

# Guilt and Expected Guilt in the Door-in-the-Face Technique

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*Three studies are reported concerning the guilt-based explanation of the door-in-the-face (DITF) technique, which proposes that in successful DITF implementations, first-request refusal generates guilt that is reduced by second-request compliance. An initial experiment confirmed that, consistent with this explanation, rejection of a prosocial request evoked more guilt than did rejection of a nonprosocial request. A second experiment provided further confirmation that request rejection can elicit guilt in the expected ways, but found that second-request compliance did not provide the predicted guilt reduction. A third experiment suggested that second-request compliance may be motivated by the expectation that compliance will reduce guilt. Key words: Door-in-the-Face, Compliance, Guilt, Anticipated Guilt, Anticipated Emotion*

The door-in-the-face (DITF) influence strategy has been studied for over 20 years, beginning with Cialdini et al.'s (1975) work. The strategy itself is simple: Before making a request of a person, an initial larger request is made, which the person declines (metaphorically closing the door in the requester's face). Compared to compliance rates in a condition where persons hear only the (smaller) target request, DITF compliance rates are commonly larger, and often substantially so. That is, declining the first request makes persons more likely to accept the second (target) request (for reviews, see Dillard, Hunter, & Burgoon, 1984; Fern, Monroe, & Avila, 1986; O'Keefe & Hale, 1998).

Although meta-analytic reviews of DITF research have identified several variables that moderate the size of DITF effects (Dillard et al., 1984; Fern et al., 1986; O'Keefe & Hale, 1998), a satisfactory account of DITF effects has been elusive. Explanations invoking such processes as reciprocal concessions (Cialdini et al., 1975), perceptual contrast (Miller, Seligman, Clark, & Bush, 1976), and self-presentation (Pendleton & Batson, 1979) appear to be unable to account for the observed moderator-variable effects (for discussion, see Dillard, 1991; O'Keefe & Hale, 1998).

O'Keefe and Figgé (1997) have suggested that guilt arousal and reduction might lie behind DITF success. This explanation proposes that successful DITF implementations work because rejection of the initial request creates guilt, which then is reduced by second-request acceptance. This account seems to be consistent with the accumulated evidence concerning factors moderating DITF effects (O'Keefe & Hale, 1998), which naturally recommends more direct examination of this explanation.

There are two ways in which one might go about collecting new primary research

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evidence relevant to this guilt-based account. The first—and the avenue traditionally pursued in DITF research—is to identify some new moderator variable suggested by the explanation, and to conduct research to see whether that moderator variable has the expected effects on DITF compliance. For example, one might investigate whether individual differences in guilt-proneness (such as discussed by Baumeister, Stillwell, & Heatherton, 1994, pp. 254–256; Niedenthal, Tangney, & Gavanski, 1994) moderate the effectiveness of the DITF strategy.

A second, and more direct, source of evidence would focus on the proposed mediating state of guilt. Abrahams and Bell (1994) have pointed out that, when considering the design of experiments intended to distinguish alternative DITF explanations (alternative mediating variables), it may well be unwise to assume that particular independent variables “are uniquely associated with just one of the mediating variables” (p. 147). And, as Dillard (1991) has observed, “the most compelling case that can be mustered in favor of a theory comes from direct evidence of the hypothesized mediating process” (p. 286).

The guilt-based explanation leads to particular expectations concerning the distinctive patterns of guilt arousal and reduction associated with different requests and request sequences. We report here three studies addressing these expectations. Experiment 1 focussed on one aspect of the predicted guilt-arousal effects (specifically, the prediction that rejection of a prosocial request will evoke more guilt than will the rejection of a nonprosocial request); Experiment 2 focussed on one aspect of the predicted guilt-reduction effects (specifically, the prediction that second-request acceptance in a DITF sequence would provide guilt reduction); Experiment 3 explored the possible role of anticipated guilt feelings in DITF situations.

### Experiment 1

One expectation of the guilt-based account is that refusal of prosocial requests will create more guilt than refusal of for-profit requests. This specific expectation is of interest for two reasons. First, the difference in DITF effects between requests from prosocial and from for-profit organizations has been described as a key boundary condition (see Dillard et al., 1984, pp. 479, 484). Given the observed role of organization type as a DITF moderator, one can say confidently that something about declining requests from prosocial groups makes people more predisposed (compared to declining requests from for-profit groups) to react favorably to a second request. The guilt-based explanation suggests that differential guilt arousal might be the operative factor, and hence a test of this hypothesis may shed light on how and why this key moderator variable operates. Second, the guilt-inducing character of request rejection is crucial to the guilt-based account. The hypothesized guilt-reducing properties of second-request compliance are irrelevant if rejection of the first request does not induce appropriate guilt. Hence the guilt-inducing character of request rejection is both theoretically and empirically central to the proposed explanation. Experiment 1 thus concerned the guilt-based account’s expectation that refusal of requests from prosocial organizations and from for-profit organizations generate differential guilt.

#### *Method*

Participants were approached in a shopping mall on weekday afternoons. Only persons walking alone at a leisurely pace were approached. After ascertaining that

the person had a few minutes to spare, the experimenter made a large request involving volunteering to exercise. This request was presented as having either a prosocial or a for-profit basis. In the prosocial condition, the experimenter said:

I am a graduate student in biology conducting research on heart disease. I am trying to measure how exercise relates to heart disease. I am looking for volunteers who would be willing to come into the lab and have their heart rate and blood pressure measured while they exercise for five to ten straight hours. Would you be willing to volunteer for the ten hours of exercise?

In the for-profit condition, the experimenter said:

I work for Read Research, a small research firm. We were recently hired by a large exercise company to try to understand consumer perceptions on exercise equipment. I am trying to get volunteers to come into a downtown location to work with a new treadmill for five to ten straight hours. Would you be willing to volunteer for the ten hours of exercise?

Persons who agreed to the request were thanked, and informed of the nature of the investigation. Those who declined the request were asked to complete a brief questionnaire, consisting of a list of 16 words describing feelings or moods. The instructions asked the participant to "please use this list to describe your feelings before you were handed this questionnaire," by circling a number from 1 ("highly accurate") to 5 ("highly inaccurate") to indicate whether the word accurately described the respondent's feelings. The 16 words consisted of four filler words (contemplative, skeptical, aloof, frustrated), and words intended to assess three emotions: guilt (ashamed, guilty, remorseful, repentant), happiness (playful, care-free, pleased, energetic), and irritation (annoyed, grouchy, irritated, bothered). This procedure paralleled that of Bozinoff and Ghingold's (1983) study of guilt-arousing persuasive appeals (which in turn relied on Nowlis, 1965; see also Buss & Gerjuoy, 1957). After completing the questionnaire, participants were told of the nature of the investigation, and thanked.

### *Results*

Of 62 participants who were approached (31 in each condition), eight (four in each condition) agreed to the request. Of the remaining 54 participants, two (one in each condition) declined to complete the questionnaire. The data analyses thus are based on 52 participants (26 in each condition). The emotion assessments displayed satisfactory internal consistency; the Cronbach's alphas were .85 (guilt), .72 (happiness), and .88 (irritation).<sup>1</sup>

Participants in the prosocial condition reported significantly greater guilt ( $M = 3.88$ ) than did those in the for-profit condition ( $M = 4.54$ ,  $t(50) = 2.80$ ,  $p = .01$  (the effect corresponds to  $r = .37$ ). The two conditions did not differ significantly in reported happiness (prosocial  $M = 2.96$ , for-profit  $M = 2.84$ ,  $t(50) = .53$ ,  $p = .60$ ) or in reported irritation (prosocial  $M = 3.80$ , for-profit  $M = 4.29$ ,  $t(50) = 1.81$ ,  $p = .08$ ); for Cohen's (1988, p. 26) medium effect size ( $d = .5$ ), the power of these tests (with .05 alpha, two-tailed tests) was .42.

### *Discussion*

These results confirm the guilt-based explanation's expectation that refusal of a request from a prosocial organization will arouse more guilt than refusal of a similar request from a for-profit organization. The contrast between prosocial and nonprosocial requests is especially significant as a moderator of DITF effects, and hence this confirming evidence is important, even if obviously quite limited.

A more telling test of the guilt-based explanation concerns the expectation that second-request acceptance in a DITF sequence will provide guilt reduction. Specifically, the guilt-based account predicts that in an investigation in which DITF effects obtain (i.e., an investigation in which target-request compliance is significantly higher in the DITF condition than in a target-request-only control condition), the amount of guilt experienced by DITF-condition participants after declining the initial request should be significantly greater than that remaining after accepting the subsequent (target) request.

But measurement of the proposed mediating state of guilt is necessarily intrusive. Ideally, of course, one would like to be able to track the guilt states of participants in the DITF condition throughout the experiment. That is, one would like DITF-condition participants to (a) decline the initial (large) request, (b) complete a guilt assessment, (c) respond to the second (target) request, and finally (d) complete another guilt assessment. This would permit observation of the expected variation in guilt levels. However, the intrusive nature of current guilt-assessment procedures makes such a design problematic.<sup>2</sup>

An alternative design provides conceptually similar information, however. This alternative design—employed in Experiment 2—has three conditions. In the DITF condition, participants decline an initial large request, are presented with the second (smaller, target) request, and then complete a guilt-assessment questionnaire. In a second condition, participants hear only the large request, and subsequently complete the guilt-assessment instrument. In the third condition, participants hear only the small (target) request, then complete the guilt-assessment instrument. Assuming that a DITF effect obtains, the expectations of the guilt-based explanation for this design can be expressed in four specific contrasts.

H<sub>1</sub>: Persons who accept an initial request will experience less guilt than persons who reject all requests.

This hypothesis reflects the expectation that request rejection will induce guilt. Participants who reject all requests presented to them presumably should experience guilt that is not aroused in participants who reject no requests (i.e., who accept the initial request made of them).

H<sub>2</sub>: Guilt will be significantly greater among persons in the large-request-only condition who decline that large request than among persons in the DITF condition who accept the target request.

This hypothesis reflects the expected guilt-reduction effect of second-request compliance in the DITF condition. If declining the initial request arouses guilt which is then reduced by target-request compliance, then persons who have just declined the initial request should be experiencing greater guilt than persons who have just complied with the second request (since such compliance presumably reduces their guilt).

H<sub>3</sub>: Persons in the DITF condition who accept the target request will have guilt that differs little from that experienced by persons in the small-request-only condition who accept that request.

This hypothesis also reflects the expected guilt-reduction effects of second-request compliance. Those who accept an initial small request presumably will have little or no guilt; if, in the DITF condition, second-request acceptance eliminates the guilt

created by first-request refusal, then those accepting that second request should also have little or no guilt.

H<sub>4</sub>: Persons in the DITF condition who accept the target request will have less guilt than persons in the DITF condition who reject the second request.

This hypothesis also reflects the expected guilt-reduction effects of second-request compliance. Given rejection of the initial request, a person who accepts the subsequent target request should experience less guilt than a person who rejects that subsequent request (since second-request acceptance is hypothesized to be a guilt-reduction mechanism).<sup>3</sup>

## Experiment 2

### *Method*

**Participants.** Participants were (persons appearing to be) students approached at outdoor campus locations on a large midwestern university. Only persons walking alone at a leisurely pace were approached; after ascertaining that the person had a minute to spare, the experimenter continued with one of three randomly-assigned conditions.

**Conditions.** In the door-in-the-face (DITF) condition, the experimenter said "I work with the Don Moyers Boys and Girls Club in Champaign. We're looking for volunteers to help out in our tutoring program. We need adults who are willing to work with children on a daily basis to help them improve their study skills. This would involve spending about 15 hours a week with a group of children, at least for the rest of the semester. Would you be interested in becoming a tutor?" When this request was refused, the experimenter then said "Well, we're also looking for people who would be willing to help out with one of the special events in our cultural program. This would involve spending one afternoon taking a group of kids to a museum or the movies. Would you be interested in volunteering for one such event?"

In the small-request control condition, the experimenter said "I work with the Don Moyers Boys and Girls Club in Champaign. We're looking for volunteers to help out with one of the special events in our cultural program. This would involve spending one afternoon taking a group of kids to a museum or the movies. Would you be interested in volunteering for one such event?"

In the large-request control condition, the experimenter said "I work with the Don Moyers Boys and Girls Club in Champaign. We're looking for volunteers to help out in our tutoring program. We need adults who are willing to work with children on a daily basis to help them improve their study skills. This would involve spending about 15 hours a week with a group of children, at least for the rest of the semester. Would you be interested in becoming a tutor?"

All requests were genuine; persons consenting to any request provided their names and addresses, which were forwarded to the Boys and Girls Club.

**Guilt assessment.** In all three conditions, following the response to the final request, participants were asked to complete a brief questionnaire containing a list of 16 words. The instructions asked the participant "how accurately does each of the following words describe the way you feel right now," with responses given by circling one of five phrases ranging from "very accurately" (scored as 5) through

TABLE 1  
GUILT AND COMPLIANCE RATES (EXPERIMENT 2)

	Comply	Not Comply	Compliance Rate
DITF	2.49 (41, .76)	2.59 (86, .67)	41/127 = .323
small-only	2.07 (17, .74)	2.44 (77, .80)	17/94 = .181
large-only	1.00 (1)	2.33 (95, .79)	1/96 = .010

Note. Higher scores represent greater guilt; ns and SDs appear in parentheses.

“neutral” to “very inaccurately” (scored as 1). The 16 words consisted of three filler words (contemplative, curious, energetic) and words intended to assess guilt (guilty, remorseful, repentant, regretful), happiness (playful, carefree, pleased, happy, joyful), and irritation (annoyed, grouchy, irritated, angry). After completing the questionnaire, participants were told of the nature of the investigation, and thanked.

### Results

Requests were made of 323 persons, of whom six did not provide complete questionnaires, yielding a total of 317 cases.

**DITF effect.** The manipulation successfully produced a DITF effect:  $X^2(1, N = 221) = 5.64, p < .02$ . Compliance was significantly greater in the DITF condition (32.3%, 41 of 127) than in the small-request-only condition (18.1%, 17 of 94). The effect corresponds to  $r = .16$  (O.R. = 2.16).

**Guilt ratings.** The four-item guilt index produced satisfactory reliability (Cronbach's alpha = .74). Table 1 contains the mean guilt ratings (and ns and standard deviations) for the various conditions.

Consistent with H1, persons who accepted an initial request, whether large or small, reported significantly less guilt ( $M = 2.01, n = 18$ ) than did those who declined all requests (declined the large request, declined the small request, or, in the DITF condition, declined both requests:  $M = 2.45, n = 258$ );  $t(274) = 2.35, p < .05$  (the effect corresponds to  $r = .14$ ).

H2 was not confirmed. The guilt reported by persons who declined the large request in the large-request-only condition ( $M = 2.33$ ) was not significantly different from that reported by persons who accepted the small (target) request in the DITF condition ( $M = 2.49$ );  $t(134) = 1.07$ ; for a two-tailed test with .05 alpha, power for detecting a medium effect size ( $d = .5$ ) was .75.

H3 was not confirmed. The level of guilt reported by those accepting the small request after declining the large request ( $M = 2.49$ ) was nonsignificantly larger [ $t(56) = 1.90, p = .06$ ; the effect corresponds to  $r = .25$ ] than that reported by persons who accepted the initial small request ( $M = 2.07$ ); for detecting a medium effect size ( $d = .5$ ) with a two-tailed test and .05 alpha, power was .39. H3 predicted little difference between these conditions; although the observed difference was nonsignificant, the size of the effect (considered in light of the power of the test and the effect's near-significance) is plainly inconsistent with H3.

H4 was not confirmed. Persons in the DITF condition who accepted the target request reported guilt ( $M = 2.49$ ) not significantly different from that reported by

TABLE 2  
IRRITATION AND HAPPINESS (EXPERIMENT 2)

	Irritation		Happiness	
	Comply	Not Comply	Comply	Not Comply
DITF	2.22 (41, .74)	2.08 (86, .73)	3.19 (41, .66)	3.11 (86, .60)
small-only	1.79 (17, .61)	2.19 (77, .70)	3.72 (17, .62)	3.16 (77, .55)
large-only	1.00 (1)	1.96 (95, .75)	2.60 (1)	3.24 (95, .75)

Note. Higher scores represent greater irritation or happiness; *ns* and *SDs* appear in parentheses.

persons in the DITF condition who rejected the target request ( $M = 2.59$ ),  $t(125) = .79$ ; for detecting a medium effect size ( $d = .5$ ) with a two-tailed test and .05 alpha, power was .74.

**Other emotions.** The indices of happiness and irritation were reliable (alphas of .71 and .73, respectively). Table 2 contains the mean happiness and irritation ratings (and *ns* and standard deviations) for the various conditions.<sup>4</sup>

Persons who accepted an initial request ( $n = 18$ ) reported significantly greater happiness ( $M = 3.66$ ) and marginally less irritation ( $M = 1.75$ ) than did those declining all requests (*Ms*, respectively, of 3.17 and 2.07;  $n = 258$ );  $t(274) = 3.06$  ( $p < .01$ ) and 1.79 ( $p < .08$ ), respectively (the effects correspond to *ns* of .18 and .11).

Persons who declined the large request in the large-request-only condition reported indistinguishable happiness ( $M = 3.24$ ) and marginally-smaller irritation ( $M = 1.96$ ) feelings compared to those reported by persons who accepted the small (target) request in the DITF condition (*Ms* of 3.19 and 2.22, respectively);  $t(134) = .37$  (*ns*) and 1.88 ( $p < .07$ ), respectively (the effects correspond to  $r = .03$  and .16). For a two-tailed test with .05 alpha, power for detecting a medium effect size ( $d = .5$ ) was .75.

Those who accepted the small request after declining the large request reported significantly less happiness ( $M = 3.19$ ) and significantly greater irritation ( $M = 2.22$ ) than did persons who accepted the initial small request (*Ms* of 3.72 and 1.79, respectively);  $t(56) = 2.81$  ( $p < .01$ ) and 2.10 ( $p < .05$ ), respectively (the effects correspond to *ns* of .35 and .27).

Persons in the DITF condition who accepted the target request reported happiness ( $M = 3.19$ ) and irritation ( $M = 2.22$ ) not significantly different from that reported by persons in the DITF condition who rejected the target request (*Ms* of 3.11 and 2.08, respectively);  $t(125) = .70$  and 1.04, respectively; for detecting a medium effect size ( $d = .5$ ) with a two-tailed test and .05 alpha, power was .74.

### Discussion

These findings are plainly inconsistent with O'Keefe and Figgé's (1997) guilt-based explanation. There is no evidence of the predicted guilt-reduction effects of second-request compliance among DITF participants. DITF-condition participants who accepted the second request did not report less guilt than did either persons who rejected the initial large request or persons who rejected both requests (contrary to H2 and H4); and DITF-condition participants who accepted the target (second) request reported marginally greater guilt than did persons who accepted the initial

target request (contrary to H3). In short, a DITF effect was obtained, without any apparent reduction in guilt among those complying in the DITF condition.

And, paralleling the findings for guilt, there is no evidence that second-request compliance among DITF participants enhanced feelings of happiness or reduced feelings of irritation. Persons who accepted the target request in the DITF condition were not significantly happier (and marginally were more irritated) than those who declined the initial large request; persons accepting the target request after declining an initial large request were less happy and more irritated than those who accepted the target request initially, and were no more happy or less irritated than persons who declined both requests.

In some other respects, the results are consistent with O'Keefe and Figgé's (1997) explanation. For example, the level of guilt reported by participants who accepted no requests was significantly higher (and the level of happiness lower) than that reported by persons who accepted an initial request (consistent with H1). Thus, as in Experiment 1, request refusal appears to be capable of generating the predicted guilt feelings. So, from the point of view of the guilt-based explanation, the key puzzling result is the finding that in the DITF condition, second-request acceptance appeared not to reduce the guilt created by first-request refusal.

It may be that guilt-based processes play a somewhat different role in DITF effects than that envisioned by O'Keefe and Figgé's (1997) explanation. O'Keefe and Figgé focussed exclusively on actual guilt feelings, but anticipated guilt feelings might influence DITF compliance. It is clear that anticipated emotions can play a role in shaping behavior. One simple example is provided by studies of the relationship between entertainment choices and mood: Stressed persons prefer calming materials, whereas bored persons prefer arousing materials, suggesting the influence of (not necessarily conscious) expectations about likely emotional effects (Zillmann & Bryant, 1985, 1994). A growing body of research indicates that various anticipated emotions, especially regret, can influence decision-making (e.g., Bagozzi, Baumgartner, & Pieters, 1998; Brown, Cron, & Slocum, 1997; Richard, van der Pligt, & de Vries, 1995, 1996a, 1996b; van der Pligt & Richard, 1994; van der Pligt & de Vries, 1998). Considering guilt specifically, Birkimer, Johnston, and Berry (1993) found that persons' estimates of how guilty they would feel if they were to engage in various health-risk behaviors are related to avoidance of those behaviors: People avoid the actions that they expect would make them feel guilty.

In the case of the DITF technique, anticipated (expected) guilt might figure in two (not mutually exclusive) possible ways. First, DITF compliance might be motivated not by a desire to reduce the guilt created by first-request refusal, but instead by a desire to avoid the additional guilt that could be expected to arise if the second request were also to be refused. That is, anticipated future guilt, not currently-experienced guilt, might underlie DITF compliance. This anticipated additional guilt has at least two possible sources. One is simply the guilt that can be experienced from rejecting requests (as when the initial request in the DITF sequence is declined). The other is the guilt that might be experienced from violating the norm of reciprocity, that is, the guilt that might arise from failing to reciprocate the requester's concession. Norm violations are a common source of guilt (see, e.g., Keltner & Buswell, 1996), and hence contemplated second-request rejection might produce anticipated guilt associated with the violation of the reciprocity norm. Thus if anticipated additional guilt underlies DITF compliance, a combination of guilt-



based processes and reciprocal-concession-based processes may explain DITF effects.

Second, DITF compliance might be motivated by a belief that compliance will reduce the guilt aroused by first-request refusal. That is, persons might comply with the target request because they expect that doing so will reduce their guilt feelings—even though (given the evidence of Experiment 2) such a belief appears to be erroneous. These two possibilities are not mutually exclusive, of course: Persons might comply with the target request both because they want to avoid additional anticipated guilt and because they expect that compliance will reduce their current guilt.

Thus Experiment 3 explored the role of anticipated guilt feelings in DITF circumstances. Participants were asked to imagine themselves in one of three situations and to report how guilty they would expect to feel. In one condition (the large-declined condition), participants were asked to imagine themselves having declined the initial large request in Experiment 2; in the other two, persons were asked to imagine themselves having declined that initial request and then either accepted (in the DITF-accepted condition) or rejected (in the DITF-declined condition) the target request used in Experiment 2.

Two specific hypotheses were of interest, corresponding to effects attributable to the two distinguishable ways in which expected guilt might figure in a DITF circumstance. First, if DITF compliance is the result of persons hoping to avoid additional guilt following second-request rejection (whether from simple request-rejection guilt arousal, reciprocity-norm-violation guilt arousal, or both), then people should anticipate feeling guiltier after declining both requests than after declining just the first. This reasoning suggests the following hypothesis:

H<sub>1</sub>: Anticipated guilt in the DITF-declined condition will be larger than that in the large-declined condition.

Second, if DITF compliance is the result of persons expecting that second-request compliance will reduce the guilt experienced as a result of first-request rejection, then people should anticipate feeling less guilty after accepting the second request than after declining the first request. This reasoning leads to a second hypothesis:

H<sub>2</sub>: Anticipated guilt in the DITF-accepted condition will be smaller than that in the large-declined condition.

If both processes are at work, then both differences should be evident. That is, if second-request compliance is motivated both by a desire to avoid additional anticipated guilt (as H<sub>1</sub> suggests) and by an expectation that second-request compliance will reduce existing guilt (as H<sub>2</sub> suggests), then both hypotheses should be confirmed.

### Experiment 3

#### *Method*

**Participants.** Participants were undergraduate students enrolled in introductory communication courses at the same large midwestern university as in Experiment 2 (i.e., were drawn from the same student population). Participation was voluntary and uncompensated.

TABLE 3  
 EXPECTED GUILT, IRRITATION, AND HAPPINESS (EXPERIMENT 3)

	Guilt	Irritation	Happiness
large-declined ( <i>n</i> = 63)	3.23 (.85)	2.08 (.91)	1.89 (.67)
DITF-declined ( <i>n</i> = 60)	3.21 (.85)	2.43 (.73)	1.86 (.63)
DITF-accepted ( <i>n</i> = 58)	2.14 (1.00)	1.88 (.97)	3.08 (.77)

*Note.* Higher scores represent greater guilt, irritation, or happiness; *SDs* appear in parentheses.

*Conditions.* There were three conditions. In the large-declined condition, participants were asked to imagine that "you're walking alone on campus one afternoon when another student approaches you, and says 'Hi, I work with the Don Moyers Boys and Girls Club in Champaign. We're looking for volunteers to help out in our tutoring program. We need adults who are willing to work with children on a daily basis to help them improve their study skills. This would involve spending about 15 hours a week with a group of children, at least for the rest of the semester. Would you be interested in becoming a tutor?'" (This was the initial request in Experiment 2.) Participants in the large-declined condition were asked to imagine that they declined this request.

In the DITF-accepted and DITF-declined conditions, participants were asked to imagine having declined the same initial large request, and then having the requester say "Well, we're also looking for volunteers to help out with one of the special events in our cultural program. This would involve spending one afternoon taking a group of kids to a museum or the movies. Would you be interested in volunteering for one such event?" (This was the target request in Experiment 2.) In the DITF-accepted condition, participants were asked to imagine having accepted this second request; in the DITF-declined condition, participants were asked to imagine having declined it.

*Assessment of expected feelings.* In all conditions, after reading the scenario, participants were asked to complete a 16-item questionnaire similar to that used in Experiment 2. The instructions asked the participant "how accurately would each of the following words describe how you would feel," with responses given by placing a checkmark on a five-point scale with end-anchors labelled "very accurately" (scored as 5) and "not at all accurately" (scored as 1). As in Experiment 2, the 16 words consisted of three filler words (contemplative, curious, energetic) and words intended to assess guilt (guilty, remorseful, repentant, regretful), happiness (playful, carefree, pleased, happy, joyful), and irritation (annoyed, grouchy, irritated, angry).

### Results

A total of 188 persons participated, of whom 7 did not provide complete questionnaires, yielding 181 cases. The assessments of guilt, happiness, and irritation were reliable (Cronbach alphas of, respectively, .83, .85, and .83). Table 3 provides means, *ns*, and standard deviations for the three conditions.<sup>5</sup>

*Expected guilt feelings.* H1 was not confirmed. Expected guilt in the large-declined and the DITF-declined conditions did not differ significantly,  $t(121) = .14$ ; for a two-tailed test with .05 alpha, power for detecting a medium effect size ( $d = .5$ ) was .78.

Consistent with H2, the guilt expected in the DITF-accepted condition ( $M = 2.14$ ) was significantly smaller than the expected guilt in the large-declined condition ( $M = 3.23$ ),  $t(119) = 6.49$ ,  $p < .001$  (the effect corresponds to  $r = .51$ ). The guilt expected in the DITF-accepted condition was also significantly smaller than the expected guilt in the DITF-declined condition ( $M = 3.21$ ),  $t(116) = 6.26$ ,  $p < .001$  (the effect corresponds to  $r = .50$ ).

*Other expected feelings.* Expected happiness in the large-declined and the DITF-declined conditions did not differ significantly,  $t(121) = .30$ ; for a two-tailed test with .05 alpha, power for detecting a medium effect size ( $d = .5$ ) was .78. The expected happiness in the DITF-accepted condition ( $M = 3.08$ ) was significantly greater than that expected in the large-declined condition ( $M = 1.89$ ),  $t(119) = 9.05$ ,  $p < .001$  (the effect corresponds to  $r = .64$ ) and was significantly greater than that expected in the DITF-declined condition ( $M = 1.86$ ),  $t(116) = 9.45$ ,  $p < .001$  (the effect corresponds to  $r = .66$ ).

The expected irritation in the DITF-accepted condition ( $M = 1.88$ ) was not significantly different from that in the large-declined condition ( $M = 2.08$ ),  $t(119) = 1.19$ ; for a two-tailed test with .05 alpha, power for detecting a medium effect size ( $d = .5$ ) was .77. Irritation expected in the DITF-declined condition ( $M = 2.43$ ) was significantly greater than that expected in the DITF-accepted condition,  $t(116) = 3.46$ ,  $p < .001$  (the effect corresponds to  $r = .31$ ) and was significantly greater than that expected in the large-declined condition,  $t(121) = 2.28$ ,  $p < .05$  (the effect corresponds to  $r = .20$ ).

### Discussion

People expect that DITF compliance will lead them to feel less guilty. The guilt expected after acceptance of the second request is substantially smaller than the guilt expected following refusal of the initial request. Broadly put, people expect to feel rather good after accepting the second request—less guilty and more happy (compared to the feelings expected from first-request refusal).

Indeed, the binary choice that persons face after declining the initial request—the choice between accepting or rejecting the second request—appears to have starkly different expected consequences: Persons expect to feel significantly more guilty, less happy, and more irritated if they reject the second request than if they accept it. These expectations supply obvious motivations for second-request compliance.

However, these results provide no indication that DITF compliance is motivated by a desire to avoid any additional guilt that might be produced by second-request refusal. People do not expect to feel significantly guiltier after turning down the second request than they do after having turned down only the initial request. Thus there is no evidence that either contemplated reciprocity-norm violations (in the form of failure to reciprocate the requester's concession) or contemplated request rejection create any additional anticipated guilt beyond that aroused by first-request rejection.

The observed expectations about guilt are puzzling, however, when considered in conjunction with the actual guilt feelings obtained in Experiment 2. Persons apparently expect that second-request compliance will reduce guilt, but no such guilt reduction was apparent in Experiment 2. Two possibilities suggest themselves. One is that persons are mistaken in expecting reduced guilt following compliance.<sup>6</sup> The other is that persons' expectations about guilt reduction are accurate, but Experi-

ment 2 simply failed to detect that guilt reduction. For example, it might be that guilt reduction does occur following second-request compliance, but does not happen immediately (and hence went undetected by Experiment 2's procedures).

## Conclusion

Taken together, these studies point to expected guilt reduction as a motivation for second-request compliance in the DITF sequence. First-request refusals can arouse guilt (Experiments 1 and 2), and persons expect that second-request compliance will make them feel substantially less guilty (Experiment 3). Such guilt reduction does not happen immediately, and indeed may not be effected by second-request compliance at all (Experiment 2). But the anticipation of guilt reduction, whether accurate or mistaken, clearly provides a motivation for DITF compliance.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>The correlation of guilt with happiness was  $-.08$ , and with irritation was  $.71$ ; the correlation between happiness and irritation was  $-.25$ . In a confirmatory factor analysis suggested by reviewers, a three-factor model for the emotion assessments proved satisfactory (CFI =  $.93$ ); details are available from the first author.

<sup>2</sup>In pilot work, attempts at implementing such a design consistently met with rebuffs and annoyance.

<sup>3</sup>The design of Experiment 2 permits guilt-level comparisons among various conditions, but the key contrasts are the ones just specified. O'Keefe and Figge's (1997) account does not claim, for instance, that rejecting a larger request inevitably creates more guilt than rejecting a smaller request, or that accepting an initial large request will produce less guilt than accepting an initial small request.

<sup>4</sup>The correlation of guilt with happiness was  $-.25$ , and with irritation was  $.35$ ; the correlation between happiness and irritation was  $-.38$ . In a confirmatory factor analysis suggested by reviewers, a three-factor model for the emotion assessments proved satisfactory (CFI =  $.92$ ); details are available from the first author.

<sup>5</sup>The correlation of guilt with happiness was  $-.51$ , and with irritation was  $.29$ ; the correlation between happiness and irritation was  $-.15$ . In a confirmatory factor analysis suggested by reviewers, a three-factor model for the emotion assessments proved satisfactory (CFI =  $.94$ ); details are available from the first author.

<sup>6</sup>This would not be the only mistaken expectation apparent in these findings. People do not expect to feel any guiltier after turning down the second request than they do after having turned down only the initial request, but this is not consistent with the actual guilt feelings obtained in Experiment 2: Persons declining the second request felt significantly more guilty than those declining only the initial request ( $M_s$  of  $2.59$  and  $2.33$ , respectively);  $t(179) = 2.38$ ,  $p < .02$  (the effect corresponds to  $r = .18$ ).

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