

Marketing Colloquia

Thursday, March 1, 2012

3:00 PM – 4:20 PM, JMHH 741

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Gratitude, Guilt, and Gift-Giving

Gratitude and guilt are both adaptive emotions that help cultivate interpersonal relationships and motivate prosocial behavior. Across five field and laboratory studies, I examine how gratitude and guilt play out in the interpersonally connecting act of gift-giving. Feelings of both gratitude and guilt arise when there are disparities in how much each relationship partner has contributed; however, guilt is associated with a focus on the self, whereas gratitude is associated with a focus on the other. Gift-givers who feel grateful put more thought into their gifts, making gift-recipients feel more connected to the gift-giver. Moreover, gift-recipients are able to assess the emotional motivation of the gift-giver. Therefore, more than it being “the thought that counts,” for gift-giving it is really “the feeling that counts.”