relationships. Therefore, a novel aspect of the present study was that we compared parents' and adolescents' evaluations of hypothetical situations where teens' or parents' requests for assistance or help conflicted with a family member's personal desires. As discussed in more detail below, the results of the present study revealed that responses varied according to whether parents' or teens' evaluations were obtained, whose assistance was requested, the level of interpersonal need, and, less consistently, teens' grade and gender.

The results indicated that in some hypothetical situations, European American parents were more supportive of adolescents' autonomy than were their adolescents. We had expected that based on adolescents' rights to self-determination (Ruck et al., 1998), hypothetical teens would be granted some latitude to ignore parental requests for help in the low-need situations. Unexpectedly, however, when parents' needs were low, parents believed that it was more permissible for teenagers to satisfy personal desires than did their adolescents. Because parents view facilitating teens' autonomy as an important child-rearing goal (Zimmer-Gembeck & Collins, 2003), they may be more able than adolescents to coordinate and balance adolescents' desires for greater autonomy with their obligation to assist other family members who ask for assistance.

Although both adults and adolescents recognized parents' obligations to nurture and care for their children (Ruck et al., 1998), those obligations were found to be tempered in low-need situations. Both adolescents and parents viewed parents as relatively obligated to help their offspring when teenagers' needs were greater, although it is important to note that even in these situations, the needs were relatively minor. These evaluations were based on concerns with (parental) role responsibilities (which focused on the duties or obligations inherent in roles or relationships or on the importance of meeting the needs of the family), adolescents' well-being, and psychological reasons, including maintaining the relationship and fostering adolescents' psychological development.

A persistent theme emerging from public opinion polls and social science commentaries is that American youth are selfish, lacking in moral values, and in a state of moral decline (see Smetana & Turiel, 2003, for a discussion). Furthermore, researchers comparing the responses of Americans to individuals in other, more collectivist cultures have asserted that Americans view individuals as being morally obligated to help only in extreme circumstances and in cases where children have serious needs in the family (Miller et al., 1990). In light of these claims, it is interesting that the European American lower-middle-class adolescents studied here viewed teens as relatively obligated to help their parents, even when their needs were minimal (e.g., teens staying home for a furniture delivery rather than going to a movie with friends, as had been planned), based on concern for others ("She should stay home so she could please her parents") and role responsibilities ("cause family matters more"). Adolescents reasoned more about concern for others than role

responsibilities, whereas parents did not differentiate between these two responses. However, our results also differed from Neff et al. (2002), who found that American college students overwhelmingly judged that protagonists were obligated to subordinate personal desires to interpersonal concerns. In the present study, judgments in low-need situations were more evenly divided between the obligation to help and the permissibility of fulfilling personal desires, and participants rated it as less permissible and more selfish to satisfy personal desires in the higher need than in the low-need situations. By design, the stories reflected the types of familiar, everyday requests for assistance in conflict with personal desires that typically occur in family life. Thus, in everyday situations entailing low to moderate levels of need, both adolescents and parents viewed actors as obligated to assist the other based primarily on concern for others, role responsibilities, and psychological concerns.

When relationships are hierarchically organized, individuals in different positions in the hierarchy may have different conceptions of their duties, roles, and personal entitlements (Turiel & Wainryb, 1994). In previous research, this hierarchical organization has been conceptualized primarily in terms of gender roles, castes, and social classes (primarily in collectivist cultures). Parent–child relationships also are hierarchically arranged, however, and entail different roles and expectations. Prior research has shown that individuals with more privileged status claim more personal entitlements than do those in subordinate roles (Wainryb & Turiel, 1994). The present results further suggest that higher status also confers the power to grant personal entitlements to lower status individuals, although adolescents' judgments that they were obligated to help parents even when parents' needs were minimal appeared to reflect the judgments of individuals in subordinate roles who accept the legitimacy and reasonableness of parental expectations. Adolescents did offer moral reasons pertaining to the unfairness of parents' expectations to justify their decisions not to help, but these responses were low in frequency.

Parents' evaluations of whether it was permissible for adolescents to fulfill personal desires appeared to entail a recognition of adolescents' needs for autonomy. However, when parents judged that adolescents should fulfill their personal desires, their justifications were rarely based on adolescents' personal choice; instead, parents' justifications were primarily pragmatic or prudential and, less frequently, psychological or (absence of) role responsibilities. In contrast, when adolescents decided it was permissible to ignore parents' requests for help and satisfy personal

desires, they used both pragmatic or prudential ("because he already had plans") and personal justifications (" 'cause I just like going out with my friends and stuff like that, and it's probably just good for her to get out and have some fun") in equal frequency. That personal reasoning was more prevalent in adolescents' responses (and absent in parents' responses) appears to reflect the types of differences in parents' and adolescents' perspectives that have been found to cause conflict in their relationships (Smetana, 1989; Smetana & Asquith, 1994).

As expected, parents viewed older teens as increasingly competent and obligated to help. That is, parents of middle adolescents viewed all actors as more obligated to help than did parents of early adolescents, and parents of older adolescents also viewed it as less permissible for actors to satisfy personal desires than did parents of younger adolescents. It is less clear, however, why parents also viewed hypothetical parents of older teens as more obligated to help. It is possible that parents believe that older teenagers are increasingly able to discern when help is really needed and that therefore even requests in low-need situations are seen as requiring parents' attention and positive response.

Consistent with hypotheses, parents of older adolescents rated it as more selfish to ignore requests for assistance and to satisfy personal desires in higher need situations than did parents of younger adolescents, while the reverse was found among adolescents. Middle adolescents rated it less selfish to satisfy personal desires in the higher need condition than did early adolescents. Furthermore, the means suggest that teens did not view decisions to satisfy personal desires as especially selfish, even when needs were greater. In other words, parents' and teens' ratings of selfishness became increasingly divergent with age. This difference between parents' and adolescents' ratings may be linked to the increases in the intensity of adolescent–parent conflict found at this age (Laursen, Coy, & Collins, 1998) and to previous research showing that appeals to personal jurisdiction increase in frequency during adolescence (Smetana, 1989; Smetana & Asquith, 1994).

Other differences in adolescents' and parents' justifications for helping were obtained as well. As expected, parents reasoned psychologically more than did adolescents and focused on the importance of helping in fostering the development of adolescents' character and compassion (Lerner et al., 2000). As one mother stated, "It just includes being there for them all the time and supporting them. Whether you like it or not, or whether it's convenient or not in your life. They need to feel supported, and they need to feel

loved . . . and that you're there for them no matter what."

Killen and Turiel (1998) found that helping in close relationships was justified more with reasons pertaining to well-being (which was similar to our category of concern for others) than duties (which was similar to our category of relationship responsibilities). Our results suggest that which of these reasons predominated varied according to whose perspective family members were taking. When reasoning about why hypothetical actors occupying their same social role should help, adolescents and parents both focused on concern for others more than any other reason. In contrast, when justifying obligations to help for hypothetical actors occupying the complementary social position, adolescents and parents both reasoned more about role responsibilities. It is possible that when reasoning about family members in similar social roles, participants conceptualized their obligations to help in moral and relational ways that described their behavior in a more volitional and therefore flattering light. On the other hand, when thinking about others' obligations, it may have been easier to see the responsibilities and duties inherent in the role.

Turiel (1983) found that an understanding of social systems as consisting of fixed roles and a hierarchical organization first emerges during middle adolescence. Consistent with these findings, role responsibility justifications were greater among middle than early adolescents. In contrast, justifications coded within the conventional category were used primarily when justifying hypothetical adolescents' but not parents' obligations to help. The social-conventional category pertained to respect, politeness, authority, and punishment avoidance and thus may have better reflected the obligations of those in subordinate positions in the social hierarchy. More generally, adolescents' and parents' use of both role obligation and conventional justifications indicates that family members were attuned to the reciprocal obligations and duties inherent in parent-adolescent relationships.

In light of debates about gender differences in moral reasoning (Gilligan, 1982; Jaffee & Hyde, 2000; Walker, 2006), it is notable that in the present study, few gender differences were found in evaluations of obligations to assist other family members. There were no gender differences in judgments to help or in justifications pertaining to concern for others, which might be seen as reflecting care reasoning. An interesting gender difference that emerged, however, was that parents of girls viewed story actors as more obligated to help when needs were greater

than did their daughters. This finding suggests that parents may place socialization pressures for care on girls that at least in the present study were not reflected in teenage girls' responses. On the other hand, the overall lack of gender differences is consistent with other research examining children's and adolescents' ability to coordinate interpersonal and personal issues (Killen & Turiel, 1998; Neff et al., 2002; Smetana et al., 1991).

Most of the gender differences that emerged in reasoning and judgments primarily pertained to the permissibility of satisfying personal desires rather than to care. For instance, families with girls viewed it as more permissible for teens than for parents to assert personal desires when help was requested, but families with boys did not differ. Furthermore, parents of boys reasoned about personal choice more than did parents of girls, whereas justifications regarding the (absence of) role responsibilities were offered more by parents of girls than boys. These differences may reflect the earlier autonomy granted to boys than to girls (Fuligni, 1998; Zimmer-Gembeck & Collins, 2003).

Study Limitations and Future Directions

One limitation of the present study was that we interviewed only one parent (usually the mother), and while we matched adolescents' and the teen story protagonists' gender, we did not systematically vary the gender of the parent depicted in the stories. Therefore, in future research, it would be worthwhile to examine whether boys and girls differ in their evaluations of interpersonal obligations toward mothers and fathers and whether mothers and fathers differ in their views. Furthermore, our sample was primarily European American. More research will be needed to determine whether the present findings generalize to families of different socioeconomic statuses and ethnicities, especially given the importance of family obligation in ethnic minority families (Fuligni, Tseng, & Lamb, 1999). However, our findings are consistent with other research showing that individuals of different ethnicities in the United States, as well as individuals in other cultures, weigh and coordinate competing moral, conventional, and personal claims and make judgments on the basis of both duties and autonomy (Helwig, 2006; Turiel, 2002, 2006).

In addition, stories describing parents' and adolescents' requests for assistance were yoked in the study design but may not have been fully equivalent. Because parent-child relationships are asymmetrical and we tried to make the hypothetical situations

realistic and compelling, we found during pilot testing that simply reversing roles in the stories (using the same scenarios but interchanging parent and teen actors) did not result in plausible or convincing stories. Therefore, the scenarios describing hypothetical parents and adolescents differed. It is important to note, though, that most of the significant effects obtained here entailed parent–adolescent differences in evaluations of the same story, mitigating concerns about their comparability. Furthermore, the complex interactions between respondent and story actor suggested that effects were not simply due to story differences. Future research should examine adolescents' and parents' judgments about interpersonal responsibilities with a more detailed interview, in a broader range of interpersonal situations, and in situations involving siblings, grandparents, and other relatives.

In the present study, we assessed obligations to help using a single interview question. However, extensive pilot testing indicated that responses to the initial judgment question ("Should she/he help?") were nearly identical to responses to questions about whether the story actor had a duty or obligation to help and whether it was important to help. Thus, because the interviews were lengthy, we streamlined our assessments to reduce the demand on the participants.

Finally, it should be noted that the hypothetical stories used here were extensively piloted to entail realistic conflicts, and comments and reactions during the interviews indicated that the dilemmas were challenging and thought provoking for our participants. Nevertheless, more research is needed on adolescents' and parents' reasoning about interpersonal obligations and responsibilities in real-life family situations and on the developmental and parenting factors influencing caring and compassion for others (Lerner et al., 2000).

The results of the present study indicated that adolescents' and parents' evaluations of family situations entailing requests for help versus competing personal desires entailed coordinations among concerns with others' needs and welfare, an understanding of role responsibilities in family relationships, and appeals to legitimate personal desires. Thus, although adolescents (and their parents) were concerned and cared about others' needs, their evaluations of obligations to help varied by the situational context. Older than younger adolescents' greater understanding of role responsibilities and their more frequent appeals to personal jurisdiction were associated with increased discrepancies between adolescents' and parents' evaluations. Future research could illuminate how adolescents and parents negotiate different

expectations and responsibilities in the family as they conflict with personal desires and how these decisions are associated with family functioning and transformations in adolescent–parent relationships during adolescence.

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Appendix: Scenarios (Shortened)

Low-Need Condition

Jenny is involved in many school activities and is always “on the go.” She is part of the Organizing Committee for her sophomore class and Friday night is their auction—an important fundraiser for the class. She wants her parents to go with her to the auction and stay for the whole event. Her parents, however, have expensive tickets to a theater production that they have really been looking forward to and would like to attend the show instead. Should Jenny’s parents go to the auction?

Barbara’s parents recently ordered a new couch for their home. After several weeks of waiting, the furniture company called them at work to let them know the couch will be delivered this evening. They had planned to attend a party this evening and ask Barbara to stay home and wait for the furniture delivery. Barbara and a group of friends have tickets to a new movie that is opening tonight, and she was getting ready to leave to meet her friends when her parents called. Should Barbara stay home and wait for the furniture delivery?

Interpersonal—Higher Needs

Mary will be in a school talent show in two days. She and her friends formed a group and will be performing at the show. Today at school, Mary and her friends decided to change their act. They really wanted to win the talent show and had a much better idea for an act that could help them win. Since Mary’s mother used to be in a band, the group really wants her help with the new act. When Mary’s mother comes home from work, Mary asks her mother to watch them rehearse and help them improve their act, but Mary’s mother was really looking forward to going to her book club meeting that night. Should she stay home and help the group with their new act?

Ellen’s father is having a big holiday party. He has been preparing the menu for weeks and has hired help for the party, but this morning, one of his waitresses called to say that she is out sick with the flu. Ellen’s father has been unable to find anyone to fill the spot and knows the party won’t be successful without more help. Ellen has helped wait tables and serve food at many events in the past, so Ellen’s father asks for her help tonight. Ellen had planned to go sledding with a big group of friends tonight, an outing he/she had been looking forward to all month. Should Ellen stay to help her father with the party?

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