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Give Enough or Not at All

Jean Zhang, Gal Smitizsky, Marta Serra-Garcia, and Ayelet Gneezy*

June 6, 2026

Abstract

We investigate prosocial preferences in contexts where giving involves small amounts. Focusing on the lower bound of generosity, we propose an asymmetry: givers may prefer to give nothing rather than a small amount, whereas receivers prefer receiving a small amount to receiving nothing. Evidence from two survey experiments ($N = 1,658$), an incentivized laboratory experiment ($N = 296$), and a field study involving 77 fundraising sessions supports the existence of a reluctance to give small amounts. Our findings further suggest that this reluctance is misaligned with receivers' preferences and that informing givers that small amounts are acceptable significantly increases the likelihood of giving.

Keywords: Generosity, Prosocial Behavior, Image Concerns, Experiment, Bilateral Threshold Dictator Game

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1. Introduction

Traditional economic models assume individuals are self-interested and focused on maximizing material payoffs. Yet, people often exhibit behaviors consistent with other-regarding preferences (Fehr and Schmidt, 1999; Charness and Rabin, 2002; List, 2007), acting prosocially even when doing so comes at a personal cost. Prosocial acts are observed in various contexts, including charitable donations (Andreoni, 1990), tipping service workers (Lynn & McCall, 2000; Khadjavi, 2017), and resource sharing (Bowles and Gintis, 2003; Forsythe et al., 1994).

Research has established that prosocial behaviors, such as giving, reflect a range of motivations, including reciprocating kindness (Sobel, 2005; Falk and Fischbacher, 2006), upholding fairness norms (Fehr and Schmidt, 1999), and maintaining a positive social- or self-image (Akerlof and Kranton, 2000; Bodner and Prelec, 2003; Bénabou and Tirole, 2006, 2011; Andreoni and Bernheim, 2009). While evidence suggests social and contextual cues such as social norms (Frey and Meier, 2004) and behavior observability (Ariely et al., 2009) can increase prosocial behavior, less is known about the potential of these cues to promote the opposite effect, decreasing prosocial acts.

Prior work has focused on the upper bound of giving and the factors that influence it, such as suggested donation amounts (Adena et al., 2014; Edwards and List, 2014; Goswami and Urminsky, 2016). A limited body of research has examined whether there also exists a lower bound of giving, below which people become reluctant to give. Cialdini and Schroeder (1976) found that adding the phrase “even a penny will help” to a charitable request significantly increased donation rates in person-to-person requests, suggesting that explicitly legitimizing small amounts can reduce psychological barriers to giving.

In this paper, we propose a paradox: Individuals may prefer to give nothing rather than a small amount, even if willing to give more, because a small amount might carry a negative

signal. These preferences, however, may be at odds with the preferences of recipients, whose acceptable minimum could be substantially lower than that of givers. This gap between the preferences of givers and receivers creates an inefficiency: in trying to be good, givers may harm recipients.

Our prediction that givers would prefer to give nothing rather than a very small amount is based on the notion that a minimal gift may signal selfishness. In contrast, giving nothing at all is more ambiguous and thus open to multiple interpretations (e.g., Newman & Cain, 2014).¹ This prediction is motivated by evidence that image concerns guide prosocial behavior. Individuals desire to uphold a favorable self-image (Akerlof and Kranton, 2000; Bénabou and Tirole, 2004, 2011; Gneezy et al., 2012a, 2012b; Serra-Garcia and Szech, 2022) and social image (Bénabou and Tirole, 2006; Dufwenberg and Muren, 2006; Charness et al., 2007; Andreoni and Serra-Garcia, 2021). What is deemed appropriate behavior depends, at least in part, on one's perceived norms (Andreoni and Bernheim, 2009) and what they believe others would approve of. This means that, in the context of prosocial behavior, the mere act of giving may not be sufficient, and that the amount one gives also matters. Therefore, the internalization of perceived norms of giving can discourage giving rather than promote it. If individuals feel unable to meet a standard or threshold, they may prefer to give nothing at all.

In our first two studies (1A-1C, 2), we study generosity using tipping decisions, which are highly sensitive to social norms (Azar, 2020; Conlin et al., 2003; Parrett, 2006). In these two survey experiments, participants are presented with a scenario involving tipping after a \$30 car wash service. In Study 1A, individuals show a higher willingness to tip when the amount available for tipping is larger: 87% would tip when they have \$5 in their wallet, compared to

¹ In titling this paper, we draw a parallel to Gneezy and Rustichini's (2000) *Pay Enough or Don't Pay at All*, reflecting the consequences of giving "too little."

only 23% who would tip when they have 25¢ ($p < .01$). In two follow-up studies (Studies 1B and 1C), we vary whether the tipping is done in person or anonymously (Study 1B) and whether participants know that the tip amount was within the acceptable norms (Study 1C). We find that both anonymous tipping and information regarding tipping norms significantly increase the stated likelihood of tipping a small amount, consistent with the proposition that signaling concerns may contribute to one's reluctance to give small amounts (Charness and Gneezy, 2008).

In Study 2, we document that tippers' decisions are at odds with the preferences of those receiving tips. Specifically, using the same scenario as in Studies 1A-C, we assign participants to either the role of the customer or the service provider and elicit their minimum threshold for giving (or receiving). The data show that customers' *minimum* tip (\$1.89) is higher than attendants' *minimum* tip (\$1.09; $p < .01$), suggesting that givers' reluctance to give a small tip is inconsistent with receivers' preferences, who may suffer because of this mismatch.

Study 3 replicates the preference misalignment using an incentive-compatible design. Pairs of participants play a modified version of the dictator game, the *Bilateral Threshold Dictator Game* (BTDG). We build on the Becker–DeGroot–Marschak (BDM; 1964) method, a strategy method procedure (Brandts and Charness, 2011), to elicit the minimum bonus that participants in the role of dictators would allocate to a receiver for completing a real effort task, and the minimum that the receiver would be willing to receive. Consistent with the findings of the first two studies, dictators' minimum allocation (\$3.38) is significantly higher than receivers' minimum acceptable allocation (\$1.97; $p < .01$). Together, Studies 1–3 suggest that givers may avoid giving small amounts because they view them as inappropriate, even when receivers would

prefer receiving a small amount to receiving nothing. This raises the question of whether making a small amount seem acceptable can increase giving.

Previous research shows that suggested donation amounts, whether explicit or implicit, and social norms may influence the likelihood of giving as well as average donation size (e.g., Andreoni and Petrie, 2004; Croson, Handy, and Shang, 2009; Croson and Shang, 2013; Krupka and Croson, 2016). Specifically, high suggested donation amounts can reduce donation rates but increase the average amount donated (Adena et al., 2014; Shang and Croson, 2009), whereas low suggested donations can have the opposite effect (Croson and Shang, 2008; Goswami and Urminsky, 2016). The effect on total donations reflects this tradeoff, leading to mixed evidence on whether low suggested amounts increase overall donations (e.g., Brockner et al., 1984; Charness and Cheung 2013; Edwards and List, 2014; Fraser, Hite, and Sauer 1988; Weyant and Smith, 1987). Study 4 asks whether explicitly requesting a very small amount can increase giving by making such gifts seem acceptable. If people avoid giving very small amounts because such gifts seem inappropriate, then explicitly requesting a very small amount should increase giving.

Study 4 examines this question in a field setting. We conducted a fundraiser for a child with cancer on a university campus, over 61 hours (13 days). In this study, we vary the observable health status of the child by showing an image of the same child when they were visibly sick or seemingly healthy. We also manipulate whether the donation request was general (i.e., "please donate") or specified a small amount (e.g., "please donate \$1"). Because a general appeal involving a sick child might heighten the concern that a small donation amount is inappropriate, we predicted that specifying a small amount would alleviate such concerns and increase donation likelihood, possibly at the cost of lowering donation amounts. In line with the

proposition that individuals are less willing to give small amounts unless the contextual cues convey that doing so is acceptable, we find that soliciting \$1 donations increases the number of donations per fundraising session when the campaign features a photo of a sick child ($b = 0.98$; $p = .01$).

Taken together, our studies offer two new insights to the field of prosocial behavior. First, individuals are reluctant to give small amounts, whereas recipients find those amounts acceptable. Second, this reluctance is driven, at least in part, by concerns about self-image and social image. When acting in private, and when cues indicate that small amounts are acceptable, individuals are significantly more likely to donate small amounts, both in the contexts of tipping and charitable giving.

2. Study 1: Survey Experiments on Tipping

For all studies, experimental instructions are provided in the Online Appendix. Studies 1B, 1C, and 3 were pre-registered on AsPredicted; Studies 1A, 2, and 4 were not pre-registered. Materials and pre-registration documents are available on the Open Science Framework (OSF: https://osf.io/wksym/?view_only=24ce91e14b4244b1a4a23d5361493905).

Studies 1A–1C examined individuals' willingness to give a small amount in the context of tipping. Participants read a scenario in which they were purchasing a \$30 full-service car wash that included a mechanical exterior wash, manual drying, and interior cleaning. Just before pickup, they realized they only had either 25¢ or \$5 in cash, depending on the condition, and could neither obtain more cash or tip by card. In Study 1A, we investigated whether the likelihood of tipping varied based on the available amount by comparing participants' willingness to tip in the small (25¢) and large (\$5) tip amount conditions. Study 1B tested whether the observability of tipping influenced willingness to tip small versus large amounts.

Participants could either hand the tip directly to the attendant or place it in a tip box located a few yards away, with no one else nearby. We designed Study 1C to test whether providing participants with information about the normative acceptability of low tips would increase the likelihood of tipping. Participants read a similar scenario in which they were traveling in a foreign country with an unfamiliar currency, the “Vero.” In some conditions, we told participants that the available tip amount fell within the customary tipping range. Across studies, participants indicated whether they would tip the specified amount.

2.1 Study 1A

In Study 1A, we compare individuals’ stated willingness to tip a car wash attendant when they had only 25¢ or \$5 available, depending on the condition. We recruited 200 U.S. participants from Amazon Mechanical Turk. After removing duplicate entries and excluding 12 participants who failed the attention check, the final sample comprised 174 participants ($M_{\text{age}} = 38.6$, 38.73% female).

The main finding is that participants in the 25¢ condition were significantly *less* likely to tip (23%) compared to the \$5 condition (87.4%). This difference is statistically significant ($b = -0.64$, $SE = 0.06$, $p < .01$; see Online Appendix A Table A1, column (1)), as shown in Figure 1, Panel A.

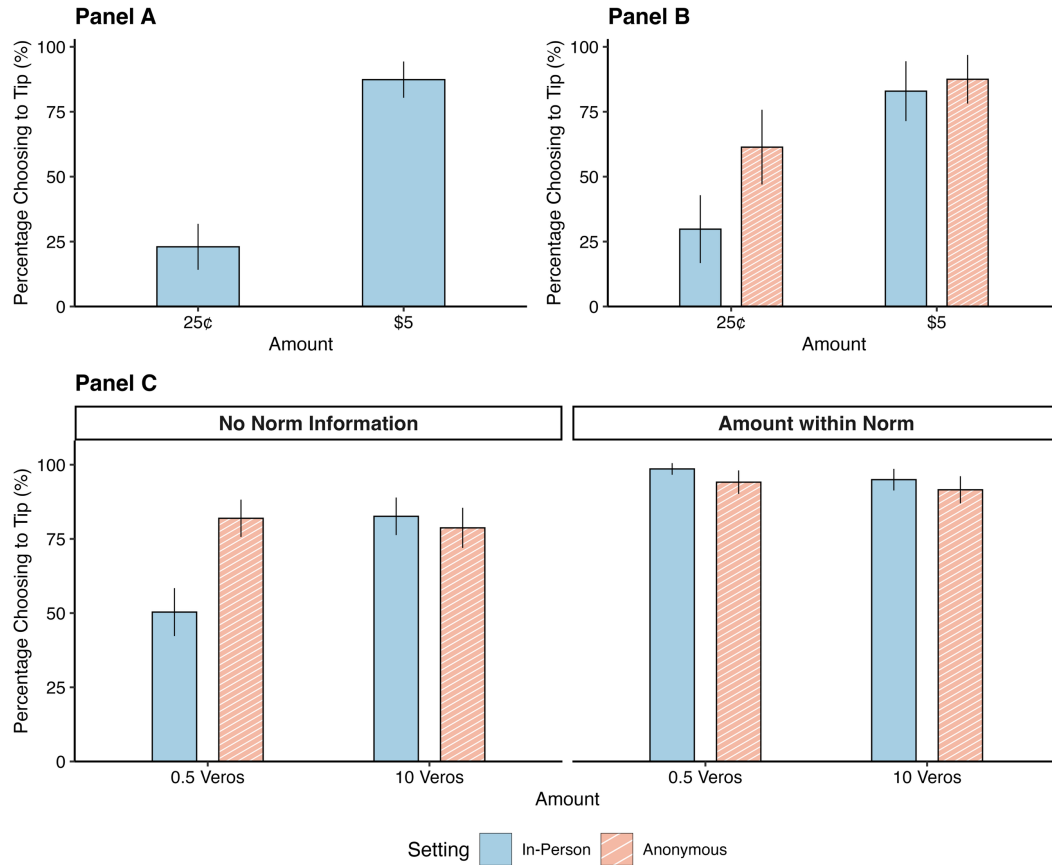


Figure 1. Stated tipping likelihood in Studies 1A–1C. Panel A shows the effect of tip amount on tipping likelihood (Study 1A; $N = 174$). Panel B illustrates tipping likelihood as a function of tip amount and setting (in-person vs. anonymous; Study 1B; $N = 180$). Bars with stripes represent the anonymous condition; solid bars represent the in-person condition. Panel C presents the interaction of tip amount, setting, and norm information (Study 1C; $N = 1127$). Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

2.2 Study 1B

Building on Study 1A, we designed Study 1B to test whether the reluctance to tip a small amount is sensitive to whether tipping was done in-person or anonymously. If concerns about social signaling decrease tipping likelihood, then making tipping anonymous could increase the likelihood of tipping when amounts are low.

Participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions in a 2 (tip amount: 25¢ vs. \$5) $\times$ 2 (setting: in-person vs. anonymous) between-subjects design. As in Study 1A, participants imagined they had only 25¢ or \$5 available. Participants in the in-person tipping conditions

would tip the attendant directly by handing them the available cash. Those in the anonymous conditions would tip the attendant by placing the cash in a designated tip box a few yards away, with no one else nearby. All participants then indicated whether they would tip.

We recruited 200 U.S. participants from Amazon Mechanical Turk. After removing duplicate entries and excluding nine participants who failed the attention check, the final sample comprised 180 participants ($M_{\text{age}} = 39.07$, 42.46% female).

The data shows that participants in the 25¢ condition were more likely to tip in the anonymous (61.4%) than in the in-person setting (29.8%; $b = 0.32$, $SE = 0.1$, $p < .01$, Online Appendix A Table A2, column (1)), as shown in Panel B of Figure 1. In contrast, tipping likelihood in the \$5 condition did not differ between the anonymous (87.5%) and in-person setting (82.9%; $b = 0.05$, $SE = 0.08$, $p = .56$, Online Appendix A Table A2, column (2)). Our finding that tipping likelihood was significantly higher in the anonymous tipping treatments is consistent with our prediction that individuals might be reluctant to tip small amounts because it might signal to others ‘meager’ generosity.

2.3 Study 1C

To test whether people’s reluctance to tip a small amount might be driven by their beliefs about its social acceptability, Study 1C introduced a third factor: information about tipping norms.

We randomly assigned participants to one of eight conditions in a 2 (tip amount: 0.5 Veros vs. 10 Veros) $\times$ 2 (setting: in-person vs. anonymous) $\times$ 2 (norm information: no information vs. tip amount within the norm) between-subjects design. Participants read a scenario in which they had traveled to a foreign country with an unfamiliar currency (“Vero”)

and purchased a full-service car wash for 60 Veros, where 2 Veros were equivalent to \$1. Just before picking up their car, participants realized they only had either 0.5 Veros (equivalent to 25¢) or 10 Veros (equivalent to \$5) available to tip, and could neither obtain more cash or tip by card. As in Study 1B, participants in the in-person conditions would hand the tip directly to the attendant, whereas participants in the anonymous conditions would place the money in a designated tip box located a few yards away, with no one else nearby. In the no information conditions, participants received no information about local tipping norms. In the norm information conditions, they learned that the available cash fell within the customary range: 0.4-0.7 Veros in the low-tip condition and 8-14 Veros in the high-tip condition. Participants then indicated whether they would tip.

We recruited 1,200 U.S. participants from Amazon Mechanical Turk. After removing duplicate entries and 40 participants who failed the attention check, the final sample comprised 1,127 participants ($M_{\text{age}} = 41.5$, 50.93% female).

Replicating the results of Study 1B, participants were significantly more likely to tip in the anonymous (86.5%) than in the in-person setting (81.3%; $b = 0.05$, $SE = 0.02$, $p = .011$; see also Online Appendix A Table A3, column (3))². This difference was especially pronounced in the small-tip condition: among participants in the small-tip conditions, 87.8% indicated they would tip, compared to only 74.1% in the in-person setting ($b = 0.14$, $SE = 0.03$, $p < .01$, Online Appendix A Table A3, column (1)). In contrast, among participants in the large-tip condition, tipping rates were similar across settings (anonymous: 85.2%, in-person: 88.8%; $b = -0.04$, $SE = 0.03$, $p = .19$, Online Appendix A Table A3, column (2)). Collapsing across settings, participants

² Effects reported are derived from an OLS regression model with robust standard errors (HC3). See Online Appendix A Table A3.

were more likely to tip when having a large (87.0%) than when having a small tipping amount (80.9%; $b = -0.06$, $SE = 0.02$, $p < .01$, Online Appendix A Table A3, column (3)).

In the absence of norm information, tipping in the in-person condition was significantly less likely in the small-tip condition ($b = -0.32$, $SE = 0.05$, $p < .01$, Online Appendix A Table A3, column (4)). This effect was significantly moderated by setting: the negative effect of a low tip disappeared when tipping was anonymous ($b = 0.35$, $SE = 0.07$, $p < .01$, Online Appendix A Table A3, column (4)). Providing norm information similarly attenuated the negative effect of a low tip amount; tipping likelihood was high in both anonymous (94.1%) and in-person (98.6%) settings. Similarly, in the high tip amount condition with norm information, tipping remained high across settings (anonymous: 91.5%, in-person: 95.0%), with no statistically significant difference³ ($b = -0.03$, $SE = 0.03$, $p = .25$, Online Appendix A Table A3, column (5)). Critically, norm information significantly increased tipping overall: pooling across conditions, providing norm information increased tipping by 22 percentage points ($b = 0.22$, $SE = 0.02$, $p < .01$, Online Appendix A Table A3, column (3)).

Taken together, Studies 1A–1C support the proposition that people are reluctant to give small amounts, especially when their behavior is observable, and when tipping a small amount falls outside the accepted norms. These findings suggest that concerns about signaling, both to others and to oneself, may be an important driver of reluctance to give a small amount. In Study 2, we examine whether givers' reluctance to give a small amount is aligned with the preferences of receivers.

3. Study 2: Stated Preferences for Minimum Giving and Receiving

³ As with any null result, the absence of a statistically significant difference should be interpreted with caution, as the available sample size may have limited statistical power to detect smaller differences.

To examine the extent of alignment between givers' minimum threshold for giving and receivers' minimum threshold for receiving, we randomly assigned participants to take the perspective of either the customer or the attendant in a scenario similar to that used in studies 1A-1C.

3.1 Design

In two between-subject conditions, participants took the role of customer bringing their car in for a full-service car wash for \$30, or the role of car wash attendant reading the same scenario from the perspective of the car wash attendant. The service was described as including a mechanical exterior wash, hand drying, and manual interior cleaning. In both conditions, participants were told that the customer had already paid for the service and could leave a tip via a digital app. We measured participants' minimum willingness-to-give (customers) and minimum willingness-to-receive (attendants) using a multiple price list ranging from 25¢ to \$5, increasing in 25¢ increments. For each amount, participants indicated whether they would tip (customers) or would prefer to be tipped (attendants).

We retained participants whose responses included up to two switch points. This approach allows us to capture participants' minimum threshold, whereby individuals could reject extremely low (e.g. 25¢), and potentially also high tip (e.g., \$5) amounts, but express willingness to give (receive) a moderate tip (e.g., \$2). We excluded participants with more than two switch points (seven per condition). We also excluded participants who answered “No” for all tipping amounts (six participants in the customer condition only), as it was unclear whether they would never tip or that their minimum acceptable tip was higher than \$5. Participants who indicated they would tip (receive) 25¢ were coded as specifying a minimum of 25¢. For all other

participants, we calculated the minimum threshold by taking the midpoint of the first switch from “No” to “Yes” in the ascending MPL.

We recruited 200 participants from Amazon Mechanical Turk. After exclusions, including duplicates and incomplete responses, the final sample comprised 177 participants (84 givers; 93 receivers, $M_{age} = 39.42$, 38.42% female).

3.2 Results

Consistent with the results of Studies 1A-1C, the minimum giving threshold of participants assigned the role of the customer (\$1.89) was significantly higher than the minimum threshold of those assigned to the role of the attendant (\$1.09; $b = 0.81$, $SE = 0.22$, $p < .01$), as shown in Figure 2 (see Online Appendix B Table B1 for complete regression results).

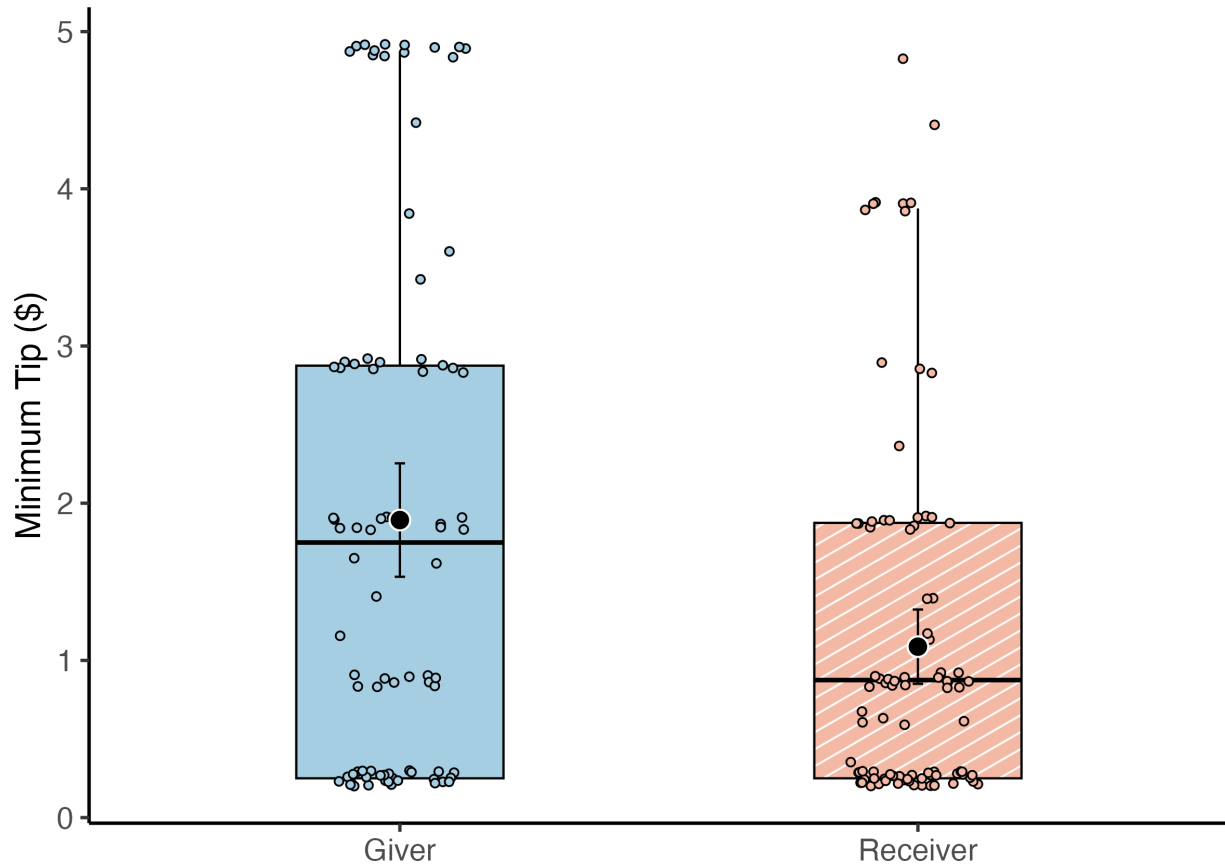


Figure 2. Distributions of minimum values for givers and receivers. Boxplots represent the distribution of responses, with bold horizontal lines indicating medians and boxes representing the interquartile range. Individual points represent participants' responses. Black circles denote means, and error bars show 95% confidence intervals. Study 2 (N = 177; 84 givers; 93 receivers).

These results reveal that givers' minimum threshold for giving is significantly higher than receivers' minimum acceptable amount for receiving, suggesting that givers' concerns about giving too little could lead to an inefficiency in giving. In the next study, we examine whether the misalignment between givers and receivers persists in an incentivized setting, using a modified Dictator Game.

4. Study 3: Giving and Receiving Preferences using a Bilateral Threshold Dictator Game

We designed Study 3 to test the preferences of givers and receivers in an incentive-compatible experimental design, using a modified Dictator Game—the Bilateral Threshold Dictator Game—that elicits both minimum and maximum acceptable allocations. Participants were randomly assigned to a dyad, with one participant in the role of the dictator and the other in the role of the receiver. In our game, the receiver could complete a 10-minute task in exchange for a \$10 payment, which the dictator would then decide how to allocate between them. This design is related to prior work examining payment decisions when one party exerts effort to complete a task and another party determines the payment (Parrett, 2006). Unlike prior work, however, our design elicits both parties' minimum and maximum acceptable allocations.

4.1 Design

We designed our Bilateral Threshold Dictator Game to incentivize participants to state their true minimum and maximum acceptable amounts to give (for dictators) or receive (for receivers). Participants were grouped into pairs, with one randomly assigned as the dictator and the other as the receiver.

Each pair could complete a 10-minute sorting task in the lab, earning them \$10. Specifically, the receiver was assigned to complete the task, while the dictator would receive the \$10 payment. The amount allocated to the receiver from the \$10 depended on both the dictator's and the receiver's decisions. Before the study began, each dyad was given 3 minutes to get acquainted in a face-to-face conversation. A research assistant explained the sorting task and the two roles to each pair, using a coin flip to determine each participant's role. From this moment on, participants were in separate rooms, with no option to communicate with one another.

Next, we elicited dictators' minimum and maximum willingness to give, in increments of 50¢. We informed dictators that we would randomly draw a number between 50¢ and \$10, building on the Becker-DeGroot-Marschak method (BDM; 1964), to determine the monetary allocation as follows: If the number (X) fell within their minimum and maximum range, the receiver would complete the task, the receiver would get $\$X$ and the dictator would receive the $(\$10 - \$X)$. If the drawn amount fell outside the dictator's range, the receiver would not complete the task, resulting in both parties receiving \$0.

Separately, we elicited receivers' minimum and maximum willingness to receive, in increments of 50¢. We informed receivers that if the randomly drawn number fell within the *dictator's* range of acceptable allocations, they (i.e., the receiver) would complete the task, earning the dictator \$10. In addition, if the randomly drawn number fell within their range of acceptable allocations, they would complete the task and receive that amount from the dictator. Finally, if the drawn number fell outside their range of acceptable allocations, they would complete the task but receive nothing. Thus, the receiver would need to complete the task regardless of their acceptable range, unless the drawn amount fell outside of the dictator's acceptable range.

This design was intended to elicit participants' minimum and maximum acceptable thresholds for giving and receiving by making their preferences consequential. For dictators, reporting a minimum amount that was too high increased the likelihood that the randomly drawn allocation would fall outside their acceptable range, resulting in \$0. Thus, they were incentivized to indicate the lowest amount they were willing to allocate. Similarly, receivers were incentivized to report the lowest amount they were willing to accept. If the drawn number fell

below their stated minimum, they would complete the task for \$0, making overstating one's minimum threshold costly.

Two hundred ninety-six undergraduate students from a large West Coast university participated in the study ($M_{age} = 20.71$; 49.3% female), forming 148 pairs.⁴ We informed participants that there was a 1-in-10 chance their allocations would be implemented, determined by a random number generator.

4.2 Results

Dictators' minimum threshold for the allocation to receivers was significantly higher than the minimum of receivers (see Figure 3). The average minimum for dictators was \$3.38 (SD = \$2.39), while the average minimum for receivers was \$1.97 (SD = \$1.81). The difference of \$1.41 is large and statistically significant ($b = 1.40$, $SE = 0.25$, $p < .01$; see Online Appendix C Table C1 for complete regression results). At the same time, there was no statistically significant difference between dictators' and receivers' maximum acceptable allocations, which were \$8.45

⁴ Seven pairs indicated they were friends prior to the study; excluding these pairs did not alter the results.

(SD = \$1.87), and \$8.24 (SD = \$2.18), respectively ($b = 0.21$, $SE = 0.24$, $p = .38$).

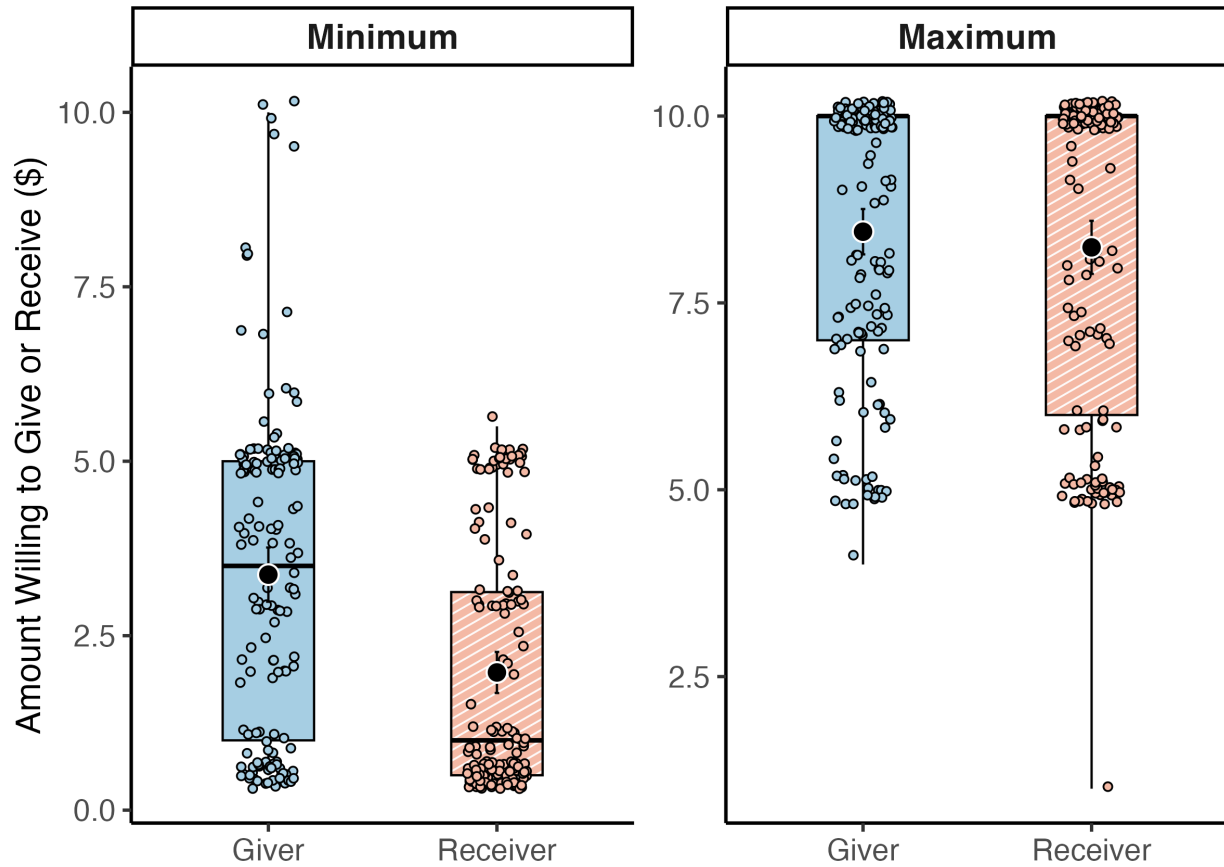


Figure 3. Distributions of minimum and maximum amounts for dictators and receivers. Boxplots show the distribution of responses for each role, with bold horizontal lines indicating medians and boxes representing the interquartile range. Individual points represent participant responses. Black circles denote means, and error bars indicate 95% confidence intervals. Study 3 ($N = 296$; 148 dictators; 148 receivers).

Using an incentive-compatible design, Study 3 replicated the misalignment between givers and receivers observed in Study 2. The average minimum giving threshold of dictators was higher than the average acceptable minimum indicated by receivers. This result is consistent with the findings of Studies 1 and 2, which revealed the same effect in the domain of tipping.

In our final study (Study 4), we examine whether the reluctance to give a small amount is reduced when it is explicitly conveyed as acceptable in the context of charitable giving. To

convey the acceptability of a small donation, our donation appeal requested a low donation amount (i.e., \$1).

5. Study 4: Field Study on Low Suggested Donation Amounts

We conducted a field experiment at a large West Coast university, in which passersby on campus were asked to donate to help cover medical expenses for a child with cancer. We varied the observable health status of the child by using images of the same child in which she appeared either visibly sick or seemingly healthy. We expected the reluctance to give a small amount—preferring instead to give nothing—to be stronger when using the picture of a sick child, potentially due to heightened concerns that a small contribution might be inadequate. To test the impact of signaling that a low donation is acceptable, we varied the ask to be either general or to request a \$1 donation. We predicted that the \$1 request would be effective when the ask included a picture of a sick child.

5.1 Design

Our fundraising campaign followed a 2 (ask: unspecified vs. \$1) $\times$ 2 (picture: seemingly healthy vs. visibly sick) between-subjects design. Our fundraising table had a banner with a photo of a baby girl, a text explaining she has cancer, and a request to help cover her medical expenses.⁵

The fundraising campaign took place over two waves, using a table set up in a central, high-traffic location on campus. The experiment ran over 61 hours (wave 1: 45 hours; wave 2: 16 hours) across 13 days, between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM. In the first wave, we randomized

⁵ Donations were directed to an actual crowdfunding campaign for a child with cancer and the images from its website (<https://www.gofundme.com/f/elisabethellis>).

conditions hourly each day. In the second wave, we randomized conditions every half hour each day, allowing for more variation in conditions during the busier hours. In both waves, the allocation of conditions to (half) hours was randomized. We refer to each condition block as a session. In total, we ran 77 sessions, with each session assigned to one of four conditions (see Online Appendix D for a breakdown of the number of sessions by condition). While some individuals may have passed by our table multiple times, such repetition would likely attenuate any effects, making our findings more conservative.

5.2 Results

Donation Rates

When featuring a sick child, asking for a \$1 donation significantly increased the number of donations per session, from 1.05 per session without a specific ask to 2.80 with a \$1 ask. The difference is statistically significant: a Poisson regression estimates an effect of $b = 0.98$ ($SE = 0.38$, $z = 2.58$, $p = .01$) for the \$1 ask condition (see Online Appendix E Table E1, column (1), for complete regression results; see Figure 4 for group means). When our sign featured a seemingly healthy child, there was no statistically significant difference in donation rates between the unspecified ask and \$1 ask conditions. There were 1.59 donations per session under the unspecified ask and 2.40 under the \$1 ask, with a Poisson regression estimating an effect of $b = 0.41$ ($SE = 0.36$, $z = 1.12$, $p = .26$) for the \$1 ask condition (see Online Appendix E Table E1, column (2) for complete regression results).

Donation Amount Conditional on Donating

Figure 5 illustrates the distribution of donations, conditional on the decision to donate. As can be seen, compared with the unspecified donation amount condition, asking for \$1 yielded a higher proportion of donations of \$1 or less in both picture conditions: when the campaign featured a sick child (\$1 ask: 65.4% vs. unspecified ask: 28.6%) and when it featured a healthy child (\$1 ask: 62.5% vs. unspecified ask: 18.5%). Because only one donation in the sample was below \$1, this pattern primarily reflects donations of exactly \$1, suggesting that the \$1 request may have served as an anchor.

When our campaign featured a sick child, the average donation, conditional on donating, was lower in the \$1 ask condition (\$2.08) compared to the unspecified ask (\$3.90; $b = -1.78$, $SE = 1.04$; $p = .09$; see Online Appendix E Table E2, column (1) for full regression results). Similarly, the \$1 ask condition yielded a distribution shifted toward lower donation amounts relative to the unspecified ask condition ($p = .017$, Goldman and Kaplan, 2018).

By contrast, our analysis did not detect significant differences in average donations when our campaign featured a healthy child. Specifically, the average donation amount, conditional on donating, was \$2.31 in the \$1 ask condition and \$4.04 in the unspecified ask condition ($b = -1.84$, $SE = 1.09$, $p = .1$; see Online Appendix E Table E2, column (2) for full regression results). There was also no statistically significant difference between the distribution of donation amounts in the two healthy child conditions ($p = .22$). Together, these results support the conclusion that the \$1 suggestion increases the share of low-dollar contributions, but it can reduce larger donations.

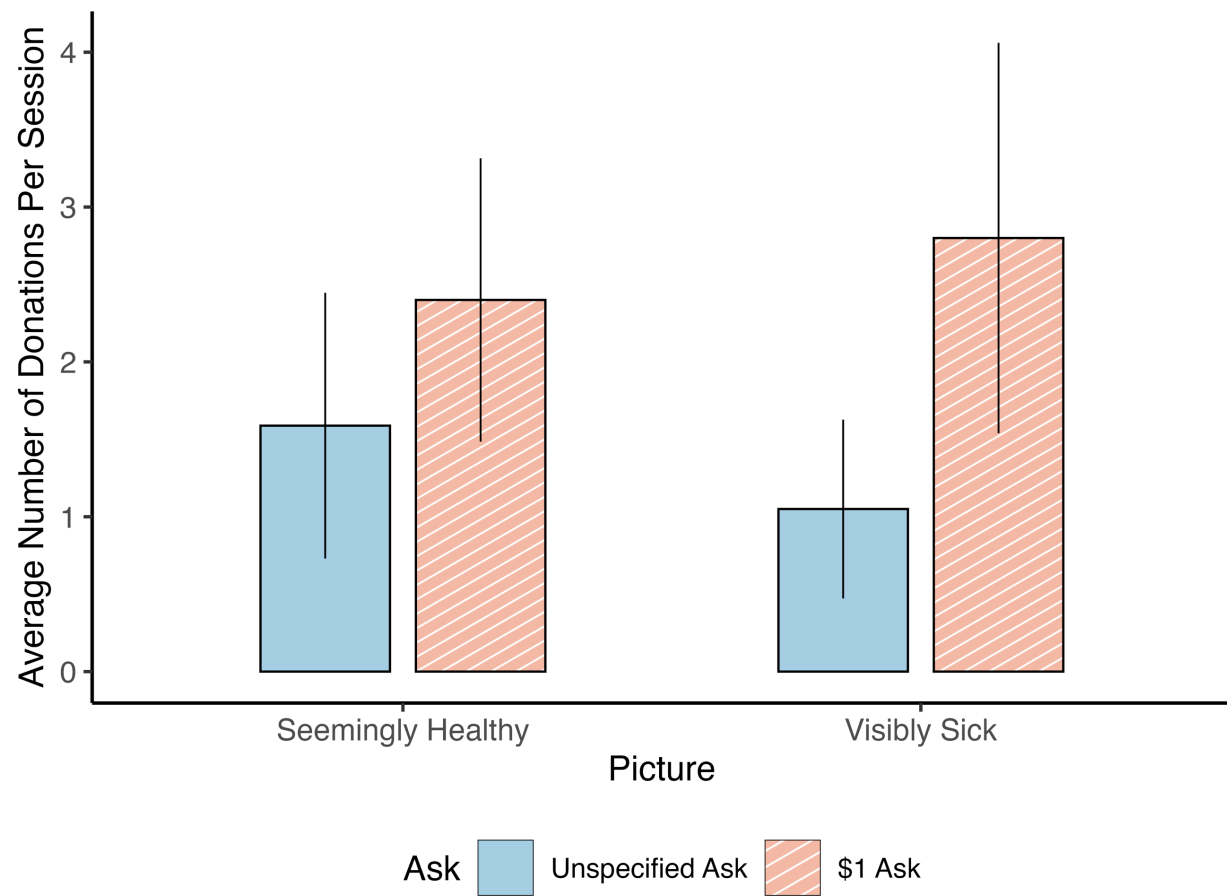


Figure 4. Average number of donations per session as a function of ask and picture types. Bars represent the mean number of donations per session across conditions. Bars with stripes represent the \$1 ask condition; solid bars represent the unspecified ask condition. Error bars indicate 95% confidence intervals. Study 4 (N = 77; 30-60 minutes fundraising sessions).

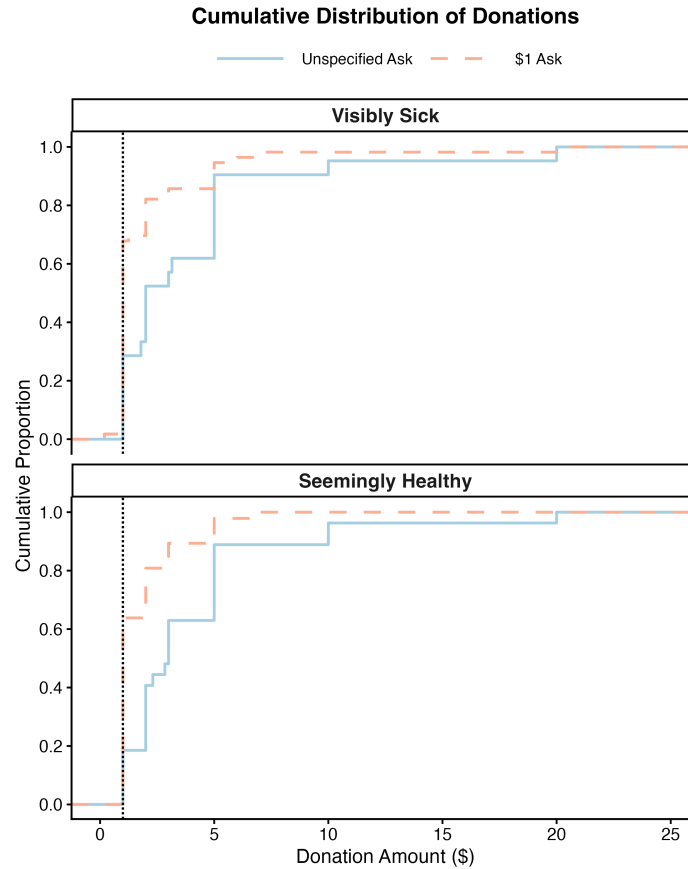


Figure 5. Cumulative Distribution of Donation Amounts by Ask and Picture. Lines represent the cumulative proportion of donations at or below each donation amount. Solid lines represent the unspecified ask condition; dashed lines represent the \$1 ask condition. The vertical dotted line marks the \$1 suggested donation amount used in the \$1 ask condition.

A comparison of total donations (i.e., combining donation rates and donation amounts) reveals that asking for \$1 did not affect total donation amounts, as the higher donation rate was offset by lower amounts given per donor. When using a photo of a sick child, the average donation per session was \$4.10 in the unspecified ask condition and \$5.82 in the \$1 ask condition ($p = .51$). When featuring a seemingly healthy child, average donations were \$6.42 and \$5.55, respectively ($p = .76$; see Online Appendix E Table E3 for full regression results).

The results of Study 4 demonstrate that, compared with a general donation request, asking for a concrete low donation amount (\$1) increases donation likelihood when concerns

about the adequacy of the donation amount are heightened, as might be the case when featuring a visibly sick child. This finding is consistent with our prediction that individuals may be reluctant to give a small amount due to signaling concerns. It is also possible that individuals are more likely to avoid giving when a donation appeal evokes strong emotions or feels especially heavy-handed. The appeal might come across as pressuring, prompting some individuals to disengage. Suggesting a small amount may reduce this avoidance by signaling that even a modest contribution is appropriate. A low suggested amount may also help counter concerns that a low donation will not make a meaningful difference. Our findings also highlight a potential downside of asking for a small amount: It could reduce the proportion of donations that exceed the suggested amount, inadvertently lowering individuals' donation amounts.

6. Conclusion

Across four studies, we provide evidence for a paradox in giving: individuals may prefer to give nothing rather than a small amount, out of concern that a small contribution might signal unkindness or inadequacy. This reluctance to give small amounts—despite receivers being willing to accept them—can lead to missed opportunities for generosity.

In both hypothetical and incentive-compatible settings that directly elicited the minimum and maximum acceptable amounts of both givers and receivers, we observe a consistent mismatch between the minimum amount that givers are willing to give and the minimum amount that receivers are willing to accept. Ironically, givers may harm receivers, as concern over not giving enough lead them to withhold giving altogether.

Our findings further suggest that givers' reluctance to give small amounts can be mitigated by providing cues that convey the acceptability of giving a small amount. In our

studies, participants informed that the (small) amount they had was within the normative range were more likely to tip a small amount. Similarly, asking for a \$1 donation, thereby qualifying it as sufficient, or perhaps even desirable, increased donation likelihood, compared with asking for a donation without specifying an amount. Consistent with our proposition that signaling concerns may drive givers' reluctance to give small amounts, we found that the effect of the \$1 ask was present when the sign displayed a picture of a visibly sick child, a context likely to heighten concern about making an inadequate contribution, highlighting an overlooked lever for increasing prosocial behavior: reducing the psychological barriers to small-scale giving.

Our field experiment data highlight a potential trade-off: while a low suggested amount increased the likelihood of small donations, it also reduced the proportion of larger donations. This pattern is consistent with prior research, which shows that suggested donation amounts often serve as an anchor, resulting in donation amounts centered around the suggested contribution (Tversky and Kahneman, 1974). This trade-off may have important implications that non-profit organizations and individuals should consider when appealing to others' sense of generosity.

By demonstrating the existence of a lower bound in giving, our work advances our understanding of the relationship between signaling and social preferences, showing that in addition to an upper bound, there exists a lower threshold below which individuals would rather give nothing.

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Online Appendix for “Give Enough or Not at All”

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Appendix A: Regression Results for Studies 1A-1C

Table A1. Treatment Effects on the Likelihood of Tipping for Studies 1A–1B

	(1) Study 1A Choice to tip	(2) Study 1B Choice to tip	(3) Choice to tip
25¢	-0.64*** (0.06)	-0.40*** (0.06)	-0.53*** (0.09)
Anonymous			0.05 (0.08)
25¢ X Anonymous			0.27** (0.13)
Constant	0.87*** (0.04)	0.85*** (0.04)	0.83*** (0.06)
Observations	174	180	180
R-squared	0.42	0.18	0.24

Notes: Table reports coefficients from linear probability models predicting the likelihood of tipping. Robust standard errors (HC3) in parentheses. Covariates are indicator variables: 25¢ (1 = 25¢, 0 = \$5), and Anonymous (1 = anonymous, 0 = in-person).

*** p < .01; ** p < .05; * p < .1

Table A2. Simple Effects of Anonymity on the Likelihood of Tipping for Study 1B

	(1) 25¢	(2) \$5
Anonymous	0.32*** (0.10)	0.05 (0.08)
Constant	0.30*** (0.07)	0.83*** (0.06)
Observations	91	89
R-squared	0.10	0.004

Notes: Table reports coefficients from linear probability models predicting the likelihood of tipping. Robust standard errors (HC3) in parentheses. Regressions are estimated separately for the 25¢ and \$5 conditions. Anonymous is an indicator variable (1 = anonymous, 0 = in-person).

*** p < .01; ** p < .05; * p < .1

Table A3. Treatment Effects on the Likelihood of Tipping (Study 1C)

<i>Treatments included:</i>	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	0.5 Veros	10 Veros	All	No Norm Info	Norm Info Provided	All
Anonymous	0.14*** (0.03)	-0.04 (0.03)	0.05** (0.02)	-0.04 (0.05)	-0.03 (0.03)	-0.04 (0.05)
Norm Information Provided	0.30*** (0.03)	0.13*** (0.03)	0.22*** (0.02)			0.12*** (0.04)
0.5 Veros			-0.06*** (0.02)	-0.32*** (0.05)	0.04* (0.02)	-0.32*** (0.05)
0.5 Veros X Anonymous				0.35*** (0.07)	-0.01 (0.04)	0.35*** (0.07)
0.5 Veros X Norm Info Provided						0.36*** (0.06)
Anonymous X Norm Info Provided						0.00 (0.06)
0.5 Veros X Anonymous X Norm Info Provided						-0.37*** (0.08)
Constant	0.59*** (0.03)	0.82*** (0.03)	0.73*** (0.02)	0.83*** (0.03)	0.95*** (0.02)	0.83*** (0.03)
Observations	567	560	1,127	570	557	1,127
R-squared	0.180	0.038	0.098	0.093	0.013	0.157

Notes: Table reports coefficients from linear probability models predicting the likelihood of tipping. Robust standard errors (HC3) in parentheses. Covariates are indicator variables: 0.5 Veros (1 = 0.5 Veros, 0 = 10 Veros), Anonymous (1 = anonymous, 0 = in-person), and Norm Info Provided (1 = amount within norm, 0 = no norm info).

*** p < .01; ** p < .05; * p < .1

Appendix B: Regression Results for Study 2

Table B1. Regression Results for Study 2

	(1)
	Minimum Amount (\$)
Constant	1.09 *** (0.12)
Role: Giver	0.81 *** (0.22)
R ²	0.08
Num. obs.	177

Notes: This table reports coefficients from an OLS regression predicting participants' minimum acceptable tip amount (in USD), as elicited using a multiple price list. The independent variable is an indicator for Role (1 = giver, 0 = receiver). Robust standard errors (HC3) are shown in parentheses.

*** p < .01; ** p < .05; * p < .1

Appendix C: Regression Results for Study 3

Table C1. Regression Results for Study 3

	(1)	(2)
	Allocation (\$)	
	Minimum	Maximum
Constant	1.97 *** (0.15)	8.24 *** (0.18)
Role: Dictator	1.40 *** (0.25)	0.21 (0.24)
R ²	0.10	0.00
Num. obs.	296	296

Notes: This table reports coefficients from OLS regressions predicting the minimum and maximum monetary allocations that participants were willing to give (receive) in the Threshold Dictator Game. The dependent variable in Column 1 is the minimum acceptable allocation, and in Column 2, the maximum acceptable allocation (in USD). The independent variable is an indicator for Role (1 = dictator, 0 = receiver). Robust standard errors (HC3) are shown in parentheses.

*** p < .01; ** p < .05; * p < .1

Appendix D: Study 4 Experimental Conditions

Table D1. Number of Sessions by Condition

Ask	Picture Type	Wave 1	Wave 2
\$1	Healthy	12	8
\$1	Sick	12	8
Unspecified	Healthy	9	8
Unspecified	Sick	12	8

Appendix E: Regression Results for Study 4

Table E1. Poisson Regression Results for Study 4

	(1)	(2)
	Number of Donations	
Condition	Sick	Healthy
Constant	-0.01 (0.34)	0.41 (0.30)
Ask: \$1 ask	0.98 *** (0.38)	0.41 (0.36)
Wave: Wave 2	0.10 (0.41)	0.11 (0.35)
Log Likelihood	-79.43	-73.42
Num. obs.	40	37

Notes: This table reports coefficients from Poisson regressions predicting the number of donations per session. Model (1) includes only sessions depicting the child as sick. Model (2) includes only sessions depicting the child as healthy. The independent variable is an indicator for Ask (1 = \$1 ask, 0 = unspecified ask). Wave is included as a covariate (1 = Wave 2, 0 = Wave 1). Sessions lasted one hour in Wave 1 and 30 minutes in Wave 2; accordingly, results are interpreted as differences in the number of donations per session, rather than donations per unit time. Robust standard errors (HC3) are shown in parentheses.

*** $p < .01$; ** $p < .05$; * $p < .1$

Table E2. Linear Regression Results Predicting Donation Amount, Conditional on Donating

	(1)	(2)
	Donation Amount (\$)	
Condition	Sick	Healthy
Constant	3.42 (0.87)	4.51 ** (1.32)
Ask: \$1 ask	-1.78 * (1.04)	-1.84 * (1.09)
Wave: Wave 2	0.72 (0.65)	-0.66 (1.04)
R ²	0.07	0.05
Num. obs.	77	75

Notes: This table reports coefficients from OLS regressions predicting average donation amount, conditional on donating. The unit of observation is a donation made by an individual donor, rather than a session. Model (1) includes only donations in sessions depicting the child as sick. Model (2) includes only donations in sessions depicting the child as healthy. The independent variable is an indicator for Ask (1 = \$1 ask, 0 = unspecified ask). Wave is included as a covariate and indicates whether the session took place during the second wave of data collection (1 = wave 2, 0 = wave 1). Robust standard errors (HC3) in parentheses.

*** p < .01; ** p < .05; * p < .1

Table E3. Linear Regression Results Predicting Total Donation Per Session

	(1)	(2)
	Total Donation	
Constant	5.12 *	5.84 *
	(2.22)	(2.66)
Ask: \$1 ask	0.45	-0.95
	(1.89)	(2.84)
Picture: Sick	-1.01	-2.40
	(1.88)	(2.80)
Wave: Wave 2	1.04	1.09
	(1.81)	(1.82)
Ask x Picture (Sick)	—	2.67
		(3.83)
R ²	0.009	0.016
Num. obs.	77	77

Notes: This table reports coefficients from OLS regressions predicting the dependent variable, total donation amount per session. Model (1) includes only main effects. Model (2) adds the interaction between Ask and Picture. The independent variable Ask is coded as 1 = \$1 Ask, 0 = Unspecified Ask. Wave is coded as 1 = Wave 2, 0 = Wave 1. Picture is coded as 1 = Sick, 0 = Healthy. Robust standard errors (HC3) in parentheses.

*** p < .01; ** p < .05; * p < .1

Appendix F: Study 1A-1C Experimental Instructions

Study 1A Instructions

Imagine you are getting a \$30 full-service car wash. The service includes: mechanical wash of the exterior of the car, manual drying of the exterior of the car, and manual cleaning of the interior of the car.

25¢ condition:

Imagine you are getting a \$30 full-service car wash. The service includes: mechanical wash of the exterior of the car, manual drying of the exterior of the car, and manual cleaning of the interior of the car.

Imagine that just before your car is ready to be picked up, you realize that you only have 25 cents in your wallet. You cannot tip using a card, and there are no ATMs nearby. You walk over to the attendant who just dried and cleaned your car.

Would you give a 25 cent tip to the attendant?

- ☐ No – I would not tip
- ☐ Yes – I would tip



\$5 condition:

Imagine you are getting a \$30 full-service car wash. The service includes: mechanical wash of the exterior of the car, manual drying of the exterior of the car, and manual cleaning of the interior of the car.

Imagine that just before your car is ready to be picked up, you realize that you only have \$5 in your wallet. You cannot tip using a card, and there are no ATMs nearby. You walk over to the attendant who just dried and cleaned your car.

Would you give a \$5 tip to the attendant?

- ☐ No – I would not tip
- ☐ Yes – I would tip



Study 1B

Instructions

Imagine you are getting a \$30 full-service car wash. The service includes: mechanical wash of the exterior of the car, manual drying of the exterior of the car, and manual cleaning of the interior of the car.

(1) 25¢—in-person condition

Imagine you are getting a \$30 full-service car wash. The service includes: mechanical wash of the exterior of the car, manual drying of the exterior of the car, and manual cleaning of the interior of the car.

Imagine that just before your car is ready to be picked up, you realize that you only have 25 cents in your wallet. You cannot tip using a card, and there are no ATMs nearby. You walk over to the attendant who just dried and cleaned your car.

Would you give a 25 cent tip to the attendant?

Yes – I would tip

No – I would not tip

(2) 25¢—anonymous condition:

Imagine you are getting a \$30 full-service car wash. The service includes: mechanical wash of the exterior of the car, manual drying of the exterior of the car, and manual cleaning of the interior of the car.

Imagine that just before your car is ready to be picked up, you realize that you only have 25 cents in your wallet. You cannot tip using a card, and there are no ATMs nearby. You see a designated tip box (i.e., each attendant has their own tip box) a couple of yards away from the attendant who is drying and cleaning your car. There is no one else nearby.

Would you put the 25 cents in the attendant's tip box?

No – I would not tip

Yes – I would tip

(3) \$5—in-person condition:

Imagine you are getting a \$30 full-service car wash. The service includes: mechanical wash of the exterior of the car, manual drying of the exterior of the car, and manual cleaning of the interior of the car.

Imagine that just before your car is ready to be picked up, you realize that you only have \$5 in your wallet. You cannot tip using a card, and there are no ATMs nearby. You walk over to the attendant who just dried and cleaned your car.

Would you give a \$5 tip to the attendant?

Yes – I would tip

No – I would not tip

(4) \$5—anonymous condition:

Imagine you are getting a \$30 full-service car wash. The service includes: mechanical wash of the exterior of the car, manual drying of the exterior of the car, and manual cleaning of the interior of the car.

Imagine that just before your car is ready to be picked up, you realize that you only have \$5 in your wallet. You cannot tip using a card, and there are no ATMs nearby. You see a designated tip box (i.e., each attendant has their own tip box) a couple of yards away from the attendant who is drying and cleaning your car. There is no one else nearby.

Would you put the \$5 in the attendant's tip box?

No – I would not tip

Yes – I would tip

Study 1C Instructions

All conditions:

Imagine you are traveling in a foreign country. The currency in this country is the "Vero". You are not familiar with this currency. The exchange rate between US dollars and Veros is:

$$1 \text{ US dollar} = 2 \text{ Veros}$$

For the past two weeks, you have been driving your friend's car, and you plan to return it later today. Before returning the car, you decide to get a full-service car wash for the total cost of 60 Veros (equivalent to 30 US dollars). The service includes: automated wash of the exterior of the car, manual drying of the exterior of the car, and manual cleaning of the interior of the car.

(1) 25¢—in-person—no norm information condition:

Imagine you are traveling in a foreign country. The currency in this country is the "Vero". You are not familiar with this currency.

For the past two weeks, you have been driving your friend's car, and you plan to return it later today. Before returning the car, you decide to get a full-service car wash for the total cost of 60 Veros (equivalent to 30 US dollars). The service includes: automated wash of the exterior of the car, manual drying of the exterior of the car, and manual cleaning of the interior of the car.

Just before your car is ready to be picked up, you realize that you only have 0.5 Veros (equivalent to 25 cents US dollars) in your wallet. You cannot tip using a card, and there are no ATMs nearby.

You walk over to pick up your car from the attendant who just dried and cleaned it.

Would you tip the attendant 0.5 Veros?

No – I would not tip

Yes – I would tip 0.5 Veros

(2) 25¢—in-person—amount within norm condition:

Imagine you are traveling in a foreign country. The currency in this country is the "Vero". You are not familiar with this currency.

For the past two weeks, you have been driving your friend's car, and you plan to return it later today. Before returning the car, you decide to get a full-service car wash for the total cost of 60 Veros (equivalent to 30 US dollars). The service includes: automated wash of the exterior of the car, manual drying of the exterior of the car, and manual cleaning of the interior of the car.

Just before your car is ready to be picked up, you realize that you only have 0.5 Veros (equivalent to 25 cents US dollars) in your wallet. You cannot tip using a card, and there are no ATMs nearby.

You do a Google search and learn that **in this country it is custom to tip between 0.4 and 0.7 Veros for a car wash**. You walk over to pick up your car from the attendant who just dried and cleaned it.

Would you tip the attendant 0.5 Veros?

Yes – I would tip 0.5 Veros

No – I would not tip

(3) 25¢—anonymous—no norm information condition:

Imagine you are traveling in a foreign country. The currency in this country is the "Vero". You are not familiar with this currency.

For the past two weeks, you have been driving your friend's car, and you plan to return it later today. Before returning the car, you decide to get a full-service car wash for the total cost of 60 Veros (equivalent to 30 US dollars). The service includes: automated wash of the exterior of the car, manual drying of the exterior of the car, and manual cleaning of the interior of the car.

Just before your car is ready to be picked up, you realize that you only have 0.5 Veros (equivalent to 25 cents US dollars) in your wallet. You cannot tip using a card, and there are no ATMs nearby.

You see a designated tip box (i.e., each attendant has their own tip box) a couple of yards away from the attendant who is drying and cleaning your car. There is no one else nearby.

Would you put the 0.5 Veros in the attendant's tip box?

Yes – I would tip 0.5 Veros

No – I would not tip

(4) 25¢—anonymous—amount within norm condition:

Imagine you are traveling in a foreign country. The currency in this country is the "Vero". You are not familiar with this currency.

For the past two weeks, you have been driving your friend's car, and you plan to return it later today. Before returning the car, you decide to get a full-service car wash for the total cost of 60 Veros (equivalent to 30 US dollars). The service includes: automated wash of the exterior of the car, manual drying of the exterior of the car, and manual cleaning of the interior of the car.

Just before your car is ready to be picked up, you realize that you only have 0.5 Veros (equivalent to 25 cents US dollars) in your wallet. You cannot tip using a card, and there are no ATMs nearby.

You see a designated tip box (i.e., each attendant has their own tip box) a couple of yards away from the attendant who is drying and cleaning your car. There is no one else nearby. You do a Google search and learn that **in this country it is custom to tip between 0.4 and 0.7 Veros for a car wash.**

Would you put the 0.5 Veros in the attendant's tip box?

Yes – I would tip 0.5 Veros

No – I would not tip

(5) \$5—in-person—no norm information condition:

Imagine you are traveling in a foreign country. The currency in this country is the "Vero". You are not familiar with this currency.

For the past two weeks, you have been driving your friend's car, and you plan to return it later today. Before returning the car, you decide to get a full-service car wash for the total cost of 60 Veros (equivalent to 30 US dollars). The service includes: automated wash of the exterior of the car, manual drying of the exterior of the car, and manual cleaning of the interior of the car.

Just before your car is ready to be picked up, you realize that you only have 10 Veros (equivalent to 5 US dollars) in your wallet. You cannot tip using a card, and there are no ATMs nearby.

You walk over to pick up your car from the attendant who just dried and cleaned it.

Would you tip the attendant 10 Veros?

No – I would not tip

Yes – I would tip 10 Veros

(6) \$5—in-person—amount within norm condition:

Imagine you are traveling in a foreign country. The currency in this country is the "Vero". You are not familiar with this currency.

For the past two weeks, you have been driving your friend's car, and you plan to return it later today. Before returning the car, you decide to get a full-service car wash for the total cost of 60 Veros (equivalent to 30 US dollars). The service includes: automated wash of the exterior of the car, manual drying of the exterior of the car, and manual cleaning of the interior of the car.

Just before your car is ready to be picked up, you realize that you only have 10 Veros (equivalent to 5 US dollars) in your wallet. You cannot tip using a card, and there are no ATMs nearby.

You do a Google search and learn that **in this country it is custom to tip between 8 and 14 Veros for a car wash**. You walk over to pick up your car from the attendant who just dried and cleaned it.

Would you tip the attendant 10 Veros?

No – I would not tip

Yes – I would tip 10 Veros

(7) \$5—anonymous—no norm information condition:

Imagine you are traveling in a foreign country. The currency in this country is the "Vero". You are not familiar with this currency.

For the past two weeks, you have been driving your friend's car, and you plan to return it later today. Before returning the car, you decide to get a full-service car wash for the total cost of 60 Veros (equivalent to 30 US dollars). The service includes: automated wash of the exterior of the car, manual drying of the exterior of the car, and manual cleaning of the interior of the car.

Just before your car is ready to be picked up, you realize that you only have 10 Veros (equivalent to 5 US dollars) in your wallet. You cannot tip using a card, and there are no ATMs nearby.

You see a designated tip box (i.e., each attendant has their own tip box) a couple of yards away from the attendant who is drying and cleaning your car. There is no one else nearby.

Would you put the 10 Veros in the attendant's tip box?

Yes – I would tip 10 Veros

No – I would not tip

(8) \$5—anonymous—amount within norm condition:

Imagine you are traveling in a foreign country. The currency in this country is the "Vero". You are not familiar with this currency.

For the past two weeks, you have been driving your friend's car, and you plan to return it later today. Before returning the car, you decide to get a full-service car wash for the total cost of 60 Veros (equivalent to 30 US dollars). The service includes: automated wash of the exterior of the car, manual drying of the exterior of the car, and manual cleaning of the interior of the car.

Just before your car is ready to be picked up, you realize that you only have 10 Veros (equivalent to 5 US dollars) in your wallet. You cannot tip using a card, and there are no ATMs nearby.

You see a designated tip box (i.e., each attendant has their own tip box) a couple of yards away from the attendant who is drying and cleaning your car. There is no one else nearby. You do a Google search and learn that **in this country it is custom to tip between 8 and 14 Veros for a car wash.**

Would you put the 10 Veros in the attendant's tip box?

No – I would not tip

Yes – I would tip 10 Veros

Appendix G: Study 2 Experimental Instructions

Customer condition (Giver)

Imagine you are at a car wash. Imagine you just brought your car in for a \$30 full-service car wash. The service includes: mechanical wash of the exterior of the car, manual drying of the exterior of the car, and manual cleaning of the interior of the car.

Imagine you are at a car wash. Imagine you just brought your car in for a \$30 full-service car wash. The service includes: mechanical wash of the exterior of the car, manual drying of the exterior of the car, and manual cleaning of the interior of the car.

The car wash attendant finishes drying the car, and hands your car keys back to you.

You have already paid for the car wash, and need to decide how much to tip the car wash attendant. In this car wash, all customers tip the car wash attendant directly via a digital app (assume you already have this app).

On the table below, please indicate, for each tip amount, whether you would choose to tip this amount or not tip.

	I would choose to tip this amount	I would choose not to tip
\$0.25	☐	☐
\$0.50	☐	☐
\$0.75	☐	☐
\$1.00	☐	☐
\$1.25	☐	☐
\$1.50	☐	☐
\$1.75	☐	☐
	I would choose to tip this amount	I would choose not to tip
\$2.00	☐	☐
\$2.25	☐	☐
\$2.50	☐	☐
\$2.75	☐	☐
\$3.00	☐	☐
\$3.25	☐	☐
\$3.50	☐	☐
	I would choose to tip this amount	I would choose not to tip
\$3.75	☐	☐
\$4.00	☐	☐
\$4.25	☐	☐
\$4.50	☐	☐
\$4.75	☐	☐
\$5.00	☐	☐

Attendant condition (Receiver)

Imagine you are a car wash attendant. Imagine a customer has just brought their car for a \$30 full-service car wash. The service includes: mechanical wash of the exterior of the car, manual drying of the exterior of the car, and manual cleaning of the interior of the car.

Imagine you are a car wash attendant. Imagine a customer has just brought their car for a \$30 full-service car wash. The service includes: mechanical wash of the exterior of the car, manual drying of the exterior of the car, and manual cleaning of the interior of the car.

You finish drying the car and hand the car keys back to the customer.

The customer has already paid for the car wash, and can leave you a tip. In this car wash, all customers tip the car wash attendant directly via a digital app (assume they already have this app).

On the table below, please indicate, for each tip amount, whether you would prefer to receive this amount or to receive no tip.

	I would prefer to receive this amount	I would prefer to receive no tip
\$0.25	☐	☐
\$0.50	☐	☐
\$0.75	☐	☐
\$1.00	☐	☐
\$1.25	☐	☐
\$1.50	☐	☐
\$1.75	☐	☐
	I would prefer to receive this amount	I would prefer to receive no tip
\$2.00	☐	☐
\$2.25	☐	☐
\$2.50	☐	☐
\$2.75	☐	☐
\$3.00	☐	☐
\$3.25	☐	☐
\$3.50	☐	☐
	I would prefer to receive this amount	I would prefer to receive no tip
\$3.75	☐	☐
\$4.00	☐	☐
\$4.25	☐	☐
\$4.50	☐	☐
\$4.75	☐	☐
\$5.00	☐	☐

Appendix H: Study 3 Experimental Instructions

Both conditions:

In this study, you have been partnered with another student. Your pair will be responsible for completing a 10-minute task that involves sorting supplies for the lab to use in future studies, and will earn \$10 for completing the task. One of you will be randomly assigned to the role of completing the sorting task, while the other will receive the \$10 payment once the task is completed. The person receiving the payment will decide how to allocate the \$10 between the two of you.

Your pair will have a 1 in 10 chance to actually receive the payment. If your pair is chosen, you will receive payment before the end of the study today. The decision will be determined using a random number generator.

Dictator condition:

You were selected to receive payment for the sorting task.

You will receive \$10 once your partner completes the task. Before your partner starts on the task, you will be asked to make some choices that will determine what will happen next.

You will be asked to choose the minimum and maximum amount of money (out of the \$10) you would like to allocate to your partner below.

We will randomly draw an amount (\$X) between \$0 and \$10, in increments of \$0.50. If the randomly drawn amount (\$X) is:

A) Within your stated minimum and maximum amount: your partner will need to complete the sorting task, you will give that amount of money (\$X) to your partner, and you will keep the rest (\$10 - \$X).

B) Below your minimum: your partner will not need to complete the sorting task, and you will not receive the \$10.

C) Above your maximum: your partner will not need to complete the sorting task, and you will not receive the \$10.

Please state the **minimum** you would give to your partner (out of \$10; in increments of \$0.50):

\$ _____

Please state the **maximum** you would give to your partner (out of \$10; in increments of \$0.50):

\$ _____

Recipient condition:

You were selected to complete the sorting task.

You will sort fidget toys for use in future lab studies. Your partner will receive the \$10 payment once you complete the task, and will decide how much to give to you. Before you start on the task, you will be asked to make some choices. Your choices will affect the payment amount you will receive.

You will be asked to choose the minimum and maximum amount of money (out of the \$10) you will accept from your partner.

If the amount your partner chooses to give you is:

A) Within your stated minimum and maximum amount: you will complete the sorting task, and you will receive this amount.

B) Below your minimum: you will complete the sorting task, and you will receive nothing.

C) Above your maximum: you will complete the sorting task, and you will receive nothing.

Please state the **minimum** you will accept from your partner (out of \$10; in increments of \$0.50): \$_____

Please state the **maximum** you will accept from your partner (out of \$10; in increments of \$0.50): \$_____

Appendix I: Study 3 Payoff Matrix

Drawn Amount (\$X) Falls...	Receiver completes task?	Dictator Payoff	Receiver Payoff
Within both dictator's and receiver's range	Yes	\$10 - \$X	\$X
Within dictator's range, but not receiver's range	Yes	\$10	Nothing
Within receiver's range, but not dictator's range	No	Nothing	Nothing
Outside both dictator's and receiver's range	No	Nothing	Nothing

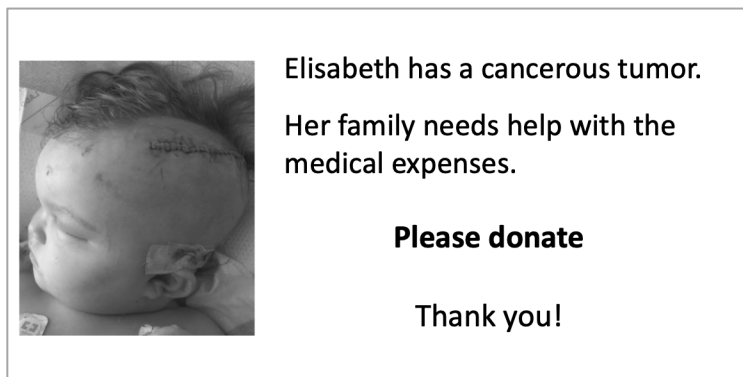
Appendix J: Study 4 Set-Up

Figure J1 shows the donation table that was set up on campus in a high-traffic pedestrian area. The image displays the version used for the seemingly healthy child condition with an unspecified ask. When a small donation amount was requested, the banner read, “Please donate \$1.” Figure J2 shows the banner layout used for the visibly sick child condition with an unspecified ask.

Figure J1. Donation Stand (Seemingly Healthy Child, Unspecified Ask)



Figure J2. Visibly Sick Child, Unspecified Ask



Appendix K: Additional Results for Study 2

After the multiple price list, participants responded to an exploratory measure eliciting their minimum willingness to give (receive) using an open-ended response. A Welch's t-test revealed no statistically significant difference between customers' (givers') minimum willingness to give and attendants' (receivers') willingness to receive ($M_{\text{giver}}: 2.54$ vs. $M_{\text{receiver}}: 2.41$; $t = 0.21$, $df = 135.56$, $p = .83$), while a Wilcoxon rank sum test found that participants assigned to the role of the customer indicated a significantly higher minimum amount compared to those assigned to the role of the attendant ($W = 6001.5$, $p < .01$). After removing three outlier responses for being more than 3 standard deviations away from the mean in their respective condition (one in the customer condition and two in the attendant condition), both a Welch's t-test and a Wilcoxon rank sum test revealed a significant difference between the minimum amounts specified by customers and attendants (Welch's: $M_{\text{giver}}: 2.36$ vs. $M_{\text{receiver}}: 1.7$; $t = 2.94$, $df = 191.28$, $p < 0.01$; Wilcoxon: $W = 5903.5$, $p < .01$).