1) Have any data been collected for this study already?
No, no data have been collected for this study yet.

2) What’s the main question being asked or hypothesis being tested in this study?
Participants will perceive less positively the moral character of a person who donates based on a deliberative approach (condition 1: deliberation), compared to someone who donates based on an empathic approach (condition 2: empathy) and someone who feels empathy but ends donating based on a deliberative approach (condition 3: empathy+deliberation). Similarly, compared to conditions 2 and 3, participants will rate the person who deliberates lower in empathy (manipulation check), will judge them as less guided by moral motives, will perceive them as less guided by an authentic prosocial motivation and less trustworthy, and they will be less preferred as social partners. For the previous hypotheses we expect no differences between conditions 2 and 3. In addition, we expect conditions 1 and 3 to be rated higher in reasonableness and competence and they will be perceived as more guided by pragmatic motives, compared to someone who donates solely based on empathy. However, we expect no differences between conditions 1 and 3.

3) Describe the key dependent variable(s) specifying how they will be measured.
To measure moral character (key dependent variable) participants will rate the person on a 12-item scale of moral character that includes positive (moral, altruistic, sincere, pure, good, and nice) and negative items (immoral, selfish, insincere, impure, bad, and mean). Negative items will be reverse-coded. Participants will also rate the following traits of the person: empathy (caring, warm, and empathic), reasonableness (reasonable, effective, realistic, and rational), and competence (competent, skilled, and proficient). To measure moral motives participants will evaluate whether the person’s decision was based on “genuine moral concern”, “moral principle”, “a genuine moral stand”, “personal self-interest”, “what was good for him personally”, and “selfish reasons”. The last three items will be reverse-coded. To measure pragmatic motives participants will rate whether the person’s decision was based on “what was reasonable”, “what was rational” and “a pragmatic stand”. To measure authentic prosocial motivation participants will evaluate whether the person “sincerely cares about Rokia”, “donated to benefit Rokia” and will answer “How authentic do you find John’s decision to donate to Rokia?” and “How suspicious are you of John’s intentions?” (reverse-coded). To measure partner preference participants will rate the extent to which somebody like the person would be a good person to have as a co-worker, neighbor, roommate, close friend, and romantic partner. To measure trustworthiness, we will ask participants “How trustworthy is John?”. We will also include an additional manipulation check to verify that participants felt empathy for the recipient of the donation: “How moving do you find Rokia’s situation?”. All of these questions will be asked using a seven-point scale. We will calculate a composite score for each variable that has more than one item by averaging the corresponding group of items.

4) How many and which conditions will participants be assigned to?
Three conditions: (deliberation, empathy, and empathy+deliberation) between-subjects design.

5) Specify exactly which analyses you will conduct to examine the main question/hypothesis.
We will conduct a one-way ANOVA to examine whether there are differences in moral character evaluation depending on the condition. We will then conduct pairwise comparisons using the Holm adjustment. We will repeat similar analyses with the different traits (empathy, reasonableness, and competence), motives (moral and pragmatic), authentic prosocial motivation, partner preference, and trustworthiness as the dependent variables. We will estimate effect sizes with between-subject’s eta squared and calculate 95% confidence intervals around the effect sizes. We will also estimate effect sizes for the differences between pairs of groups using independent-groups Cohen’s d and calculate 95% confidence intervals around the effect sizes and the mean differences.

We will also conduct a one sample t-test on the mean empathy felt for the recipient of the donation to examine whether it is significantly higher from the scale midpoint (4), in order to confirm that the manipulation triggered empathy. We will also compute the appropriate effect size and confidence interval for the effect size and the mean difference. The predictions are specified above.

We will calculate Cronbach’s alpha for each scale. We will not perform analyses with scales that have an alpha below 0.7.

6) Any secondary analyses?
We may examine if the main and secondary results are maintained after controlling for socio-demographic variables using multiple regression.

7) How many observations will be collected or what will determine sample size? No need to justify decision, but be precise about exactly how the
number will be determined.

We did an a priori power analysis using G*Power 3.1 to determine the sample size required to achieve a 95% statistical power, given a 5% alpha level, 3 groups, and a minimum effect size f of interest of 0.25 (calculated from an eta squared of 0.06). The results showed that we need a total sample size of 246 people. As a conservative measure, we will collect a total sample size of 300 people (100 per group) using MTurk.

8) Anything else you would like to pre-register? (e.g., data exclusions, variables collected for exploratory purposes, unusual analyses planned?)

We include six exploratory questions to examine potential alternative explanations (no pre-registered hypotheses), socio-demographic variables (age, gender, race, education, income, political ideology, and religiosity) and three exit questions.

Participants who respond to less than 75% of the survey or who respond with the same option to every question will be excluded. We include an attention check after collecting the main measures to avoid prompting systematic thinking (Hauser & Schwarz, 2015). We will exclude subjects who fail the attention check.