5

Pushing Up to a Point
The Psychology of
Interpersonal Assertiveness

DANIEL AMES

Columbia University

On most days, it does not take a great deal of social interaction for us to remember that other peoples' goals and interests are not perfectly aligned with our own. We want to sleep in late, and our spouse or child wants to get up early. We want a clean sidewalk, but our neighbor forgets to pick up after his dog. We want our work colleagues to meet the deadlines they have given us, but apparently they have other plans. Wishing it were otherwise—that everyone would want exactly the same things we do—is folly. Besides, it would not make for a very interesting world; variety is the spice of life. So dealing with this "spice" is a significant part of the human condition. How do we cope with the ever-present fact that others surround us whose interests and goals diverge from, and sometimes oppose, our own? Do we press hard for our goals to be satisfied—and, if so, why? Do we yield to others' claims—and, if so, when?

In this chapter, I want to argue that these questions of how hard we push pervade and to some extent define our lives. Accordingly, the matter of when and why people push hard or relent in interpersonal conflicts large and small deserves considerable attention and care. Indeed, for decades it has been a topic of academic scrutiny in the literatures on interpersonal conflict, negotiation, and social dilemmas. There, a well-established theme in the account of who pushes hard and why is that motivations play a central role. Some people care more about winning; others just want to get along. This seems irrefutable. One goal of the present chapter is to describe past and recent work that takes a complimentary approach to motivation-focused accounts, highlighting the role of expectancies in interpersonal assertiveness. Pushing hard is not solely a function of what people want but also of what they believe will happen

when they make forceful demands or capitulate to others' requests. I contend that a complete account of interpersonal assertiveness needs both of these pieces—expectancies and motivations. And because our lives have so much spice in them, with the question of "how hard should I push" shaping our behavior from sunrise to sleep, we need a complete account of interpersonal assertiveness.
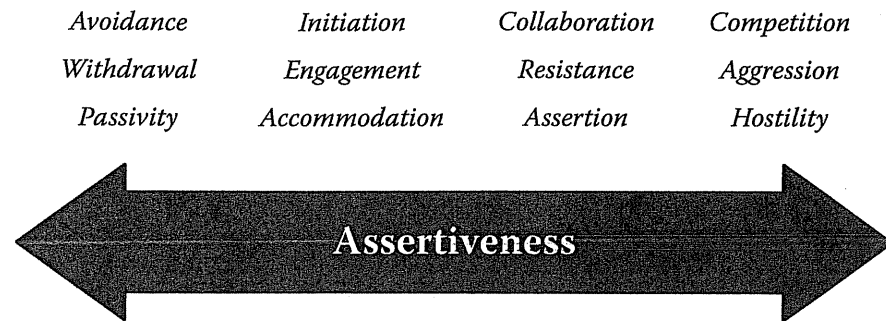
ASSERTIVENESS DEFINED

I begin by clarifying what I mean by the term *assertiveness*, which comes not so much from an a priori scholarly model but from my interpretation of everyday perceptions of interpersonal behavior. This could be seen as a folk model of interpersonal assertiveness: a continuous dimension characterizing how persons behave or respond in a situation in which their positions or interests are, or could be, in conflict with others' positions or interests. In other words, when goals diverge, how hard do people push for their own interests? In considering the set of an actor's possible responses in any given social conflict, I believe both actors and observers can and often do array behaviors along a rough dimension of assertiveness ranging from passivity and capitulation at one extreme to aggression and hostility at the other. Later in this chapter I discuss how this unidimensional model of folk perceptions fits with past theoretical distinctions (e.g., between assertion and aggression).

Some concrete examples help to illustrate assertiveness as it is approached in this chapter. Imagine that members of a newly formed academic research center meet to discuss a senior hire. One member advocates a particular choice, but another believes this would be a disastrous move. Does the skeptical member unequivocally disparage the proposed choice and champion her own ideas? Does she make a more measured observation about expanding the set of options? Or does she hold back entirely, hoping someone else will break the silence?

Imagine directors of two nonprofit organizations who share a building are planning for much-needed renovations. One director begins by telling the other he expects his organization's space to be entirely refurbished even though he intends to pay only a small share of the cost. Does the other director forcefully reject the proposal and demand greater cost-sharing? Does she probe for flexibility, and propose revisions to the plan? Or does she accept the offer as given?

Last, consider a manager concerned with her subordinate's time management skills. Does she confront him directly, stressing negative repercussions if he fails to improve? Does she raise questions and offer suggestions for change? Or does she avoid the issue altogether, hoping it will correct itself in time?

These cases highlight the kinds of daily choices individuals make in their interpersonal assertiveness toward others. These situations and behaviors may seem disparate, but I believe that they have common underlying psychological processes that shape actors' choices about behavior and observers' interpretations of acts. I define assertiveness as a dimension in everyday perceptions reflecting individuals' interpersonal willingness to stand up and speak out for their own interests and ideas, pursuing their objectives and resisting others' impositions. As shown in Figure 5.1, one end of this folk spectrum entails passivity and yielding, whereas

end that a
s—expec-
n, with the
o sleep, we

comes not
t of every-
olk model
; how per-
sts are, or
vhen goals
g the set of
actors and
f assertive-
m and hos-
mal model
n assertion

roached in
earch cen-
choice, but
al member
leas? Does
options? Or
?
uilding are
he other he
he intends
y reject the
ty, and pro-

ianagement
if he fails to
Or does she

their inter-
; may seem
al processes
ns of acts. I
ig individu-
vn interests
As shown in
ng, whereas

	Avoidance	Initiation	Collaboration	Competition
	Withdrawal	Engagement	Resistance	Aggression
	Passivity	Accommodation	Assertion	Hostility

← **Assertiveness** →

Domain	Illustrative behavior or style		
Conflict	Avoidant, trivializing	Candid, constructive	Belligerent, demanding
Negotiation	Weak opening, ready concessions	Strong opening, integrative solutions	Extreme opening, aggressive tactics
Teamwork	Silent with opinions, conformist	Egalitarian, open, engaged	Confrontational, dominance-seeking
Influence	Supplicant, appeasing	Active, forthright, persuasive	Bullying, cajoling
Decision making	Equivocal, indecisive	Proactive, inclusive	Unilateral, self-serving

Figure 5.1   The everyday perception of assertiveness.

the other end features aggression and hostility. In between are gradations ranging from engagement and initiation to collaboration and resistance.

This unidimensional approach may seem to confound dimensions that deserve to be separated (e.g., how much one asks for vs. how one asks for it) and to make neighbors out of constructs that are qualitatively foreign to one another (e.g., aggression and assertion). A first point to note is that I use the term assertiveness here to describe the wide spectrum that grades possible responses in social conflict (i.e., some acts are seen as more or less assertive than others) rather than a particular point or subrange of responses on the spectrum (i.e., "assertive behaviors" as those that fall between passivity and aggression). A second point to stress is that this spectrum reflects everyday perceptions of possible responses in a social conflict. When people think about how hard they might push in a social conflict, I suggest they often consider gradations of responses ranging from "giving in" to "asking for what I want" to "demanding that I get my way." Scholars have understandably taken pains to distinguish between constructs such as assertiveness, often defined as expressing one's own interests, and aggression, usually seen as involving coercion or an intent to harm (e.g., DeGiovanni & Epstein, 1978; see also Chapter 4 in this volume). My argument does not deny the importance of such scholarly distinctions but rather reflects the fact that these boundaries may be blurred or gradual in folk judgments (which is exactly why scholars have worked so hard to be precise

in their own discussions). The present model simply suggests that people may consider the implications of different, perhaps qualitatively disparate, responses in social conflict, deciding that some go too far whereas others don't go far enough. Whether this approach has merit should be judged, I think, by how well it fares in predicting behavior in social conflict.

ASSERTIVENESS AND OUTCOMES

I eventually want to present an account of choices of assertive behaviors (how do people decide how hard to push?), but I first turn to some evidence of how assertiveness relates to actual interpersonal outcomes (what happens when someone pushes hard?). This step lays important groundwork for the nature and role of assertiveness expectancies because it seems entirely likely that peoples' folk theories of assertiveness will at least partly reflect how actual assertiveness plays out. Put another way, people decide how hard to push in part because they predict, flawlessly or not, what happens when they push hard or relent in a particular situation. So what happens when people push hard or give in?

My answer to this question comes from research I've done with Frank Flynn in the domain of organizational leadership (Ames & Flynn, 2007; see Ames, 2008a; Ames, 2009 for reviews). We began by reviewing thousands of open-ended anonymous comments professionals, including working managers and MBA students, gathered from coworkers on their behavioral strengths (e.g., what makes them effective) and weaknesses (e.g., what behaviors could be developed or improved). Assertiveness was not much of a factor in comments about strengths, which tended to revolve around intelligence and conscientiousness. However, references to assertiveness dominated weakness comments. Importantly, they did so in both directions, with some comments referring to too much assertiveness and others referring to too little. What many professionals and leaders struggle with, at least in the eyes of onlookers, is striking the right balance with assertiveness, pushing hard enough to get things done but not so hard that they fail to get along.

This stands in contrast to a long tradition of work on individual differences as linear predictors of leadership effectiveness—though there are important exceptions, such as Fleishman (1995) and Simonton (1985). Past work has tended to hypothesize about and test for qualities that are positively and linearly associated with leadership—that is, more of a given attribute (e.g., intelligence, ambition, extraversion) means more effective leadership. However, our work on qualitative comments from coworkers suggested a curvilinear, inverted-U-shaped relationship between assertiveness and leadership effectiveness. Indeed, several follow-up studies with managers using continuous rating measures have shown that both comparatively low and comparatively high assertive leaders were rated as less effective by coworkers than those in the middle range (Ames & Flynn, 2007).

To unpack why this happens, we decomposed outcomes into two domains: instrumental and relational outcomes. In brief, we found that each domain seemed to account for the effect at one end of the spectrum. Instrumental outcomes (getting one's way, getting things done) seem to improve noticeably as actors move from low to moderate assertiveness, with fewer gains beyond that point. Relational

outcomes (getting along with others) seem to improve considerably as actors move from high to moderate assertiveness, with few gains beyond that point. Thus, high assertive leaders tended to be ineffective largely because they failed to get along, whereas low assertive leaders tended to be ineffective largely because they failed to get their way or get things done.

I believe the lessons from this work on organizational leadership hold more generally, characterizing the consequences of interpersonal assertiveness as a curvilinear effect with instrumental and relational components. What happens when people push very hard? They may undermine their relationships without gaining much instrumentally. What happens when people give in? They may lose instrumentally without gaining much relationally. While situational differences surely dictate different appropriate levels of assertiveness in a given situation (see Ames, 2009), it seems that there may be some middle range of assertiveness that tends to optimize outcomes. This idea is the starting point for an expectancy-based account of assertive behavioral choices: what does an individual actor *believe* is the optimal level of assertiveness? Do individuals vary in where they believe this optimal point lies— and does such variance predict their behavioral choices? The notion that expectancies such as these govern behavior is certainly not new and so before zeroing in specifically on assertiveness expectancies, it is worth recognizing this context.

EXPECTANCIES

From its earliest days, psychology has portrayed people as having expectations about others around them and suggested that these beliefs have a function in regulating behavior (see Roese & Sherman, 2007 for a review). Much of the scholarship on interpersonal expectancies has focused on expectations about other people's characteristics and behavior, as in work on stereotyping and self-fulfilling prophecies (e.g., Miller & Turnbull, 1986). Another important and relevant tradition of work, addressed in Chapter 2 in this volume, examines the nature and development of people's internal working models of others and their interpersonal attachment styles (see also Campbell, Simpson, Boldry, & Kashy, 2005; Pietromonaco & Barrett, 2000). Numerous researchers have highlighted the role of competitive expectations about others, linking conflict behaviors to a prediction that one's conflict partner may be aggressive, hostile, or untrustworthy (e.g., Crick & Dodge, 1994; Diekmann, Tenbrunsel, & Galinsky, 2003; Kelley & Stahelski, 1970; Van Lange, 1992).

Such basic expectations about others—whether in the form of a stereotype, an attachment style, or some other kind of representation—are certainly important in shaping behavior. However, the assertiveness expectancy account presented here departs from this tradition by emphasizing expected reactions by another to one's own assertive behavior. Rather than basic or noncontingent expectancies, this account deals with contingent ones: If I do X, this other person will do, think, or feel Y. Building on social cognitive models of behavior (e.g., Bandura, 1986; Mischel & Shoda, 1995), several noteworthy traditions of work have examined such contingent expectancies. One body of research deals with relational schemas or scripts and their impact on relationship behavior and self-construal

(see Baldwin & Dandeneau, 2005 for a review). Research in this vein has shown, for instance, that the amount of anger displayed in a close relationship depends on anticipated partner response (Fehr, Baldwin, Collins, Patterson, & Benditt, 1999). A related area of inquiry has examined rejection sensitivity, which revolves around "anxious expectations" of interpersonal rejection and the associated acti-vation of defensive responses that can have negative or even self-fulfilling effects (e.g., Downey & Feldman, 1996). Elsewhere, researchers examining gender dynamics in negotiation have linked women's assertive behaviors to "anticipated backlash," namely, women's expectations of how their behavior will be viewed and derogated by others (Amanatullah & Morris, 2010; Bowles, Babcock, & Lai, 2007).

In all of these programs of work, people are portrayed as having different inter-nal models of how others will react to them or their behavior. Person-to-person variance in these models has been linked to a variety of interpersonal behaviors and outcomes, such as psychological adjustment. Together, this body of work suggests that there is substantial promise in exploring how general assertiveness expectancies might shape behavior—how hard people push—across a variety of contexts. Those who pessimistically expect that high levels of assertiveness will be costly will tend to show lower levels of assertiveness than those who optimistically believe that high levels of assertiveness bring benefits. However, to harness asser-tiveness expectancies in our conceptual models and to use them in our research, we first need to establish the form these expectancies typically take and how they can best be measured, a matter to which I turn next.

THE NATURE OF ASSERTIVENESS EXPECTANCIES

Based on the prior work showing that interpersonal assertiveness often has a curvi-linear, inverted-U-shaped effect on interpersonal relations (Ames & Flynn, 2007), I expect that many people will have curvilinear expectancies, assuming that they can push up to a point but no further without incurring damage to their outcomes or relationships. For instance, in a negotiation, people may feel that making a moderately assertive opening offering could be effective but that at some point of heightened assertiveness an opening could backfire, undermining both results and relationships. While people in general may show this form of expectancy, individu-als will vary in what point they think they can push up to. Some may be very opti-mistic, assuming they can display very high levels of interpersonal assertiveness before incurring costs. Others may be much more pessimistic, assuming that even modest levels of assertiveness could spell trouble. If this characterization is correct, it would invite a research approach that attempts to identify an individual's per-ceived "optimal" level of assertiveness or some kind of proxy for this expectancy.

I tested this idea by asking research participants to literally draw their expec-tancies (Ames, 2008, Study 1). Participants received a blank chart, with an x-axis indicating degrees of assertiveness and a y-axis indicating either social or instru-mental outcomes; they were then asked to draw a line representing the outcomes they would generally expect for each level of assertiveness. Pilot work showed that people found this task to be an intuitive way of expressing their expectations that
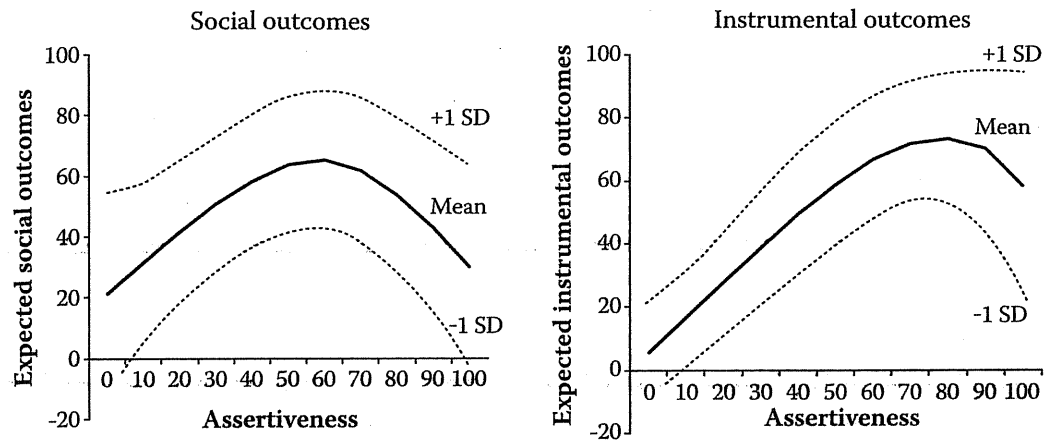
Social outcomes

Instrumental outcomes

Figure 5.2   Plots of expectancy drawing means and variance.

were sometimes hard to put into words. As expected, the majority of participants (some 60 to 70%) drew lines that had a clear inverted-U shape, with a midpoint and downturned ends, for both social and instrumental outcomes. Responses from undergraduate students and MBA students were nearly identical. This suggests that assertiveness expectancies often take the form of implying an ideal or optimal level of assertiveness that varies from one person to the next and could be taken as a measure of expectancies. The drawing results also showed greatest variance at the extremes: most everyone agreed that some middle level of assertiveness led to good outcomes; people varied more considerably on the outcomes they thought would be associated with extreme levels of assertiveness. This was especially true for expected instrumental outcomes at high assertiveness: some people thought high assertiveness would bring instrumental gains, and others thought it would backfire (see Figure 5.2). This suggests that expected outcomes for very high levels of assertiveness would be another way of measuring expectancies.

ASSERTIVENESS EXPECTANCIES AND BEHAVIOR

Having characterized assertiveness expectancies as often taking a curvilinear form and varying from person to person at extreme levels of assertiveness, I sought evidence linking these expectancies to behavior. Initial evidence comes from the previously noted line-drawing study (Ames, 2008), where measures of both optimal assertiveness (the level of assertiveness for each participant that yielded the greatest social or instrumental outcomes) and extreme assertiveness (the expected social or instrumental outcomes for the lowest or highest levels of assertiveness) were associated with self-reported assertiveness. However, non-self-report measures of assertiveness would arguably make a more compelling case.

In subsequent studies (Ames, 2008, Studies 3 and 4), I pursued and found such evidence. For the independent measure of expectancies, participants predicted social and instrumental outcomes for a range of specific behaviors spanning from low assertiveness to high assertiveness. For instance, participants reviewed a scenario involving a manager's low-ball offer in a salary negotiation. Participants went on to consider a number of responses, ranging from accepting the low-ball

offer to responding with an aggressive counteroffer, and then rated the outcomes they expected would result, such as final negotiated salary and liking and trust for the new employee on behalf of the manager. In another scenario, participants imagined they were in a team meeting with a fellow manager who recommended a strategic initiative they knew would not be successful. Participants rated outcomes for responses ranging from saying nothing to vociferously and forcefully objecting. In effect, across these scenarios, participants made a forecast of what they thought would happen if they yielded ground or fought hard. To what extent would they get their way? And to what extent would they get along? These expectancies served as an independent variable, tapping into participants' more general views of what happens when they push hard or give in.

As expected, participants' self-reported expectancy measures based on a series of specific but hypothetical situations predicted indices of participants' assertive behavior based on reports from negotiation counterparts and real-life coworkers. Those who expected relatively minimal costs for high levels of interpersonal assertiveness (e.g., they thought a manager would find an aggressive counteroffer in the salary negotiation acceptable) were seen by partners in an unrelated dyadic, fixed-sum negotiation exercise as considerably more assertive. Expectancies also predicted the value claimed in negotiation settlements: those who were more optimistic about the payoffs of highly assertive behavior achieved more favorable deal terms. In another study, participants were rated by work colleagues for their typical level of assertiveness in the actual workplace (e.g., standing their ground in a conflict). As predicted, work colleagues saw those who were more optimistic about the payoffs of highly assertive behavior in the scenarios as considerably more assertive in the workplace.

The evidence I have gathered suggests that individuals' assertiveness expectancies have a place in predicting their behavior. While my work to date has gauged only certain kinds of assertive behavior, I suspect assertiveness expectancies shape other behaviors as well, including those addressed elsewhere in this volume. For instance, Chapter 11 addresses intimate partner violence, noting models (e.g., Holtzworth-Munroe, 1992) that describe how individuals choose behavioral responses, ranging from passivity or acquiescence to violence, based in part on their expectations of the behavior's consequences. Chapters 3 and 13 address aggression in the wake of ostracism. Expectancies about what different behaviors will achieve (e.g., renewed acceptance by the ostracizers, punishing outcomes for the ostracizers, experienced remorse on behalf of the ostracizers) may play a role in responses to being ostracized. Chapter 9 notes work on the display of anger in conflict and negotiations. Some displays are certainly spontaneous and uncontrolled, whereas other displays may be calculated. Behind these calculated displays likely lie expectancies, whether right or wrong, about what displays of anger will achieve (e.g., intimidation). Chapter 10 presents a compelling motivational model of terrorist behavior revolving around the quest for significance. Expectancies may help delineate these processes: charting an individual's expectancies about which acts will lead to what kinds of significance (e.g., "If I die in an attack I will be martyred" vs. "Only if I both die and kill others will I be martyred") could help us better understand and possibly curtail acts of dramatic violence and harm.

In sum, people vary in what they expect happens when they push hard or give in, and these idiosyncratic expectancies are predictive of at least some assertive behaviors. But are these effects distinct from the effects of motivations, such as a desire to win or a concern for maintaining relationships? Are expectancies themselves merely reflections of motivations? The next section takes up these questions.

ASSERTIVENESS EXPECTANCIES AND MOTIVES

Over the last half century, scholars of conflict, negotiation, and social dilemmas have repeatedly linked interpersonal conflict behavior to underlying motivations—variously identified as preferences, concerns, priorities, orientations, and values. While interaction-specific objectives surely matter (e.g., "I want my manager to give me a 10% raise today"), considerable attention has been paid to more general social motives (e.g., "I don't care what happens to others as long as I get what I want"). One of the most active traditions of such work revolves around dual-concern theory (e.g., Carnevale & Pruitt, 1992) and motivational orientations (e.g., Messick & McClintock, 1968), which posit that people vary in their attitudes about their own and their conflict partners' outcomes. Combinations of these dimensions yield different orientations that are often labeled proself or competitive (concerned with maximizing the positive difference between self and other), individualist (concerned solely with one's own outcome), and prosocial or cooperative (concerned with maximizing joint outcomes). An abundance of research has linked these social value orientations to assertive behaviors in social dilemmas and games (e.g., McClintock & Liebrand, 1988; Van Lange, 1999) and in conflict and negotiation (e.g., De Dreu & Van Lange, 1995; De Dreu, Weingart, & Kwon, 2000; Olekalns & Smith, 2003).

While these social orientations seem to account for the bulk of motivational work on conflict behavior, other interpersonal motives have been invoked as well, such as communal values (e.g., Amanatullah, Morris, & Curhan, 2008), agreeableness (e.g., Barry & Friedman, 1998; Graziano, Jensen-Campbell, & Hair, 1996), and need to belong (e.g., Baumeister & Leary, 1995; De Cremer & Leonardelli, 2003). In addition, there is evidence to suggest that identity motivations, such as the need to save face or maintain an image of toughness, can affect conflict behavior (e.g., White, Tynan, Galinsky, & Thompson, 2004). In short, ample evidence shows that what people care about affects their assertiveness in conflict and negotiation. Put simply, motives matter.

The results about expectancies reviewed above raise the question about how motives and expectancies relate. Will the link between expectancies and behavior remain after controlling for motivations, or will it be overshadowed? Are expectancies simply derivatives of motives? I expect that whereas assertiveness expectancies might be related to social motivations, an independent expectancy–behavior link will generally remain after controlling for motivations. The logic can be illustrated by work in the domain of risky choice that distinguishes between risk preferences and risk perceptions (e.g., Weber & Milliman, 1997). Risk preferences, analogous to motivations, concern a person's appetite for risk. Risk perceptions, analogous to expectancies in the current account, concern a person's assessment of how risky

a given option is. Empirically, these preference and perception constructs have proven to be distinct and both appear to exhibit independent effects on risky choice (e.g., Weber & Hsee, 1998). Two people could have identical risk preferences but differ in their choices because one perceives the option as risky and the other does not. In the domain of conflict, two people could have identical motives—the same concerns for maintaining relationships, for instance—but differ in their assertiveness simply because one expects a behavior would damage a relationship and the other does not.

In brief, the recent work I have done on assertiveness expectancies is consistent with this idea. Across the studies (Ames, 2008), I found weak or nonsignificant links between expectancies and measures of motivations, including social value orientations, conflict styles, unmitigated communion, and basic questions about concerns for winning and maintaining relationships. In other words, expectancies are not mere reflections of motivations. Further, across the studies, both expectancies and motivations appeared to be simultaneously and separately predictive of behavior, suggesting that they each have a distinct role to play. Assertive behavior appears to be a product of both what people care about and what they believe will happen when they give in or push hard.

I have not yet found evidence for an interaction between expectancies and motivations. However, the logic for such interactions seems clear. Imagine a team leader advocating on her team's behalf to an organizational leader. She might expect that the harder she pushes the more costly it will be in terms of her relationship with her leader but the better she will do in terms of resources for her team. Along with these two expectancies would be two motivations: concern for her relationship with the leader and concern with the resources for her team. It stands to reason that if she cares vastly more about, say, her team's resources, the resource expectancy would be more predictive of her behavior than the relationship expectancy. Alternately, if she cares very little about the team's resources, it seems unlikely that the resource expectancy would be a powerful predictor of her behavior. In short, the expectancies that matter most in predicting our behavior are likely those about outcomes that mean the most to us. A full account of interpersonal assertiveness and behavioral choice would likely need to have roles for both motivations and expectancies as well as an interaction between the two.

SOURCES OF EXPECTANCIES

Evidence that expectancies are an important predictor of assertive behavior naturally raises another question: where do expectancies come from? The fact that expectancies seem to carry across domains implies an underlying core, such as basic working models for the self, others, and relationships that are built up over the course of a lifetime (Chapter 2 in this volume). Self-esteem may be part of this core. Baldwin and Keelan (1999) argued that individuals higher in trait self-esteem had more positive interpersonal expectancies about their own ability to secure affiliation from others. Indeed, there was some evidence of a modest positive link between self-esteem and optimal assertiveness in the line drawing study discussed earlier (Ames, 2008, Study 1). Those lower in self-esteem were more

structs have
risky choice
ferences but
e other does
;—the same
ir assertive-
ship and the

is consistent
nsignificant
social value
stions about
expectancies
th expectan-
redictive of
ive behavior
believe will

ctancies and
agine a team
: She might
of her rela-
irces for her
concern for
her team. It
sources, the
the relation-
resources, it
dictor of her
our behavior
unt of inter-
ave roles for
the two.

ehavior natu-
The fact that
core, such as
built up over
y be part of
in trait self-
wn ability to
modest posi-
rawing study
n were more

pessimistic about their ability to pursue their interests without suffering relational costs. Future work might further explore the links between assertiveness expectancies and relevant working models or schema, such as self-esteem, rejection sensitivity, and attachment styles.

While expectancies may be partly rooted in long-held models that accumulate over a lifetime, they may also be shaped and reinforced—validly or not—by more immediate evidence. Part of the process no doubt reflects the fact that people only experience the outcomes of behaviors they choose, not of behaviors they forego. Such is the case with anxiety disorders, where someone afraid of driving over bridges for fear of collapse, for example, never does so and thus does not experience the outcome of driving safely over a bridge, left instead to imagine that the worst might have happened if she had done so. Someone who is pessimistic about asserting his own opinion in a group setting systematically holds back, never experiencing the positive effects of speaking up and thus never overturning his overly pessimistic expectancy. Confirmation biases and selective interpretation no doubt also play a role. Someone who is optimistic about her ability to push hard without damaging relationships may see what she expects to see in the wake of a conflict. She may take superficial signs of acceptance as a signal of her counterpart's contentment even though the counterpart's ample resentment is lingering below the surface.

Another type of evidence for expectancies is "vicarious experience" through various media sources. People of all ages are frequently exposed to media portraits of assertion–outcome contingencies, as when characters in movies or television show aggression and experience positive or negative outcomes (e.g., Huesmann, Moise-Titus, Podolski, & Eron, 2003). As Chapter 17 in this volume notes, the Internet is increasingly ubiquitous as a source of information, giving viewers new ways to watch actual acts of aggression (e.g., videos of "happy slapping" aggression) or to assert themselves or watch others assert themselves in novel ways (e.g., flaming in a chat room or posting disparaging remarks to a Facebook page). Elsewhere, work on video game violence examines the impact of game playing and exposure on behavior (e.g., Anderson et al., 2004). Together, these traditions of work highlight that the development of assertiveness expectancies is likely not simply a product of one's own direct experience with assertion and outcomes but partly a product of the contingencies presented in the media environment. To the extent that people are chronically exposed to overly optimistic assertiveness contingencies in the media (e.g., that aggression reliably brings desirable outcomes), they may come to hold expectancies that reflect such contingencies and behave accordingly. One implication is that the link between media exposure or consumption and aggressive behavior may be partially mediated by expectancies.

Situational influences could also affect expectancies in "nonevidentiary" ways (i.e., through processes other than apparent evidence what happens when one pushes hard or gives in). For instance, while attachment styles may reflect a somewhat stable interpersonal schema, evidence suggests that attachment motivations can also be primed and manipulated, such as through focusing individuals on various attachment figures (see Chapter 2 in this volume). Research on mood also suggests that those in happy compared with sad moods are less polite in their

interpersonal requests from others (Forgas, 1999). It could be that happy moods engender more optimistic assertiveness expectancies whereas sad moods engender more pessimistic ones. Situations that promote or inhibit empathic or cognitive perspective taking could also affect expectations about how others will react to one's own assertive or acquiescent behavior (see Chapter 7 in this volume).

For a variety of reasons—such as developmental history, distorted or misinterpreted evidence, and situational factors—people may often have misguided expectancies and may not effectively bring them in line with reality. The implication may seem disconcerting: left to their own devices, people with misguided expectancies might persist in behaving on the basis of distorted forecasts. However, I believe the facts that expectancies shape behavior and that expectancies can be revised in the face of evidence and feedback is a rather hopeful one. Although people may not naturally or spontaneously confront the right kinds of evidence, individuals, organizations, and trainers can find ways to help them do so, potentially leading to more effective assertiveness and constructive interpersonal conflict. Within organizations, multirater feedback has the potential to deliver useful information; in business schools, negotiations training with role-play exercises and debriefing often helps individual calibrate their sense of what happens when they push hard or give in.

EXPECTANCIES AND OTHER EXPERIENCES

Other contributions in this volume have encouraged me to think beyond the focal question of this chapter (when and why do people push more or less in interpersonal conflicts?) and to consider how expectancies might relate to other experiences. Chapter 12 in this volume describes a research program charting how goal similarity predicts conflict in romantic relationships: partners who have less goal similarity report more conflict in their relationships. It is possible that similarity and divergence between instrumental and relational expectancies could shed light on conflict in romantic relationships. While I have generally focused on instrumental and relational expectancies having a common core (e.g., people who are optimistic about instrumental outcomes for pushing hard tend to be more optimistic about relational outcomes, too), they can also diverge. Take the case of a person with very optimistic instrumental expectancies about her personal goals (e.g., "If I resist my spouse's demands on my time, I can devote more to my work and achieve greater professional success") but very pessimistic relational expectancies (e.g., "If I resist my spouse's demands on my time, he will resent me and our relationship will suffer"). Such a pattern could be a stressful one, regardless of the actor's behavioral choices. Contrast this with a person who has optimistic relational expectancies in addition to instrumental ones (e.g., "If I resist my spouse's demands on my time, he will understand and our relationship will remain secure"). This person may not feel a bind or trade-off, though it is possible that these optimistic expectancies could lead to behavioral choices that would create relationship stress.

Chapter 14 in this volume describes how the impact of a victim's forgiveness in the wake of a transgression depends on the extent and quality of the harm-doer's amend making. Victims who showed forgiveness toward a harm-doer who failed to

make amends had lower subsequent self-respect than those who forgave a harm-doer who made amends. It seems likely that some people are simply habitual "for-givers" who may suffer when their forgiveness is unrequited. In other cases, this effect may represent a failed prediction such that the forgiver had a contingent expectancy about what would happen (e.g., "If I forgive him, he will apologize, make amends, and change his ways") that was not borne out. To the extent that some cases entail such prediction failures, it could be useful to explore what leads to this kind of misplaced optimism. The opposite effect would be interesting as well: when an overly pessimistic expectancy (e.g., "If I forgive him, it won't mat-ter because he'll never change his ways") leads someone to avoid forgiveness that could have been beneficial to both parties involved (cf. Kammrath & Dweck, 2006).

CONCLUSION

Our lives are, in many ways, enriched by interacting with others who aspire to things that we do not. But the fact that we are surrounded by people with different objectives and interests means that we are in a constant series of conflicts, mostly low-grade ones, throughout our days, confronting again and again the same ques-tions: How hard should I push? Should I resist my spouse or child? Should I defy my neighbor or boss? Should I give in? All of us who interact with other people answer an ongoing barrage of such questions, often arriving at our answers seam-lessly, perhaps even unconsciously. As scholars, we already know some about how people answer these questions, but we can, should, and no doubt will know more. I believe assertiveness expectancies have the potential to help us better under-stand how people choose how hard to push and that complete models of assertive behavior should afford a place for expectancies. Yet variety is the spice of life, and I would be disappointed if other scholars did not see the matter differently. I look forward to them pushing back, but maybe not too hard.

REFERENCES

Amanatullah, E. T., & Morris, M. W. (2010). Negotiating gender roles: Gender differences in assertive negotiating are mediated by women's fear of backlash and attenuated when negotiating on behalf of others. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 98*, 256–267.

Amanatullah, E. T., Morris, M. W., & Curhan, J. R. (2008). Negotiators who give too much: Unmitigated communion, relational anxieties, and economic costs in distributive and integrative bargaining. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 95*, 723–738.

Ames, D. R. (2008a). In search of the right touch: Interpersonal assertiveness in organiza-tional life. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 17*, 381–385.

Ames, D. R. (2008b). Assertiveness expectancies: How hard people push depends on the consequences they predict. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 95*, 1541–1557.

Ames, D. R. (2009). Pushing up to a point: Assertiveness and effectiveness in leadership and interpersonal dynamics. In A. Brief and B. Staw (Eds.), *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 29, 111–133.

Ames, D. R., & Flynn, F. J. (2007). What breaks a leader: The curvilinear relation between assertiveness and leadership. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 92, 307–324.

Anderson, C. A., Carnagey, N. L., Flanagan, M., Benjamin, A. J., Eubanks, J., & Valentine, J. C. (2004). Violent video games: Specific effects of violent content on aggressive thoughts and behavior. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 36, 199–249.

Baldwin, M. W., & Dandeneau, S. D. (2005). Understanding and modifying the relational schemas underlying insecurity. In M. Baldwin (Ed.), *Interpersonal cognition* (pp. 33–61). New York: Guilford Press.

Baldwin, M. W., & Keelan, J. P. R. (1999). Interpersonal expectations as a function of self-esteem and sex. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 16, 822–833.

Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Barry, B., & Friedman, R. A. (1998). Bargainer characteristics in distributive and integrative negotiation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74, 345–359.

Baumeister, R.F., & Leary, M.R. (1995). The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological Bulletin*, 117, 497–529.

Bowles, H. R., Babcock, L., & Lai, L. (2007). Social incentives for gender differences in the propensity to initiate negotiations: Sometimes it does hurt to ask. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 103, 84–103.

Campbell, L., Simpson, J. A., Boldry, J. G., & Kashy, D. (2005). Perceptions of conflict and support in romantic relationships: The role of attachment anxiety. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 88, 510–531.

Carnevale, P. J., & Pruitt, D. G. (1992). Negotiation and mediation. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 43, 531–582.

Crick, N. R., & Dodge, K. A. (1994). A review and reformulation of social information-processing mechanisms in children's social adjustment. *Psychological Bulletin*, 115, 74–101.

De Cremer, D., & Leonardelli, G. J. (2003). Cooperation in social dilemmas and the need to belong: The moderating effect of group size. *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice*, 7, 168–174.

De Dreu, C. K., & Van Lange, P. A. (1995). Impact of social value orientation on negotiator cognition and behavior. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 21, 1178–1188.

De Dreu, C. K., Weingart, L. R., & Kwon, S. (2000). Influence of social motives on integrative negotiation: A meta-analytic review and test of two theories. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 78, 889–905.

DeGiovanni, I. S., & Epstein, N. (1978). Unbinding assertion and aggression in research and clinical practice. *Behavior Modification*, 2, 173–192.

Diekmann, K. A., Tenbrunsel, A. E., & Galinsky, A. D. (2003). From self-prediction to self-defeat: Behavioral forecasting, self-fulfilling prophecies, and the effect of competitive expectations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 85, 672–683.

Downey, G., & Feldman, S. I. (1996). Implications of rejection sensitivity for intimate relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 70, 1327–1343.

Fehr, B., Baldwin, M., Collins, L., Patterson, S., & Benditt, R. (1999). Anger in close relationships: An interpersonal script analysis. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 25, 299–312.

Fleishman, E. A. (1995). Consideration and structure: Another look at their role in leadership research. In F. Dansereau & F. J. Yammarino (Eds.), *Leadership: The multiple-level approaches* (pp. 51–60). Stamford, CT: JAI Press.

Forgas, J. P. (1999). On feeling good and being rude: Affective influences on language use and request formulations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 76*, 928–939.

Graziano, W. G., Jensen-Campbell, L. A., & Hair, E. C. (1996). Perceiving interpersonal conflict and reacting to it: The case for agreeableness. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 70*, 820–835.

Huesmann, L. R., Moise-Titus, J., Podolski, C., & Eron, L. D. (2003). Longitudinal relations between children's exposure to TV violence and their aggressive and violent behavior in young adulthood: 1977–1992. *Developmental Psychology, 39*, 201–221.

Kammrath, L. K., & Dweck, C. (2006). Voicing conflict: Preferred conflict strategies among incremental and entity theorists. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 32*, 1497–1508.

Kelley, H. H., & Stahelski, A. J. (1970). Social interaction basis of cooperators' and competitors' beliefs about others. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 16*, 66–91.

McClintock, C. G., & Liebrand, W. B. (1988). Role of interdependence structure, individual value orientation, and another's strategy in social decision making: A transformational analysis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 55*, 396–409.

Messick, D. M., & McClintock, C.G. (1968). Motivational basis of choice in experimental games. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 4*, 1–25.

Miller, D. T., & Turnbull, W. (1986). Expectancies and interpersonal processes. In M.R. Rosenzweig & L. W. Porter (Eds.), *Annual review of psychology* (Vol. 37, pp. 233–256). Palo Alto, CA: Annual Reviews, Inc.

Mischel, W., & Shoda, Y. (1995). A cognitive-affective system theory of personality: Reconceptualizing situations, dispositions, dynamics, and invariance in personality structure. *Psychological Review, 102*, 246–268.

Olekalns, M., & Smith, P.L. (2003). Testing the relationships among negotiators' motivational orientations, strategy choices and outcomes. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 39*, 101–117.

Pietromonaco, P. R., & Barrett, L. F. (2000). Internal working models: What do we really know about the self in relation to others? *Review of General Psychology, 4*, 155–175.

Roese, N. J., & Sherman, J. W. (2007). Expectancy. In A. W. Kruglanski & E. T. Higgins (Eds.), *Social psychology: Handbook of basic principles* (pp. 91–115). New York: Guilford Press.

Simonton, D. K. (1985). Intelligence and personal influence in groups: Four nonlinear models. *Psychological Review, 92*, 532–547.

Van Lange, P. A. M. (1992). Confidence in expectations: A test of the triangle hypothesis. *European Journal of Personality, 6*, 371–379.

Van Lange, P. A. M. (1999). The pursuit of joint outcomes and equality in outcomes: An integrative model of social value orientation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 77*, 337–349.

Weber, E. U., & Hsee, C. K. (1998). Cross-cultural differences in risk perception but cross-cultural similarities in attitudes towards perceived risk. *Management Science, 44*, 1205–1217.

Weber, E. U., & Milliman, R. (1997). Perceived risk attitudes: Relating risk perception to risky choice. *Management Science, 43*, 123–144.

White, J. B., Tynan, R., Galinsky, A. D., & Thompson, L. (2004). Face threat sensitivity in negotiation: Roadblock to agreement and joint gain. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 94*, 102–124.