

Wellbeing guides
Jess Mansfield © 2023

Healing the runaway helper

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Please also see *Being Neutral; Healthy Assertiveness; Healing relationships*.

Purpose of guide

So many people, who may well be wonderful people, want to, and do, help others. Great! But how many 'helpers' also practice their own advice, live by their own highest standards, and help themselves likewise? How many experience low self-esteem only supplemented when they receive recognition from those they assist? How many feel hurt or offended if their help is rejected, not acknowledged, or not integrated? The purpose of this guide is to show what I believe to be the difference between *runaway helping* (helping without any objective analysis) and *genuine helping*, in hope practicing the latter is indeed for the *highest good of All*.

Please note, there is nothing written in these guides which states, 'Don't help people'. I understand some situations require help regardless of what anyone is feeling or whether it seems right or not! As with most guides, I am rarely referring to high intensity situations. *This guide is not for the faint-hearted*. I can only hope readers can trust I am writing it *because* I feel empathy for all parties. 'The Rules' in this guide may work for most interactions, and could possibly ease tensions during more stressful situations. (This is not a guarantee as it takes much self-practice to master neutrality, required for one to act on one's own behalf without being negatively affected by *any* reaction; as well, neutrality is the state which *allows for the possibility of positive resolution*.)

As advised for all guides, trusting one's own intuition and taking a pause for measured judgement, knowing each person, and each situation is unique and requires a unique approach, can be more effective than 'painting all situations with the same brush'. If it's a significant intuition to do or say something, which comes from a genuine place (not projection), trusting this could trump any advice in these guides!

Although I feel I have mostly healed my runaway helper, I still support many people. Perhaps those who expect my help would say, "Bosh! She doesn't help anywhere near enough!" or perhaps they would give me a 'decent level' support rating. *It is not my business what other people think*. I believe I am a giving person, and have felt very comfortable in the role, *before* doing the practices in this guide (all the practices I advise I literally do myself as my philosophy is borne from personal experience). In writing this guide, I have needed to self-assess many times for any hypocrisy, to ensure my writing is not itself driven by 'runaway giving'. And I feel, upon neutral analysis, writing these guides enacts genuine self-respect.

I used to always offer help, all the time, and say "yes" to any request. I've learnt in the process, to find the balance, shutting off all giving is not the answer for me either, as it honours me to give, when it is right for me, and I make sure I reward myself for being the helper, even if no one else shows particular gratitude.

Because runaway helpers tend to be 'on' all the time, this guide is precisely about evaluating all the times people may be unnecessarily helping *at their own, and often others' expense*, suggesting ways to assess for 'right timing' and approaches for giving in 'right energy'.

*Giving help when it is needed for the right reasons
can be genuinely beneficial to all parties.*

Affirmations

"I allow myself to give and receive in equal balance"



"As I respect myself and others I only give in right energy"

Actions

Self-assessment exercise. Am I a runaway helper?

- 1. Do you mostly offer help or are you asked for help? Who initiates?*
- 2. In your opinion, is the way you give empowering to all you help? Is it empowering for you personally?*
- 3. If you feel burdened in supporting others' needs, aside from necessary care (such as caregiver roles), what is the fundamental feeling when it comes to why you won't disengage from the dependency on you, or from co-dependency? Are some of these reasons:*
 - fear of others' reaction; e.g., they'll get mad, be sad or disappointed?*
 - fear of changing others' and your own, perception of you; e.g., it would make you look like a 'bad, mean, selfish' person?*
 - desire for recognition; e.g., to be perceived as 'a nice, generous person'?*
 - because you genuinely believe good people are always kind and giving, and as a good person, you must always demonstrate this?*
- 4. Do you have any issues with receiving? Do you say "Yes" to others' offers and "Thank you" to genuine compliments? If you don't receive well, do you expect those you give to, to receive well?*
- 5. Do you give to yourself; e.g., time, space, love, comfort, healing, reassurance?*
- 6. How much time is taken to assess 'right conditions' before an offer of help is made, or a request for help is agreed to? I.e., how many of the transactions are 'running on automatic'?*
- 7. Do you feel neglected, abandoned, and hurt when you may be struggling, and need something yourself, but no one is there to help you? Do you feel resentment for all you've done for others which may in fact have had a negative impact on your own personal health and wellbeing? How much bitterness do you hold stemming from "all you've done for others"?*

For this quiz I don't summarise the answers in a neat explanation. This is a self-governing exercise to begin the process of questioning what is really happening in the giving/receiving transactions, and why.

Philosophy

"Mind your own business not with apathy, but with compassion"

I could also refer to this as 'the giver's disease' or the 'nice person's disease' which some readers may feel uncomfortable with, thinking, "How can a nice, giving person, ever be associated with a word like 'disease'?" These questions hopefully clarify why I use such phrases and why terms like *runaway healers* has entered into healing discourse (these questions can be used as part of the 'self-assessment' exercise).

Who is helped when a person helps another? The helper, the receiver, or both?

How often is help rejected, to the dismay of the helper?

How often is the receiver resented, because they didn't respond like they 'should' to the help which was offered?

What is the cost of helping if help is not actually needed?

How many people constantly help others yet feel depleted, unappreciated, and resentful?

How many givers recognise the actual effect of their giving, whether good or bad? Do they take a breather and reward their own acts of good, and, are they also willing to see where their help was perceived as 'interference', with offers based on their own assumption about 'what's right for the other'?

The phrase underlying my entire philosophy, and the philosophy of many spiritual healers is to only act, *for the good of all, and with harm to none.*

Help is only helpful, if it actually helps.

Even when we feel great empathy for another's situation, doesn't necessarily mean it is right for us to offer help. There are situations where *our help may not be useful or welcome*, as hard as this can be for some to accept. I believe trusting our intuition as to 'how and when' our assistance, words and actions can bring the greatest benefit to another, is a better system than automatically assuming offering help is the only 'right' response.

Sometimes people may have darker reasons for acting as the constant helper, perhaps thinking their saintliness should make them immune from 'any and all fault' and protect them from others ever acting negatively towards them.

In this scenario, future immunity is 'bought' using the currency of current generosity, and of course, with the giver not telling anyone about this, may find themselves feeling disappointed, hurt, and undervalued when people don't match up with the giver's secret 'mutual' agreement; the receiver's job is to be pliable, be less annoying, accept the help graciously, offer reciprocation, don't ever ask for more, don't be moody, don't ever contradict the giver, always show appreciation, don't complain

about anything else which burdens the giver, and offer something in return even though every offer is going to be rejected. This is all expected by the giver with the receiver having a bare inkling on the matter! I am sorry if this sounds harsh and judgemental, because I honestly believe the pattern is usually borne from fear.

People who are afraid of conflict may use constant helping to cover up any pesky problems which could cause tension, which they perceive as 'conflict'.

And there's usually an entrenched belief that 'being nice all the time' is the answer to avoid any and all problems. But ignoring those things which need to be addressed, conflict doesn't disappear, it just gets suppressed and usually rears its ugly head in ways which could be lessened if the problem was addressed much earlier. Being assertive, as an example, can clear the air in a way which creates mutual respect, but if it is not done, imbalance is borne between people.

The very attitude runaway helpers operate on can actually be the cause of conflict.

Runaway helpers are often expert 'people pleasers', effectively 'managing others' by reading others' needs and moods, and accommodating according to what they think 'pleases' the other best. It's hard for them to understand, not all people want this 'niceness' and constant offers! Many people may find 'useful suggestions' from runaway helpers disrespectful and near intolerable! For the untethered people pleaser, *the genuine needs of the other are completely ignored.*

Some people just want to talk honestly and address problems as they arise, even if this at times feels unpleasant.

Many over-givers may self-berate, take on responsibility for everyone, blame themselves and work hard to 'be better', but I am certain there's a feeling like being 'kicked in the guts' or a 'gaping hole' within for the giver, when recipients don't acknowledge, or act less than kindly towards the giver. As well as creating, (without realising it), an intolerance for others' behaviour, the runaway helper by deflecting any deeper conversations (they're always too 'busy'), and ignoring underlying problems, *in the overall picture are maintaining an approach which is very unhelpful and unhealthy for relationships.*

As well, the runaway helper is usually oblivious to the fact that their constant help and kindness literally conditions others to expect and rely on it, creating pain and confusion for recipients when the giver later withdraws or changes their giving behaviour.

Runaway givers may have a need to feel in control, and can demonstrate behaviours which are controlling; they get to 'run the show', make all the decisions, and ultimately, they have the power to withdraw help at any point they feel the recipient is no longer deserving.

There are many reasons we help others, where, if we truly analyse it, we may see we have less than benevolent motivations for these offers.

Reasons for offering help which are unhealthy

- A deep, and essentially arrogant belief, that we personally are the beacon of knowledge for others and if they just did what we told them to do, their lives would be perfect and all their problems would be solved. Of course, we don't feel this way when the shoe is on the other foot, and find it condescending when others do the exact same thing when advising us!
- We feel we have no value as an individual person, and our only self-value comes from what we can offer others
- A need to distract from ourselves, our own needs, our own ability to receive, our own worries, our own solutions; and as a way to avoid being honest with the other person about how we really feel
- An ongoing need to please others out of fear they'll respond negatively if we withdrew or changed the giving behaviour. Sometimes these fears are justified, but in this scenario the fear is usually applied far beyond this, where even in the safest of scenarios, the giver still feels they cannot say "No" to another's request for help
- A need to control situations, out of fear of allowing others to be in control, because others may make choices the helper doesn't agree with. "My way is the right way, I do this better than you so you may as well just let me do it", which means the helper gets their preference and kudos for how things are managed. The control may be more insidious, where the helpers monitor others' behaviour and moods, and 'measure out' the amount they give, or how nice they are, based on whether the recipient is showing adequate appreciation, recognition, or otherwise reacting the way the giver wants them to
- The helper may be demonstrating the very treatment they themselves want, because they're too afraid to say directly what they want, or they don't think they should have to say their needs out loud; others should just 'know'. But usually, when other people offer to give to the helper in the very same ways the helper gives, the helper doesn't receive well or at all (because receiving may take away their 'giver' status), creating a cyclic conundrum
- A need to be the 'saviour' and believing adamantly, this giving outwards is a righteous way of being. This can be true, except for one key detail, *giving outward but never giving inward completely denies that the giver is a human being too!* It denies what others have to give, and giving only works if it is genuinely helpful to the receiver. 'Saviours' may overlook that the very people they act as saviour to, may well need to 'be their own saviour'!

*If it is a sacred act to give to our fellow human beings in the right way;
it must also be so; it is just as sacred and right to give to ourselves in
the right way.*



Personal example

I used to have a very different perspective than what I have written in this guide. In fact, the only way I realised any of it, was when I was in a very close relationship with a runaway helper who matched my ability for runaway helping, if not more so! I had learnt at this point to say “No” at times to people who asked for constant favours and I was starting to develop an awareness of the importance of setting boundaries. But in this new relationship, which lasted many years, I developed a completely opposite philosophy, as I seriously felt the effects of being on the receiving end of a runaway giver! And this person rivaled what I thought were my expert helping skills, and would never say “No” to anyone, on anything, ever. Therefore, loyalties could never be measured; the person they would always put first is the person who asked first, or the person they wanted to placate the most. The behaviour was ingrained, and the person would constantly offer things, interrupting quiet or potentially intimate moments, and over many years, creating moderate dependency and conditioned expectation (simply by repetitive input; it is hard to say “no” at the thousandth offer!); and this being would later deeply resent me for being such a burden, although I valiantly tried to be independent in every way possible, and felt I was. It is possible for one to sacrifice their time and energy for another, even when the other doesn’t want them to and is actively asking them not to! Basically, I realised all the ill consequences I must have brought to previous people in relationships where I ‘gave, gave, gave’, as this is usually followed by ‘resent, withdraw, despise’. I know the best thing I can do is keep an eye on and continue healing my runaway helper, whilst also keeping keen eyes on, and putting a stop to, any runaway helpers trying to ‘fix’ my life! Receiving is wonderful when the help is offered in the right ways for the right reasons, and when it is obvious there is respect for giver and receiver.

Misconceptions

It is no secret that our modern system of law, and many ideas ingrained in Western society, is imbued with the sentiments of Christianity (*these sentiments being common to many other cultures and religions*) such as “be nice, be charitable, be pleasant”, “do unto others as you would have them do unto you”, “love thy neighbour as thyself”. In the modern vernacular, these phrases are still common, only the language has changed.

“It did make me feel uncomfortable, but I wasn’t going to say anything, I’m a nice person”

“You should always be nice to people”

“Of course I have to help, otherwise it means I’m selfish”

“I would say no but I don’t want them to think I’m being rude”

In a capitalist system ultimately geared towards individual focus, and the satisfaction of one’s own needs, these sentiments of “do good towards your fellow (hu)man” seem to be absolutely valid and needed. I completely agree! I am a human rights advocate and I believe all beings deserve the right to live freely and fairly. But ‘uncontrolled giving’, or ‘giving without consideration’, or ‘giving for self-validation’, all really complicate many relationships, and most for the worst. It creates such a divide between people, so much pain from the giver in feeling undervalued; and so much anger and resentment towards the receiver if they withdraw, or take advantage, or are rude. Ultimately,

unreasonable giving creates imbalance. Most relationships don't heal from this because of these ingrained misconceptions.

Most people who believe they are a 'nice person' usually attach this to being a 'giving person', and define this specifically as meaning they are not a 'bad person', or a 'selfish person'.

The phrases need to be changed so they consider as well, the way we treat ourselves needs to be taken into account, lest we blame others for all we won't voice for ourselves.

Do unto yourself as you would have others do unto you.

Treat yourself the way you believe your loved ones deserve to be treated. Give to yourself the giving you believe others deserve, or at the least, give to yourself as much as you give to others. There is a great deal of negative conditioning, self-judgements, and societal norms of behaviour, which may prevent us from understanding the effects of our unhealthy giving.

*Runaway giving can mean one starves oneself
for a lifetime of one's own self-giving!*

*It can mean denying one's dreams, in order to fulfill
what one perceives as the needs of others!*

In truth, those people who love the giver, may adjust well if the right measures are taken to wean off the giver's support (and for the giver to wean off the giving), for the giver to take the time to focus on their own dreams! But the road never taken is the road unknown. We do make assumptions about what others' want from us, and about what they need, often without even asking them directly if our assumptions are in any way true! Assuming others automatically expect our help, as an example, may blind us to all the times we could actually say "No".

Healing the misconceptions

One of the worst things an over-giver does is attunes others to their constant 'niceness' and 'generosity', whilst inwardly developing a sense of injustice about the imbalance, which of course is the other person's fault! Eventually, the giver may withdraw the niceness and generosity, but having conditioned the other to it, this can cause the recipient quite shocking deprivation. This is usually the point when the argument happens; the recipient reacts very angrily to what they perceive is a complete 180 degree turn from the giver which makes zero sense to them.

The giver, having been so nice, generous, and tolerant for so long, is aghast the recipient can act so badly, so aggressively, when all the giver is trying to do is finally be assertive, stand up for themselves, say what they really think, and say "No", or even say something insulting which they have never said previously, and feel they should be able to say considering the recipient complains to them about all manner of things. *Why can't the giver have this one complaint?* Again, in this scenario, from the giver's perspective, this is all the recipient's fault. But it was the giver's behaviour which conditioned the recipient to the seamless, constant, niceness. It makes complete sense when

this is changed the recipient would think something was very wrong, and it could cause a fearful reaction, expressed as anger or annoyance.

I am sorry this may be painful to read for those who resonate or empathise, with either giver or receiver in these scenarios (or both!), but as someone who feels empathy *for all parties*, it is my belief considering these matters is crucial if we truly want to be good people, and demonstrate genuine love, care and respect for others.

When we respect ourselves, this is practically always the best way to respect others. And though some may need to practice this 'respecting their own needs first' to convince themselves through their own experience the validity in doing so, what they may see, is even in entrenched imbalanced scenarios, *it is possible to integrate change which respects all parties!*

Respecting oneself at least ensures one party is respected!

It is rare for runaway giving to produce results which benefit all parties.

The opposite is usually true: no party benefits and disrespect among all parties is rampant whether or not any party is aware of it.

As the runaway givers suppress their own needs, building resentments along the way, each time they lose more respect for the recipient, to the point of utter disdain. This can happen especially when the receiver treats the giver with disdain outwardly (which the giver finds outrageous) because the receiver:

- Is not able to see the actual effort the giver puts in, because the giver hides the extent of their effort and personal strain, they cover and act nice no matter what, and the receiver gets so used to their needs being accommodated, they do take it for granted, and help may be expected 'as a given'
- Feels the giver undermines them, they don't trust the giver, they feel the undercurrents, or they resent the giver for their own reasons

It seems so unjust to the giver; not only don't they get appreciated, but the person they help also treats them very badly!

But with each giving act not reciprocated, which enables the growing imbalance, and each moment the giver feels powerless, used, and unappreciated, but maintains their giver attitude and status, the giver gains more power.

Runaway givers are usually certain they have zero power: they "have to" help other people, "there's no one else who can do it", "I feel guilty if I say no", "I should help because it's the right thing to do", "This person is too hard to say no to, they are really persuasive", and so, the giver is certain, the help

is coerced, they get it is their choice in a way, but really it's all on the receiver for being so needy, *and*, unappreciative. *"The road to hell is paved with good intentions"*¹

The content within this guide has many solutions to these problems I am relaying. But I feel this serious aspect may need to be explored to grasp how this phrase plays out and leads to breakdown in many relationships, and usually with the people we're closest to. I have seen its manifestations and even been in them, and now it just breaks my heart and I pray for compassion for giver *and* receiver.

It could happen between a parent and child, it could happen with very close friend or partners, but continuing on from before, when the giver hides all their angst, yet conditions through their excess giving, the receiver to their giving treatment, however these patterns formed (whether from the receivers' needs and requests, *or*, from the giver's offer), *the power the giver gains comes from the fact that at any point they can take it all away!*

Say it's a child who remains dependent on the parent when a grown adult, but really the parent is dependent on them, and the scenario becomes genuinely co-dependent, but neither sees it this way; it's the other person who is the dependent.

When it's co-dependency it is possible for both parties to see themselves as the one who gives and sacrifices for the other.

Each may independently complain to outsiders about their struggle and burden, of course, never sharing this with each other, but if they were to, both people could realise they feel exactly the same way! And perhaps they could work towards healing the imbalances. It is not at all uncommon for the imbalance to be quite clearly about *someone who is very selfish* and *someone who is very giving*. Parentified children are a perfect example. This is where the child becomes the parent to the parent, which can start at a very young age. Now it is decades later, and each party resents the other. When it's a parent now a senior, and the child, decades older, gets fed up, and finally, really lashes out at the parent, and withdraws, their timing is right when the parent needs support the most, but this is when the child turns on them. *(Whatever a person has done previously all human beings need wellbeing in the present and in fact when they don't have it, for those who have acted badly towards others, it's much more likely they'll continue to cause pain to others.)*

It makes sense parentified children feel encumbered to say "Yes" and acquiesce to all the parent's requests. Refusing to help could feel akin to a complete betrayal. This can be true as well when it's a child dependent on a giving parent, and the parent is great about it, right up until they're not! But even in everyday relationships, most of us do this in some way; give away our self-respect (in not demonstrating it), or, in the opposite way, take advantage of others without realising it, or ignoring this because we're driven to meet our own wants, and therefore we easily overlook others' needs.

Disrespecting others tends to lead to, and be informed by, disrespect for one's self.

¹ <https://grammarist.com/proverb/the-road-to-hell-is-paved-with-good-intentions/> Accessed October 13, 2021. Please note this site and Wikipedia search on this phrase which shows the writers who have published this, and like, phrases.

Some are too shy to ask anyone for anything, but when they acquiesce for others' benefit (based on the assumption it's the 'right thing to do'), they are proliferating the imbalance which ultimately leads to emotional damage; usually for all involved!

The giver makes a choice!

And it frustrates me no end all these givers feel they are sanctimonious without seeing at all the negative effect their imbalanced giving can bring! Think about what this means, in relation to the 'the road to hell is paved with good intentions' phrase, as what seems to be the underlying truth which I am very sorry to say may apply to most runaway givers, is:

They have the power to give, and the power to take away.

I believe the phrase's meaning, alongside the context where offers are not followed through, has a much more accurately sinister outcome. The giver is literally like God, except it's likely the giving is conditional, which is why the giver can become so resentful.

Runaway givers with their endless runaway offers, create scenarios where, for all their good work, they are setting themselves up to at some point, disappoint the receiver when they can no longer keep it all up. The receiver may be very dependent, and I strongly recommend each party wean off each other to slowly restore balance. Of course, every situation is unique, and some may need to go cold turkey! Trust is such a huge factor in allowing oneself to shift one's perspective in the way one handles interactions.

Trust that when you wean off giving to another, which you could facilitate by finding replacement helpers, it's very possible, there are people who want to give, including to recipients who can be cranky and demanding, and they'll still love the giving work! And they may manage cranky recipients well, even teaching the recipient how to show adequate appreciation and respect. They may guide those they give to to be better people, and never feel resentful! If you relate to this scenario as a resentful giver it's much better these people do the role than you!

Is it more caring to give when it feels right and genuine, or to give tirelessly for years and then abandon or turn on the recipient when their need is highest?

Saying "No" when it's not the right time to help; adjusting things so all help suits your schedule with zero sacrifice; making it work for you in some way to balance any sacrifice (like getting a massage on the way home from doing someone's shopping or physical support, and asking someone for a massage if there's no budget for massages); researching the options for how else the help could be done, like ordering online shopping, and if the recipient complains the products are not exactly as ordered, say, "Yes, but it saved \$30 in petrol, 1 hour in travel time, 30 minutes at the shops, and they don't always have the exact products in store either", and ironically shopping for the replaced items online is still much faster than doing the entire shop in store; if we manage ourselves well, if we respect ourselves well, if we're mindful when we offer, and very mindful we're not conditioning the other with too much giving and niceness, *we protect the person from our future resentments and our eroding disrespect. What a great way to demonstrate care for people!*

It takes much self-observation to feel where the line is, when over-giving is occurring, and immediately set the boundary/be assertive/withdraw the offer. When we feel the imbalance, it is easy to judge the recipient, but often we ourselves set up the imbalance to begin with as *who but we could give so well?* Either way, the attitude makes the giver the sole being who has the power to help others, which only separates them from their fellow human being.

We need to give other people every chance to respect us.

We need to release our idea of what's best for others, because having us resent others due to our one-way generosity and their subsequent, unavoidable 'selfishness', is not respectful to either party.

The only person we can truly know what is best for, is ourselves.

If there's full disclosure from the start, for example, perhaps the misconceptions could be healed instantly. Whether one has been asked a favour, or is about to offer a favour, one could preface:

"Hey. Because I am aware there is something I can do for you, I am going to offer you this guidance, support, and practical help. It might seem like a one-time thing, but I'm so good at helping and I'll offer again and again, that you'll probably get used to it, and get used to saying yes. And so from the start, we'll develop these giving/receiving transactions (I give/you receive). To begin with, I'll feel really good about it, from getting your positive feedback and feeling great about myself, but as time goes on my giving will surpass anything you're able to offer in return, if you offer anything, and I'll begin to really resent your selfishness and neediness, but I won't tell you about it. By the way if you do offer anything, I'll reject it. I prefer to be in control and I believe it's best when I'm the one helping (I'm really good at it). For all the times when I don't feel you really appreciated what I did, or when you overlooked something I said, or acted in a way I felt was rude, I'll note it down on the 'you're selfish' list, but I'll keep smiling and helping you, because I'm a good person. I'll let you know my disappointment in other ways, through my withdrawal, or untoward responses on occasion, and maybe one day really let you hear my full opinion on how ridiculous the way you live your life is and how if you did x, y, and z you wouldn't have any problems, or need me or anyone to help you. If I don't tell you all this upfront, I'll keep this all inside and let it gnaw away at me. You'll probably become someone I really truly despise because you never consider anyone else's needs but your own. Now, *would you still like my help?*"

Even when we think we are in control, when we have all the justifications for believing 'helping this person and saying yes to this request is all fine and a good thing' without forethought we still may easily walk into a situation where we have crossed our own boundaries. We may be diverting and denying our own needs as it's easier to solve problems expressed through other people, and ongoing projection occurs.

We disrespect ourselves when we do not assert our needs and this becomes other people's fault.

We heal this pattern every time we respect our own needs.

How the imbalance occurs

It is very hard for many people to accept, but I believe it to be true, and certainly it is true in my experience, *helping only helps when it is done in right energy*. This is achieved when:

Help is given from a neutral platform and works 'for the best of all parties'.

If this practice is not followed, felt, trusted, or believed in, conditioned behaviour and beliefs often emerge which deepen the divide between people, especially in those closer relationships, such as with family, partners and friends, where runaway helping has become a pattern, often a long-term pattern.

The giver

- has an expectation regarding how the help is going to benefit the other, and measures the worth of their effort on the receiver's reaction, therefore, is bound to feel disappointed each time the expectation is not met
- has exhausted their resources to help the other, and even if the receiver is appreciative, it is still too much and the giver may be deeply worn out and possibly resentful
- sees the receiver as needy, or in genuine need, either way, the giver feels quite good about providing the help, and giving the advice, as they are obviously in the better position to provide such good help to others; and in looking down on the other, *in any way at all*, they are literally seeing themselves as 'smarter, better, stronger, and more capable'. This is already disrespectful and starts the divide
- with the pattern of help entrenched, and expected, has created true dependency on the giver; the giver, for all their good will, has become quite inwardly upset at the receiver for this now ongoing need for assistance
- has very low self-esteem, and only gets the 'hit' that they are worthy if others receive their offers for help. *They do not feel they are worth anything simply existing for their own sake; they must be seen as outwardly giving to 'matter', and are only worth what others show them they are worth*
- allows mistreatment, and disrespectful behaviour, because they must maintain their 'being nice' and 'giving' attitude; they do not ever want to be at fault; they may often apologise even when they have done nothing 'wrong'. They are nice to people who are obviously treating them poorly, and continue giving to them, silently wishing the other would notice and 'learn from their example' about how a 'good person' should behave
- believes with all they have given, it has 'earned them the right' to have the receiver's continual and unconditional respect. If the receiver happens to get cranky, moody, or make any kind of slight towards the giver, it seems utterly outrageous from the giver's point of view. "How dare they say that to me/treat me like that/ignore my messages, when I have done so much for them?" Ultimately, at this level, although the giver may not realise it at all,

they have set up a relationship where the receiver is now not allowed to express human emotions or act in any way untoward to the giver.

*The giver feels they should be immune from fault,
and anyone else's negative behaviour*

- spends quite a bit of time thinking about: how to get out of the transaction which is causing them stress, it's time-consuming, it's negative, even if there's no resentment towards the receiver; how to do what's needed without ruining their own mood, schedule, and other commitments; how to approach the person about changing the situation; et cetera.

*Much more time goes into these giving/receiving transactions than just
the physical favours! More than time-consuming, it is energy consuming*

- always uses the excuse of what they have to do for others to avoid dealing with their own need for self-healing, or avoiding the pressure of realising their own dreams, or of meeting their own needs. All this takes inner work and practical actions. Many find it much easier to focus on what they think they can do for others, and get kudos for it in the process
- may find with all the strain they are under from all the others they are helping, they are taking out their frustrations on their loved ones, and even on people who are themselves offering support to the giver! The built-up imbalance they are creating in over-giving, is affecting other relationships negatively, usually the relationships the giver enjoys the most! It is a form of self-sacrifice, but other people are the reason the giver cannot indulge time for their favourite people and activities. The self-imposed strain means the giver has an excuse to not honour and respect those sacred relationships as much as the giver, deep down, wants to, and knows they need to
- usually does not allow, or see ways they themselves could receive support from others, as they find it very hard to give up their 'giver' status. Even this shows their mentality towards the receivers is not a respectful one. They are expecting others to easily receive their help and support, which, if offered likewise to the giver, is completely rejected. This is where the phrase 'giving is receiving' and 'receiving is giving' applies, because the giver rarely recognises or allows others to give to them they deny others the feeling of 'kudos' for giving!

*In an odd way, it could be considered selfish to only give and
never receive, because one is denying others the gift of giving*

- with the focus on them as the primary helper, denies the recipient the opportunity to create new relationships with other helpers. Say, the receiver has a neighbour who would be more than happy to help with shopping, or offer physical assistance (such as mowing the lawns), and it would in fact brighten their days to be of use to someone. The receiver's giver is stressed out doing all these chores, but insists they're the only person appropriate to help, the receiver is so used to this they don't even think to look elsewhere. But if a new possibility is considered, such as the receiver chatting with the neighbour about what's

possible, the giver's time could be saved; the receiver could develop a new relationship; the neighbour gets some much needed kudos; all of which could *benefit all parties*

- disrespects and disempowers the recipient from the start, in making sure they are the primary helper, even though the recipient may want to view all help as given within the realms of friendship, the recipient still wants, and expects, to feel heard and understood as a friend. But the burdened giver, who, amongst all the helping, doesn't have the energy or want to engage in friendly conversation, literally dismantles the friendship, or makes the friendship impossible, as they won't explore avenues which could make the friendship mutual. And this all means *no matter how nice they act, and how engaged they may seem, at heart, the giver doesn't believe there is any value in a mutual friendship with the receiver*
- doesn't allow the recipient time or satisfaction to work things out for themselves. The recipient may be or become disempowered but neither party is aware of this as long as the transactions between them stay as they are
- blinds the recipient to seeing they could do much better if they 'spread the load' for any assistance they need, which would allow the recipient to form new relationships, and hopefully relationships healthier than the one they have with the runaway giver. In wanting to 'be everything to everyone' the runaway giver disallows room for recipients to *seek better connections elsewhere*
- doesn't see how their words, attitude, and behaviour could be seen as untoward from the receiver's perspective, and rarely takes the time to consider how even aspects of their own personality could be affecting the receiver negatively. Zealous helpers tend to be oblivious to everything except for the details regarding their zealous, unconsidered, helping!
- may find themselves later in life, having genuine problems where they require others to help with the basics: driving to and from medical appointments; doing shopping; making healthy meals; but find there is no one to ask. For all the free helping they've done for so many years, when they need someone, no one is there! The giver may have never wanted to ask in the past, but now the need is imperative, they find others are too busy or not able to help. This may cause such intense bitterness and anger, the sheer hypocrisy of others not making themselves available when the giver has always been there, and always helped them. The feelings of loneliness, abandonment, and seething resentment, may be ever-present in the giver, all from their own choice to be the over-giver for so long, where now it's obvious in retrospect, *there was an expectation for reciprocation all along. And the giver shouldn't have to ask, others should just offer and insist on helping, and make the giver feel alright about receiving, just exactly how the giver would do for them*
- may find themselves later in life developing illnesses from stress or overwork. A common complaint is 'the bad back' where givers have slogged so hard for others at their own detriment!

Hay states back problems are to do with "not feeling supported in life"² and many people with back problems that I know have sacrificed themselves for others, or felt undervalued by

² Hay, Louise L., *You can heal your life*, Hay House Inc., USA, 1999, p. 128. First published 1984.

others, and may feel as if life is against them, to some degree. Rather than being a metaphysical cause (emotions influencing the physical) in the case of runaway helpers the cause could well be literal. They do others' shopping, they help others' move house, and they do physical tasks for others, all which takes a toll on their own body. Again, a harsh bitterness can form when the giver realises all their 'good deeds' has compromised their own health and wellbeing

The receiver

- is not aware of the amount of time, energy, attention and effort that is invested by the giver. They appreciate the help, offer, or advice and respond according to how much benefit they feel from it. They may be surprised at what later appears some slight withdrawal from the giver. What's that about? Depending on the receiver's headspace they may think the withdrawal has nothing to do with the giving transactions and spend time trying to figure it out! They may have forgotten all about what was given and assume the changed behaviour of the giver is due to something completely unrelated. This is time and energy consuming
- doesn't understand why the giver is so generous or why they're offering so much, but they feel it is polite to say "yes" and "thank you", sometimes because of their own 'nice person' complex! Although others may interpret it as more polite to reject offers, saying, "don't be silly", "It's fine, I can do it". For the 'nice person' receiver, it seems to make the giver happy when they say "Yes", and they are quite happy to receive. One day, the giver's mood is changed, and they're not doing the usual tasks, favours, or help, the receiver is confused and has come to rely on it, and responds less than enthusiastically if the giver is expressing anger and annoyance. Such opposite behaviour! They never asked the giver for anything, it was all freely offered. How is that the receiver's fault? And the receiver may still need the transaction they are now dependent on to happen
- becomes so used to the help provided, they focus solely on their own needs, therefore showing gratitude becomes perfunctory rather than felt, and sometimes forgotten altogether. They have also gotten used to their specific requirements being met. This now seems important and should be followed. As the focus is always on them, diverted to them by the giver anytime they ask the giver if they're "alright with all this", with the constant deflection they may stop asking altogether if the giver is alright, and in the process become totally unaware of any exhaustion, or resentment, felt by the giver
- learns to take the easy way out, in letting others do things for them, making them unable to develop mutually respectful relationships, or develop the enriching feelings which come from self-empowerment. It is easy for many people to feel comfortable to rely on others when the help is readily available. When the help is constantly suggested and offered, it can be hard to say no!
- learns even if they behave badly, the giver still gives, the nice person is still nice, again, the mistreatment-resentment divide continues and the receiver is completely shut off from mutually loving relationships

- relies on others for answers, and allows the givers to direct their life in the way they see fit and best for the receiver. The receiver finds it difficult to understand their own truth, and to make choices based on what they believe; constantly pulled and encouraged to rely on others' advice. How likely is it, that these advice givers, truly know what is best for these receivers? Do they know the receiver's deepest hopes, wishes, thoughts, and beliefs? Have they even asked? If not, how can they make a truly informed decision about what is best for the receiver? The receiver may ultimately feel lost and disconnected
- loses a great deal of self-respect, every time they give away their right to self-empowerment, by allowing the giver to help and interfere. They may not speak up to be polite, because the giver insists, or they may protest but be overrun. But each time they inwardly wince, and may think thoughts such as, "God they really must think I'm an idiot that I couldn't work that out for myself", or, "They must think I am such a loser letting them help", or, "Why couldn't I just do this myself?" Breaking the pattern of low-esteem may not be easy, but when someone is constantly offering their assistance, it may be hard to know when it is right to receive, and when it is right to achieve the task on one's own, or seek help in a more appropriate way
- feels generally helpless, stupid, and loses their want to learn how to do new things, or create their own opportunities for self-development, or work on themselves outside of what they have to do. It's so much easier when the giver does it
- gets treated very badly at the odd times the giver 'lashes out' because of how selfish and unappreciative the receiver is. The receiver may feel things were offered in good faith, and the lashing out is unfair, or they may recognise themselves as selfish, very selfish, and feel really bad and contrite. None of this changes the fact that there is still entrenched dependency on the giver. The cycle continues
- feels a great deal of anger, and may express anger towards the giver, as they realise deeper issues are being overlooked and the reasons for all the giving may be indeed to undermine, rather than empower, the receiver. This may cause the giver outrage and a sense of injustice if the receiver expresses their own resentment
- feels like they live in a bubble, and may become shy to developing new connections, because they have fear if they don't 'need' the giver, the giver may leave them. If this happens even one time it could happen again, so they may stop looking elsewhere for connection and support. They trust the giver and may even become insistent that the giver is the only one who helps. This again puts pressure on the giver to 'be all that', the social listener as well as the helper, and the recipient may sense deep down, the giver is not really interested.

*This is incredibly damaging for the receiver's self-esteem,
and could even compromise their life-force energy.*

To be given to, on the physical level, but ignored on the spiritual level, can be very painful, and many people are doing this to others who they specifically offer help to or agree to help upon request, and then consider the recipient a burden! Runaway helpers can resent recipients to the point where recipients feel utterly unworthy. *This is a psychological risk!*

*All humans need to feel valued and recognised,
even those who are fully dependent on others!*

This is why when we help anyone it's essential we actually do respect the human being we are helping. It is not nice or helpful to do actions which could compromise other people's self-esteem; *but this is usually what happens when we don't help for the right reasons.*

If the giver set a boundary, or asserted themselves, and advised the recipient to seek new avenues for support, the recipient at least has a chance to find other people, perhaps people who could show them respect *and* support their needs, but if the recipient doesn't seek these new connections, they cannot make them

- doesn't see how their words and behaviour could be seen as untoward from the giver's perspective, and rarely takes the time to consider how even aspects of their own personality could be negatively affecting the giver. They may have every reason in the world to feel it's reasonable to receive from the giver, and be unaware ongoing acknowledgment is what the giver wants (the giver probably deferred all the "thank you's" and "can I offer you anything in exchange?" with their fussing replies, "It's fine, no need to thank me!" and "Of course not. I'm more than happy to help. You don't ever need to offer me anything!" from the beginning of the relationship); the receiver may even feel disappointed when the giver doesn't seem as enthusiastic about helping as they used to!
- may become the source of blame, as an entrenched pattern demonstrated by the giver, when the giver is 'done with it' and lets the receiver well know it is all their fault; describing to them all the problems, health or otherwise, the giver now has due to the recipient being such a long-term burden. Depending on the recipient's level of gratitude, or belligerence, is how badly they'll feel for being such a 'burden' on the giver. For those recipient's with low self-esteem, who never asked for the giver's help in the first place, or who never meant to go along with the giver's offer to become dependent (but subtly, being convinced "It's fine" over time), this kind of treatment may be very damaging to the recipient's mental and emotional health!

How to heal the imbalance

Following on from these points I hope it has become very clear:

In many of these 'giving' transactions, quite a bit of damage is being done!

This is of no help to anybody.

Accepting this truth is the first step to healing the runaway helper. *Many people do truly care and want to be a 'good' person.* But doing this without any self-analysis or objectivity doesn't usually lead to these outcomes.

*If one truly wants to be 'good', surely one wants to integrate
the best and most authentic ways to demonstrate this.*

Essential to this process, is being willing, honest, and self-aware enough to accept all which one currently does which may not fit quite right with being a genuinely 'good' person. The only way to heal these often long-standing patterns, is to train oneself to *only give in right energy*.

*"Yes, you can still share, and show you care,
but never at the expense of yourself"³*

When we think we are helping, we may be genuinely disempowering people, or, allowing them to take up all our spare time and energy when others could fulfill what they need at no personal cost, and in a way which is 'for the good of all'.

Share the load!

It took me a long time to accept, because I was raised in hardship (within a Westerner's context), that most people are actually alright, they have a good network of friends and supportive family, they are not self-raised like me, and they didn't at all need my unsolicited help or intuitive advice. Nowadays, I allow for any help to go where it seems needed. And these days, more than anyone, I need it.

It's been a journey healing my runaway helper, and to adequately accept, I am not responsible for the health and wellbeing of others, and cannot control how others live their lives, but as well, I do owe it to myself to be compassionate to others if this is a genuine intuition, and when I deny my compassion I hurt myself as much as when I give it to everyone but myself!

... I release myself from all negative attachment ...
I trust that this is for the highest good of all
I help others most by not allowing myself or them to be co-dependent
I look at every situation in a balanced way.⁴

From here on this guide focuses on practices for healing the imbalance through training oneself to *give in the right way, at the right time, for the right reasons*.

Am I helping for the right reasons?

This practice involves being neutral, to better read your intuition, or for those who don't ascribe to the word 'intuition', being neutral means having a clear head, and helps one feel free from bother from external attachments. The first step is to assess, from a neutral perspective, clear of your own prejudices, judgements, desires, and expectations, why any help is offered, asking yourself if the offer works in favour of all parties.

There is nothing wrong with feeling good about helping someone.

It is only wrong if it is detrimental to either party.

³ Stars in the making, *Thrive*, Words and Music Copyright © 2020.

⁴ Salerno, Toni Carmine, *Gaia Oracle guidebook*, 'Liberation' oracle card, Blue Angel Publishing, Australia, 2016, pp. 54-55. First published 2008.

To help ethically the questions need to be asked:

- *Are you doing it for you or is it also best for them?*
- *Are you truly the best authority to decide what others' true needs are?*
- *Could the other tell you what their true needs are if asked?*
- *Is there any underlying negative pull to help: insecurity; arrogance; expectation; undue obligation?*
- *Is this person being selfish, and the helping supports them being selfish? Are you being selfish?*

It may seem contradictory, but giving for your own reasons, without any consideration as to whether the help is healthy for the receiver, *is* selfish! So yes, there are many 'nice, giving people' running around who don't actually give a stuff about others' wellbeing, only that they listen and appreciate their steadfast commitment to be of continual assistance, and whether or not this is wanted by the receiver is irrelevant.

If you truly care about people, you don't want them to experience any of those nasty side-effects as listed, simply because they said "Yes" and chose to receive, or otherwise went along with your 'generosity'. Likewise, you don't want the over-givers experiencing any of those negative consequences either.

Be careful when you offer help.

Even unsolicited advice can make people feel defensive, enough to have the opposite effect, where they may resist healing or trying anything new. It is quite easy to damage people on some 'harmless merit' in a simple offer to help. I am not saying one has done anything 'wrong' per se, if damage is caused from offering unsolicited help, because empowered people can handle runaway helpers anyway, and disempowered people are going to find something to feel bad about no matter what we say, but:

It is fair to say the choice which demonstrates respect at least considers the other person's needs, long before offering anything.

If the giver allows mistreatment, if the giver allows dependency, if the receiver goes along with it, always, it is perceived as the receiver's fault. The reason this is so ironic is because *if one cannot see one's own part in the problem, how can one create a solution?* Yet what about all those who are giving recklessly? The receivers are labelled as selfish, demanding, even cruel, pedantic, needy, and ineffective, but yet the runaway helpers are saints? Runaway helpers may often complain endlessly about all the things they need to do and all the people they have to help, all whilst tooting their own horn (whether they realise it or not) about what a giving person they are, and simultaneously, be completely unaware all their complaining is causing detriment to the people they complain to! In being a 'helper' they have created another side-set of 'unhelpful' behaviours. Again, when this happens due to conditioning, the outcome for all parties may be a litany of unwanted consequences.

I do apologise if I sound judgemental towards the givers, I am sorry. It is really only my past behaviour I am judging, and I cannot expect to know or judge anyone else's reasons for giving. I myself am a reformed giver. I still need to manage it constantly, to make sure I am protecting myself and others. But what bothers me most was my own hypocrisy, in thinking I had the answers for others when I was not even addressing my own issues. I was the one instigating those very giver/receiver transactions I described in the previous section. It was very hard to accept I was the hypocrite, but it also helped me heal.

We must look at how we ourselves can act for the good of all parties in these giving/receiving scenarios, if we truly are to be good.

Some funky outcomes may present when one tries to help another (without asking them) and in their assumption may create the opposite effect. Say, one decides to do the dishes for their housemate who has just finished a night shift, the giver feeling this is such a nice, thoughtful gesture. But, in their bliss, the giver fails to realise the rattling from the dishes is interrupting the housemate's sleep! The housemate doesn't want to be rude, or want to mention it, so when they later see the chirpy giver, who asks, "Did you notice I did your dishes?" and the reticent recipient mumbles, "Thanks" bitterly, the giver has no idea why and feels really slighted! Or, maybe those who suffer from conditioned, unbalanced guilt think, "I should ring this person and see if they need anything". This urge could happen, sometimes especially so, when the giver is feeling tired, but they push against it, thinking, "No, I should do something for someone else and not think about myself". So they go ahead and ring the person they think they should be offering help to, but it turns out their phonecall interrupts the 'receiver' doing yoga for the first time, or interrupts a much needed nap.

Sometimes we don't see or ever learn the negative effect unreasonable giving could have, we just have to trust there usually is one.

We know at least one party is damaged when we don't 'give in right energy', which is ourselves. This should be enough to make us want to be cautious.

Allow yourself to be neutral in situations where you would automatically offer help, be open to listening to your intuition when you ask the key question:

"What is the best thing for me to do in this situation?"

Suggested questions to assess whether one is giving 'only in right energy'

- Is this task/help/support something the receiver can do for themselves? Can I support them in doing this on their own? Giving someone written notes on how to use a computer for example, or showing them how to do online searches to answer their own questions, rather than you explaining things again every visit, is a much more effective approach for all parties
- Is this right for me to help with, or would someone else be better suited? Keep an open mind as to other ways the help could be given

- What is the motivation? Will I feel good about doing this because it is genuine help, it is appreciated and respected, and something I am quite happy to assist with?
- Can I offer this without any expectation of reciprocation, or particular thanks, other than common courtesy? Am I going to remember this and although I won't state it out loud, the person now 'owes' me extended courtesy or a future favour?
- If I require reciprocation, to feel all parties benefit, can I state so clearly before the transaction how I would like my help to be reciprocated?
- Can I accept that if I choose not to help to respect my own needs, this is not disrespectful to the receiver? Can I accept being the manager of others' lives (except with young children, and invalids) is not my responsibility?

Release expectations

If you decide to help someone, or receive help from someone, one way to avoid disappointment is to release expectations. Respect your own needs. As all the guides state, being neutral does not mean being absent of self-respect; *all beings are worthy of respect!* Be open to what your deeper feelings are and open to the outcomes which come from making choices for the right reasons.

It also helps, as part of being neutral, to release expectations about how, when or why the giving/receiving scenario presents itself.

Example

Instead of expecting, as is 'typical', when you go to your friend's house (or ring her), she is going to complain and complain, and you are going to throw yourself into the listener/support/carer role; start the interaction with a completely open mind as to what can happen. If you can observe, instead of act/react, you may find it is *you* instigating such transactions! Within seconds you're already gushing, "How are you?" with such compassion, then asking, "What's going on with you? Is everything alright? Talk to me!" Of course there are as many examples as there are unique situations! But effectively it could be, the friend is insecure and only shares her complaints because you are pushing her to; or, your friend is very talkative and you notice she is not even taking a moment to ask how you are, well, alert factor, that's a boundary which needs setting, "Please take the time to ask me how I am and listen to my response before you tell me everything which is going on with you!" Whatever the unique scenario, if you release your own idea about 'how it's going to be', thinking 'it's always like this, they wouldn't change', which keeps you trapped in the cycle, you may start to notice what is *really* happening; seeing the underlying functions of interactions. Then, you can at least control what you are doing on *your* side of the transaction. This helps enormously!

You can apply this technique to many situations.

A classic example when looking at entrenched patterns, is the giver with the overly demanding boss or parent, where the expectations on the giver are very obvious and 'the way it is'. Ironically again, if expectations are released, the giver may find there are some moments, however occasional, where:

- ✚ they can 'make something up and take 5 minutes time out', saying, "I need to take a phone call", but really they just go and meditate or play on their phone for a few minutes;
- ✚ they can react so neutrally to the constant demands, and say casually, "You mean, you want me to do this right now?" at least pointing out the ridiculous demands placed upon them;
- ✚ they can say in a calm, neutral way, or, say so fiercely it cannot be ignored (with strength and authority), "Look I'm already doing everything you ask of me, but I ask one thing, don't ever yell at me while I'm helping you!"

Please see *Healthy assertiveness*.

In each of these scenarios, one cannot be concerned about the other's response, because the expectations of a negative response may prevent one from ever saying what is needed to create the possible change!

The expectations need to be released first.

People usually wait for the magic moment where the other changes *their* behaviour, and in so doing, *they're unable to see their own role in the transaction, which completely disempowers them from changing it!*

Acting on one's own behalf and demonstrating self-respect is *always* the right thing to do; the only exception is if it comes to personal safety and one's instincts are to completely acquiesce, but even this ultimately, is an act of self-protection which respects the self. But these negative expectations cause us to truly believe saying "No" and not acting as the perfect, nice, helpful person, is going to cause others to tirade against us. Some, who are used to our help, may show some surprise and even upset at first, but most people actually want to respect others' stated needs, and it's *our own assumptions* which prevent us from ever stating them!

It is only when we release expectations can we see in truth what is happening; this allows us to see opportunities for change in the dynamics within those relationships, however small.

Healing resentment

Be aware of the role you are playing in all your relationships. This may be terribly hard for some to accept, but there is a hidden truth about runaway helpers which must be addressed. Many may, without realising it, be 'giving everything away' for one core reason: *because they need to point the finger outwards, blaming and resenting others for 'using them', in order to avoid responsibility for their own happiness. But it may be possible:*

*The person they blame at their core, is themselves
The person they want to give to, and feel the love and support from,
at their core, is themselves.*

The person they most need to forgive, is themselves.

Runaway helpers, on some level, must believe that nurturing, support, encouragement, compassion and love, *must* come from outside sources. The great value they feel from being the giver is that others' value their worth. *But do they value their own worth?* I must constantly monitor this aspect in myself. Often we may lower our self-respecting boundaries to give to someone, it can happen very fast, one minute we respect ourselves, next minute, someone rings us and asks for a favour. We find ourselves involuntarily saying "Yes" even knowing it doesn't feel right. Then, in knowing it isn't right, if we do the help anyway, it's typical some other negative thing could arise, we bump our head on the car door; we misplace our phone; or anything which would have all been fine if we respected ourselves and said "No". And this is all the other person's fault, by the way. These frustrations happen because when we ignore our own rights, due to this idea that *to be a good person we must say yes to others*, we are actually working against our own energy, and our own emotional and mental wellbeing! The problem with the 'law of attraction' is unless we cultivate an inner template which is self-loving and self-nurturing, the external gets attracted to our inner feelings of unhappiness, low self-worth, insecurity, resentment, and frustration.

Imagine how much you could thrive, if you gave yourself all the love, time, guidance, energy, focus and support that you give to others?

Considering, as has been stated, we don't truly know, and shouldn't have the right to decide, what others' genuine needs are anyway (again, with exceptions relating to young children and genuine dependents), the outcome of giving outward much more than giving inward may not be anywhere near as fruitful as we hope. If we give ourselves even an inkling of our own time, support, love, and encouragement, we could do far more with these resources than others could as we actually do know ourselves fairly well!

Learning to receive

One of the best ways to heal the imbalance a runaway helper automatically creates in their unassessed offers, is to learn how to receive and what receiving feels like. This helps restore the balance. It also teaches and shows something very important: *the value in what others have to offer.*

One of the saddest things over-givers do is take away the gift of giving from others, as if others have no real worth in their genuine offers of assistance.

We must nurture and practice *feeling the space within which is willing to receive*, and feel it as an energy; and as a genuine recognition of something being received.

*We need to be the container for the giving waters to pour into;
and therefore able to receive the giving which is on offer.*

Even recognising what we ourselves get from giving transactions can be acknowledged as a way we give to ourselves, but receiving from others, and ourselves, this takes more practice than we may think!

It is worth noting, just as one can give in unhealthy ways, one can receive in unhealthy ways! Sometimes we say “yes” to another’s help when we really didn’t want or need it, but we don’t know how to say “no”. I have found myself doing this, because I can feel the giver’s need to help, I want to allow them this gift, but every time I do so when it doesn’t feel right, there’s a negative consequence. It usually just takes longer to say what could be said from the front in one sentence, “I truly recognise and appreciate the offer, but for right now I just want to manage this myself”. It is quite possible, giving ourselves and others this respect whenever offers are made, creates circumstances which works wonders for all parties, even if each person doesn’t see or have any idea the benefits which comes from their own self-respecting act.

*We must train ourselves to only receive when we feel it is right for us.
Allow room and space, listen out for offers, and allow
people to assist you where it’s applicable.*

Helpful language

When you have assessed you feel it’s reasonable to offer help, there is language you can use to make another feel you are not saying they ‘need’ help; approaches which are empowering to the giver *and* receiver. For example, instead of saying, “Can I help you with this?” You could try saying, “Let me know if you want a 2nd pair of eyes on it”. And when we’re just gung-ho and sure we know the answer to another’s problem, and they’ve already shown an openness to our help, we can at least be up front and honest, “I really like solving problems if you’re up for letting me assist”.

If we want to show we genuinely care for others, we want the language we use to show love and respect. It’s not as simple as rushing in and acting as the solution master. This can be unhelpful and disempowering. We want to talk in a way which shows we are neutral as to what the other chooses, and where possible, *always ask others what they feel is best*, long before we chime in with what we think is best for them!

When we have helped and others are thanking us, it’s important we acknowledge the thank you; *the way we receive gratitude reflects the energy in which we have given*. When we (givers) say “It’s alright” it suggests we didn’t mind and it wasn’t too much bother. “That’s fine” similarly, it’s done now, and no need to worry. “You’re welcome”, says, “I am happy I was able to help”, and “My pleasure” means we acknowledge we benefitted as well from the transaction! It can feel great to be able to fulfill someone else’s needs in the way they want, as we have achieved something! But hopefully we equally want to receive the same level of support from ourselves for ourselves.

When others compliment us, even if inwardly we don’t agree, we can graciously say “Thank you” and in this way show the ability we have to receive. If we expect others to receive what we have to give we must see the benefit in showing we can graciously receive as well. If we don’t receive well, whether supportive offers or compliments, we’re saying, “The help/compliment is not worthy of receiving” or, “we are not worthy of receiving”, both of which is disrespectful to all parties! One denies the other the gift of giving; the other denies ourselves the gift of receiving!

It is worth being mindful of language and making sure the way we talk is not in any way disempowering or condescending. In saying this, this very sentence sounds this way and I do acknowledge this and apologise! Perhaps the point is to show being gracious and aware of how one

comes across to others, can be as helpful as the actual help! Especially when one says, “Boy that tone wasn’t what I was going for, what I was trying to say is I want to show my respect for you, so if that’s not offering you a peep, no problems, because I am behind your choices 100%, or, if it is about lending a hand, if it might be useful, I’m here”.

If you’re not able to help someone, and your feeling is strong that you don’t at all want to, let the person know it’s not about them, even if it means full disclosure. “I honestly have a problem saying yes to people and I really don’t have the energy to keep it up, but this is something I need to start saying to everyone.”

Where there is automatic helping, we can make the choice to pause and say: “Is it possible someone else could help you with this?” We don’t often allow for this option, thinking, ‘Well I can do it, I may as well’, ‘It’s easier just to do it and get it done’, ‘If I do this, *then* I can focus on myself again’, and, ‘At least they’ll stop asking if I just do this now’. *But sometimes all we need to do is ask!* “I’m really sorry, and I hope you can find the right person, but is there some way you can do this without my help?” This may involve asking a favour from someone yourself to help the person you don’t feel you can do the favour for!

When it comes to owning what we bring to situations, and being mindful of any resentment, it’s worth replacing the terms ‘You/They’ with the term ‘I’. “They always make me feel unappreciated” becomes “I don’t alert them to the fact that I require adequate gratitude”, and, “I don’t demonstrate self-respect”. Healing these patterns of thinking, the affirmations are:

*“I say no when I need to and ask for adequate reciprocation
when I do help others”*

“I make the right choice when I demonstrate self-respect”.

‘The Rules’ for genuine helping

Rule #1 Be neutral

Being neutral is the art of removing one’s ego, judgements, objectives, and expectations off a situation. It is the place within ourselves which understands we are all human beings experiencing life as only we can from our unique spatial position. A bird can stand on one branch atop a tree, and see the world from this perspective. A bird on a lower branch, literally, sees the world differently, from a different spatial position. They also feel differently, being these beings in unique locations with unique experiences. *We can only occupy our own unique pocket in space and time; our physical vessel. This is why diversity exists, because a differentiation occurs depending where we are, and then, how we are conditioned to our unique surroundings.* Birds help each other locate what others cannot see from their spatial position and vice versa. Think how different something looks when you see it from a different perspective, from a greater height or from a different angle. Humans judge not only what they see, but their conditioning determines how they interpret their experiences, especially their interactions. And sadly, many humans use this ‘different perspective’ to constantly judge each other. For one to be neutral, one must see it makes perfect sense we all interpret the

world differently, and therefore, all our unique beliefs and behaviours, make perfect sense. Just as the flora and fauna change depending on the landscape, so too do humans find themselves raised so differently to each other and to believe so differently it's hard to believe they live on the same planet! When you find yourself thinking, "God they're an idiot for doing that! How can anyone think such behaviour is funny? Why is this person acting this way?" replace it all with the question:

"I wonder what is happening from their perspective?"

You do not need to get emotionally involved to do this. It's about accepting we each have our own unique point of view, beliefs, and perspectives, and it's all perfectly normal. When you tap into this 'Universality' when you want to know how best to act towards others, and how to respond to others, intuition may be clearer and easier to listen to.

The neutral state is usually achieved when one meditates, and when one is deeply relaxed; the state where one neither judges anything nor feels particularly attached to any concerns. But we have this state within us all the time. But even without meditating or being relaxed, one can acknowledge all others' experience is different and each situation is unique and requires a unique approach, *if all parties are to be respected.*

When the situations arise to help, ask yourself "why are you offering?" or "why are you responding 'yes'?"

Tap into your inner truth and ask:

"Is this right for me?" and "Is this right for them?"

Take the time to listen. Usually your gut tells you straight away, "No, I definitely do not want to help with this favour" even while the mouth says, "Yes, no problems, I can help". Being neutral cuts through the nonsense for the offer to help to be based on what *you* think, and allows the other's needs to be considered. The questions can be asked to the other person, "Do you think it's best for you if I offer to help or do you feel more comfortable doing this solo?" and the question to self, "Is it in my best interests to help?" I am not talking about being selfish. I am saying, we may compromise our time, effort, and energy for others when they didn't specifically want or need our help in the first place! And where they could have *easily* sourced the help elsewhere, allowing the possibility for all parties to benefit, where the other giver they find *is* doing it for the right reasons! A great question to ask oneself is:

"Am I doing this for the right reasons?"

And to be truly honest with self about what those reasons are, and trusting:

It makes one a much better person to recognise all the ways one may not be acting 'good' in order to truly be good!

Being neutral allows us to see the possibility our help may not be needed.

It allows us to offer help whilst freeing others of our baggage (our projections), and our need to help.

Rule #2 *No pressure*

If you believe genuine helping can be of great value to someone, also means you are recognising your own value. Doing the opposite – *doing things under pressure from others when it's not an emergency* – would reflect you are not valuing your own time and energy. If you decide to help, make the choice to remove the pressure. The decision is made and you recognise you are doing it from your own free will, and this in itself can relieve any additional negative energy. If you're the one instigating the help, make the offer to help open-ended, i.e., do not put pressure on the other to receive or respond to your help in any particular way! If you need to change your personal schedule to accommodate the other, don't add this to the negative pressure, you are making an active choice, and it's pointless to make it and then resent it as well, as this only takes up even more energy! If you go out of your way for someone without them realising it, this is your choice and shouldn't equal the receiver having to then be overly grateful.

Rule #3 *No stress*

Same as Rule #2, once the decision has been neutrally assessed, and you do feel it is genuinely 'right' to help, then also decide it is now ridiculous to add stress to the task. Sure, in the past, helping the same person, or finding yourself in the same helping scenario may have been very stressful. But now, in the awareness of your choices, and trusting your decision is 'for the good of all', there is no need for the stress. *Let it go*. You can physically do things, and even give advice and show great compassion, without compromising your soul, wellbeing, and time.

When you help for the right reasons it nourishes you as well!

If the person you help stresses you out, and acts in any way untoward, you have a few choices. You can be assertive, and say:

"I find it really hard to help you if I feel you're being critical too. If it's me you want as the helper, could you be aware of this? It otherwise may be better to choose a helper you don't want to criticise"

"If things I do or say bother you, can you share it with me at another time, not when I'm in the middle of helping you?"

It's important the tone is neutral, it doesn't ever need to be accusatory! You are stating your own needs and preferences plainly, in a way where you're not banking on any form of response, but it still needed to be said. If you don't feel it's right to say anything, you can inwardly remind yourself, 'Yes, this person does usually get on my nerves, and I do find it stressful being around them, but, I made the active choice to help so it's probably silly being bothered about something I was well aware could happen anyway!' And if you're at the point where you know it's wrong for this person to allow you to help and then make it hard for you, say, *"I'm not helping you so I could feel like crap,*

and it makes it far too hard to help if you're feeling bad about me being here, so I best leave", or, "I came here to help, but I'm obviously not helping, and this is not helping me either, so I best leave". Sometimes, just saying what you need to say can alleviate the stress.

*Remember, you always have the choice to be neutral.
No matter what others do or say, they are just being who they are.*

Allow this, but do what's right for you which could even mean being neutral to your own feelings.

*If you put yourself in a stressful situation, and accept this, it is
quite possible to do all the things without feeling stressed!*

When I do this myself, say "Yes" to the favours I really didn't want to do, or blurt out "Can I help?" when I didn't even assess if it was me specifically who was needed for the help, when I do the tasks, I can laugh at myself, because it's just a new opportunity to remind myself, *I must learn to assert my needs and protect my energy*. This self-awareness helps diffuse the stress associated with helping, and it's empowering to recognise any stress incurred always relates to those moments where I disrespected myself, even if ever so slightly.

Rule #4 *Self-protection*

Many people feel, and therefore are, entrenched in these relationships where they are over-giving. In deciding to be neutral, to separate feelings, to recognise 'what is yours and what is theirs', one can learn not to compromise their own precious energy. How does it help to cause an imbalance between people? Where one has to wane for the other to wax? One has to sacrifice for the other to thrive? *Do you believe it works this way?* If you believe we each have the right to respect our own time, being, space and energy, then self-protection in all matters relating to helping others seems important.

Assess whether you can truly give, and truly help, with no personal discomfort in any degree. Make a choice, and once made, set the protection shield of love and light, trust your choice, and do not allow any possible (and common in the past) negative words, behaviours, or external responses, and the state of others, to bother you in the least bit. Even if the tasks take mental and physical work, well, you knew this as well, and made the choice to help knowing all which was possible. You're shield is up, you're doing the thing. Continue self-protecting and assess yourself to make sure whether self-protecting, and all the neutral work, is not done as another way to justify helping others out of unreasonable guilt, unfair obligation, ill-perceived responsibility, and unhealed conditioning. *The choice to help still always needs to be for the right reasons.* Stay self-aware and make sure you're not duping yourself!

Rule #5 *Ask others first!*

If someone has asked you for advice or assistance, there is nothing wrong with asking them first:

"Is this the best way for you to get this help?"

"Do you have other ideas for solutions?"

"What would you do if I didn't answer this call, who else could you ask?"

And where you don't want to help, you can preface:

"Do you think it's wrong if I say no? Is it possible you can source the assist elsewhere?"

"I want to say yes but it's just not right for me to help anyone else right now, can you understand this?"

Where you're just about to offer help, you can preface:

"What do you think is the best way for me to support/help/assist you with this?"

"If I offer to help you with this, do you think this is empowering or disempowering for either of us?"

"Do you honestly want my help with this, or am I interfering?"

"Do you feel I'm overdoing it if I offer to help, or do you feel it could be really useful?"

"If I offer to help you with this, do you mind if we discuss reciprocation?"

And the most important question we can ask anyone we want to help:

"What do you think is best?"

Rule #6

Release expectations

If you say "Yes" to someone's request, if you offer to help and the receiver says "Yes", do you then expect something from the transaction? I am not talking about the obvious here. Even energetically, it's important to recognise a transaction is taking place, one which could cause great imbalance in the relationship if it is not done correctly. As one example, being someone's personal taxi driver without ever asking for petrol money, or having it offered. Some people may think this is normal (especially when it's lifts for partners or family members). But when the receiver asks for a lift, they are really asking the giver to, "organise their schedule; account for traffic; map the right route; get petrol; do anything else incorporated into the drive (like getting something from the shops); concentrate on the road; park safely; deal with anything along the way, such as roadworks, or detours, traffic, or one's own mood; et cetera". All this takes time, physical and mental energy, and money, especially if the lifts are regular. *It adds up!* The giver may want the receiver to recognise all this, even though, in never explaining it, they have conditioned the recipient to not recognise it, all which can breed silent and seething resentment. The expectations are:

"The other should know to show adequate gratitude and offer reciprocation"

"The other should realise how much effort goes into this"

"The other should know not to ask too much because I have already done so much for them".

No. The recipient may not know any of this!

Most likely, because the giver acts graciously, as if it *is* fine, zero problems, and effort, the recipient is completely shielded from the truth of the giver's experience and any mention of their efforts by the recipient is scoffed away anyway, "Don't be silly. I don't mind". And if, on occasion, the recipient offers petrol money, "Bosh, put your money away", says the giver. If the recipient gives the over-giver a way out of helping, "If you're not sure, or if it's any problem, I could ask someone else", "No!" says the giver, "This is a 'me' job". And the giver never explains what they go through, or what it takes, to do all the helping. Yet they expect others to just 'know'.

The giver conditions the recipient to believe that nothing is required in reciprocation, and even consideration of their efforts is not required, yet the giver still expects the recipient to know to offer, and to show care, and extended appreciation.

When we expect others to act a certain way in response to our help, again, why? If this is the truth, how can we be sure the offer to help is for the right reasons? Wanting people to respond a certain way is a burden on them, and one others didn't ask for. For the givers who *do* explain 'all they go through' to do the help, this may burden or even desensitise the recipient who just sees it as unnecessary complaining.

*If we want to feel fulfilled, we need to find ways to fulfill ourselves
which doesn't put this burden onto other people.*

When we give, unless we set a clear reciprocation for the task, releasing any expectation is the only way we can be free to give, otherwise we may feel hurt or slighted when our secret expectation is not met.

If you require reciprocation, be up front, "Yes, I can drive you, but the petrol adds up. So if you can chip in \$10 this makes the task much easier for me".

If you require thanks, but it's not stated, you could do as I like to do, I say it! "Thank you Jess for the help". I don't do it expecting a response, but the typical response from the recipient is a giggle, and, "Right, yes. Sorry. Thank you!" Either I acknowledge me, or they acknowledge me, and when I acknowledge me in this way it's usually both!

Rule #7 ***Pause and trust***

We usually can feel whether we want to help someone who asks, or a pull to offer help. The distinction to make is: *when is the response on automatic?* If we have helped and helped, and it is our pattern, and why we are reading this guide, in those situations, the responses, "Yes, no problems", and the offers, "Let me help with that", and "I can do that for you", come out automatically, we need to be able to pause for a fair and reasoned choice to be made. At the point of pausing a great question to ask is:

*"Can I trust doing the right thing for myself won't
have a detrimental effect on the other?"*

Because it does take trust. It also takes practice, and the only way to develop trust, is to try, and from experience, decide in retrospect and see whether the choice was for the 'best for all parties'.

Each time the practice works, you learn to trust you made the right decision!

If one feels others' responses could be critical if the over-giver changes behaviour, again, one won't know until one changes it! If one does not feel safe, one must trust one's instincts and it is not for me to say, as with any guide, what is best for someone else. But, often we have decided within ourselves, *without ever trying anything different*, that it would somehow be bad to say "No". If we can do as these rules suggest, stay neutral, release expectations, including, releasing any need or idea about what the other's response is, it is possible, to say "No" and just see what happens. Usually, the 'drama' we thought could happen, doesn't, because when we are being neutral, others are free to respond however they want. And then again, we can engage with them honestly, "I'm really sorry, I know it must be a shock me changing my behaviour, but I do feel over-pressured and need to make some changes. I hope you're alright with this, as I feel it's best for me".

*Trust, even if you don't know how, that doing the right thing for you
can work for the best of all parties.*

Rule #8

Be open to other sources

Once we have established that it is self-righteous and arrogant to think we are the sole providers for help which other people need, *and*, that we must be very careful about unsolicited offers to help, lest we disempower others, we can start to recognise what may be best for all parties. When you say "No" you give someone else the opportunity to say "Yes", of course this means, we have to agree we are not the only person in the world who can be a source of help!

When you follow what you feel is right, it is very likely this is best for others too, even when it doesn't seem so. For example, you say "No" to someone's request, and find out later they had a wonderful time meeting an old friend who happened to be free, and who they only thought to call, *because you made yourself unavailable*. Perhaps the person who assisted them, empowers them by showing them how to do something for themselves, which you didn't know about. It could be a parent who asks you to get their meds from the chemist, or their shopping every time you visit. One time, you ring and say, "Sorry, I'm too busy, but I am hoping you can ask someone else". A new person helps, and they say, "Didn't you know your chemist delivers?" Or they show the recipient how to do online shopping. Even if the recipient has been against online shopping, say, because they don't want to list their mobile number online, the new helper can say, "No, you don't need to, just your email is enough". Or perhaps they didn't want to shop online, because it could lose their connection to the original runaway helper, but, when the new helper suggests it, they realise it's probably worth the risk, and feel more open to it. Essentially, where these examples are relevant, the giver could save thousands of hours of time, and hundreds of dollars in petrol, and free up so much time for self, all from saying "No" once. When we assume we have to be the helper, the only helper, we deny the other the benefit of attaining help from new sources. *This disempowers all parties.*

If we are truly these gifted problem solvers, let's use the power to problem solve how to run our own lives without interfering too much with, or taking on unhealthy responsibility for, people who may find much better sources than us for what they need.

Rule #9 *Universal respect*

Respect for self and other. If you truly respect the other, or want to respect the other, it is advised you allow all others to do what they can do, instead of thinking 'you' have a better answer! Sure, if they turn to you, if you are pulled to, if all signs point to you to be the provider of this help, no problems! This is great. *But you could not help if no others had need.* Think about what this means. Many helpers may exalt in, and be warmed, from the gratitude they receive from others for all they give but, *do they appreciate the receiver for being the reason the transaction took place at all?* This exactly explains the meaning for the phrase 'receiving is giving and giving is receiving'. When someone allows you to help them in the right way, they are giving you a great gift. Likewise, when you allow yourself to receive in the right way, you are giving others a gift. It is worth appreciating the great gift you have been given to give and receive.

It is self-respecting to give and to receive.

If it feels good, for the right reasons, no problems.

Rule #10 *Be honest*

The exception to this rule is *Self-protection*. Sometimes, it is certainly not favourable for us to share too much personal information. But sometimes honesty can clear a bunch of problems very easily, if one trusts it is safe to do so. It can free years of cobwebs of unspoken thoughts and resentments, without one ever needing to share what those resentments were. It can stop imbalance in relationships from the first seed sprouting.

Being honest does not need to mean full disclosure.

It means we can tell the truth about our choices and actions at any given time.

"I'm sorry if it seems selfish, and I do wish I could assist you, but I don't feel right about it, because I promised myself a day off. I really hope you can find the right person to help"

"I'm honestly really not in the mood to think about this. You know I love you, but can you please think of some options which don't rely on me? I'm sorry if this seems surprising to say, I just need some time for me and if it's not an emergency, I really want to stay out of it if I can"

"If it's alright with you, could you consider someone else for this? I need to do nothing for a while even if this seems selfish"

"I have been pushing myself too hard, I always make these offers to help and then feel overwhelmed"

"I'm really sorry to withdraw at this point and I'll try to be more careful about what I offer, and hope you can forgive me!"

"Sorry, I'm not able to help right now"

"I know I said yes, but I don't feel right about it now. I take responsibility and I do apologise"

"I'm having this problem/need to focus on this/worried about something else so not able to do anything else for you at this point"

"Honestly I'm not the right person to ask"

"I feel I should be offering to help, do you think I should be? Is it alright if I don't or do you think this makes me selfish?" This allows the other to reply, *"No, it's fine, I wasn't expecting or needing your help"*

"I know I said I could help, but hoping you can understand for these reasons, I need to withdraw the offer"

There are quite a few apologies here so the listener knows we did not at all intend to personally disappoint them, and we recognise and take responsibility for our withdrawal. It wouldn't be wrong though, to say these statements without apology, for example, *"I just need to do the right thing for me"*. Sometimes, an apology protects self; other times, it may be acquiescing a bit too much to what we think the other person wants from us.

The exceptions

I do not believe saying you're busy when you're not, or saying you're doing some other task when you're not, needs to necessarily be considered lying either. If it is done for self-protection this is the exception to not telling the direct truth and I don't think needs to be considered as lying.

The truth is, when someone says, "I need your help with this" but your indulging in some much needed you time, and you say, "Sorry, but I'm helping my friend with something else, so I'm not able to help you right now", it is not a lie, at best, it's misdirection. "You" are the friend you are "helping to have 'you' time and de-stress as needed". When you say, "Sorry, I'm not free then 'cause I have to help my partner with something/I have to study/I have work the next day", again, these are all statements which have been true in the past but you've helped the other person anyway. And the work you have to do when they want you is to make sure you have a decent sleep and take care of yourself; this does take focus and work!

This whole idea we have that it is *wrong to take care of our own needs* in this way, is honestly a pretty horrendous way to treat ourselves. We certainly would not deprive the humans we love the way we deprive ourselves. So for these exceptions, *tell the truth when it works in your favour*, and, *say whatever you need to say which works in your favour*. I am not condoning deliberate deception, but rather, a more honest recognition about what you do for your own needs and why. It is not untrue or even an 'excuse' saying, "I need to do something (nothing) for someone else (yourself)", as the reason you give for not being able to help someone with a non-urgent favour.

We need to consider our own time is as valuable as anyone else's, outside from immediate or essential care-giving, and sometimes even then.

Rule #11
Trust your intuition

I believe intuition is the refined form of instinct. Where instinct says immediately "Stop", intuition gives you nuanced information. When you can pause, or be so adept at this work you can tell immediately, there is at least time taken to consider whether you are giving in right energy. In this moment, you can ask some more intricate questions:

"Do I really know whether it's best to help this person? I assume they need help because they asked, but are they deflecting responsibility? Is this disempowering for them, to even ask me?"

"Is it somehow compromising the relationship, or could this begin an imbalance if I agree to help?"

"Is there a tone, or a sense something is not quite right, and my presumption to offer help, or their presumption to ask, is a bit off?"

"Is there something I am not seeing about this person's life which makes my offer to help possibly damaging, or could me helping them possibly compromise their self-esteem, or my self-esteem?"

"Is there a way I can relate to them, which is empowering for both for us? Can I be clear about what I feel is best for this situation?"

"What is the best tone to use/way to approach/words to say, to ask this person if they want any help?"

"Universe/Higher self, can you tell me what is right for this person, and the best way to allow them to feel comfortable to tell me what they feel is right for them?"

Intuition is usually quite direct when communicating, as is instinct; a response to these questions from the inner voice may be, "Say nothing, but promote a compassionate vibe", or, "They'll talk to you/ask when they're ready", or, "Don't push it. On some level they may be vulnerable right now", or, "Ask them about this aspect of their life", or, "Tell them something you shared together when you experienced a similar thing". Remember with intuition, it does not need to seem logical or relevant, it just needs to be trusted. If your friend is feeling low, and normally you'd go into support mode, but your intuition says to bring up this time or this subject, the other may brighten from their own self-realizations, which is much more empowering for them than anyone else offering to solve the problem. If the other perks up about some unrelated subject, the energy may motivate them to fix whatever it is themselves. You just don't know how your intuition could help, but it's worth trying, and from experience, and seeing the results in retrospect, you can decide if trusting your intuition works in yours, and the recipient's, favour.

Depending what you assess intuitively, and where you feel it's reasoned to offer help and to agree to help, there are some fairly safe, neutral phrases you can use, if you feel it's right to.

"I'm here to listen if you want to talk"

"I definitely want to help if I can, and if it's the right thing to do"

"I don't assume I know the best way to help, please feel free to tell me what you think is best"

"Can we discuss reciprocation for this which we equally feel is fair?"

"Feel free to ask if you need anything"

"Are you sure you want my help with this? Sometimes I forget to ask what you think is best"

Healing obligations

All this may seem small fry to the readers who have genuine, pressing obligations, and whether it is right or not to help is the least of their problems. I understand. As stated in the *Essential notes* to these guides, I am not referring to high intensity situations, or to ongoing crises. But many do not only feel obligated, they are obligated. I want to make this distinction and advise in either case the same rules can and do apply.

Do you love the person you are helping?

Do you perhaps not care too much but you are obligated?

Do you 'owe' the person you feel obligated to? (Yes, I understand in some cases people may feel the opposite is true; the other owes them yet they're in the giver role)

In situations where the ongoing transactions are from obligation, and must be done, the only thing to ask is *what is my true reason for doing this?*

The initial thoughts might be:

"Because I have to"

"Because there's no one else"

"Because no one is as capable as me to help. I know their needs best"

"Because they won't let anyone but me help"

"Because I owe them for all they have done for me"

"Because I don't know how to say no and would feel bad not helping"

If you are genuinely helping someone you love; someone you are genuinely responsible for; someone you owe a great debt to; someone who is very important to you; *is this ever wrong?* If it is not wrong, why do so many drag their heels about it? Why do so many feel weighed down, and so beset by, and so resentful in those obligations? Why do they do it? What is the real reason?

*When we help those important to us, it is honouring ourselves; knowing this,
we can hopefully release ourselves from all the inner hardship we incur,
in accepting the truth: it is our choice to help.*

You can only do what you can, for anyone, if it is right for you to do so. Whether it is fair or not is a completely different conversation. There are many provisions to help support carers (in Australia where these guides are written), as one example, many could get money for their caring duties, with bonus annual payments applied, but when it's caring among families, or with partners, these carers don't have time to research how they could access more support for their dependent or themselves! To those carers, you can only do what you can but I strongly encourage pooling all possible resources so it's not always a 'one person only' job. I suggest if it must be done, then do so in humble acceptance instead of pushing away any moments of peace in believing the situation is untenable. There may be others who could help you with some of your own pesky tasks (paying bills, or garden maintenance), so you can get that time to yourself. For some it could mean, a rare occurrence where another carer type person helps for a few hours so a carer can get time to research their own support, or, to see every avenue possible for any others to help (paying a gardener for a dependent rather than spending the petrol to travel and the personal manual labour). Small shifts can have much larger, healthier, effects. When it comes to support for others, and it feels burdensome:

If you can change it, do.

If you cannot change it, do with peace and acceptance.

If you are obligated and feel it is wrong. Why? How have you entangled yourself in the other's needs? Do they really need you, you specifically, or could many of these things be delegated to others? Is delegating to any others possible? Perhaps 3 volunteers for 1 task would do instead of 1 person doing all 3 tasks. Perhaps just one other person, one other support system. Perhaps the best support to employ for the person you want to help is to encourage, and be open to, and step back, and let them finish a sentence about their genuine feelings and wants (if you aren't already), and provide opportunities for them to guide you on their own solutions, and changes they can enact for themselves. You may have convinced yourself you can, and should, do many tasks for them, and lost sight of all those incremental things where the receiver could empower themselves, or where tasks could be delegated and shared. 'Many hands make light work' is a long forgotten truism to the runaway helper who has worked darn hard and deserves sole credit! If you delegate 1 task to one person, you have given yourself 1 less task to do.

*I do understand a helper may feel completely alone and
be the only person available to help. I am not denying the
difficulty or reality of this; I have been there.*

But these points are made because often we have become so used to being the one helper person, we are literally conditioned and blinded to seeing any other opportunities for support. We may also be terrible ourselves at asking others for support, seeing this as 'weak' (just goes to show again, the disdain we may have for receivers), when we could ask our neighbour, or our cousin, to bring us dinner when we are too exhausted from helping another, which would be a huge relief for us, but a fairly small favour to ask someone else! The point is, for all those solo helpers, to see if there's *any* chance at all to ask the question:

*Are there any ways you could take some pressure off yourself and the situation
which you may not have been able to see before or weren't open to yet?*

If you make the choice to be open, at least you allow for a new possibility if one exists.

If you have made the choice to commit to ongoing obligations, remember at heart, *you are doing it for you*. Either to feel ‘you do the right thing’, and to feel like you are a ‘good person’, or for all the reasons why you ‘have to’, the transaction is real and as the giver you are accountable for your actions as well. You may have heard the stories where givers just walk away from a situation. We each make our choices for our own reasons, usually driven by our beliefs about ‘what is right’.

*Know you make the choice to help for a deeper reason which serves you,
even if it doesn't seem so.*

Help yourself

The hardest thing for runaway helpers to do is receive. If they do receive, it's usually from an equal transaction. “I pick up their medicine, they walk my dog”, “I lend them money, they lend me money”, type thing. For them, the receiving must be justified. Can they see the gift in allowing someone else to give to them freely? Not usually. Usually, it's about their own need to be that valued person. But how could the giver help themselves? If they could clone themselves, and be their own objective helper, what would they advise? How would they help? Would you honestly tell your wise clone “no, I don't want to listen”? Would you, can you, do you, take your own advice?

Do you do for yourself what you do for others?

Do you show yourself, inwardly with your thoughts, the same tolerance, compassion, and respect you show others? Why are we ourselves so unworthy of this giving energy? Surely we ourselves need to be included as a recipient? Can we give to ourselves as much as we give to others, if not more? And can we accept sometimes this self-giving, comes in the way of allowing others to make their own choices, and from not oppressing them with all we want to give them? Every time you think of another's needs (your perception of their needs), ask yourself:

“What do I need?”

and

“How can I honour my own needs?”

There are people who want to give more, there are people not open to receiving. It is only when we learn the value of giving and receiving in equal balance, we can truly feel blessed in either role.

I wish you love, Universal support, and blessings on the journey!

Jess Mansfield

Practice notes

From Affirmations

"I allow myself to give and receive in equal balance"



"As I respect myself and others I only give in right energy"

From Actions

Self-assessment exercise. Am I a runaway helper?

- 1. Do you mostly offer help or are you asked for help? Who initiates?*
- 2. In your opinion, is the way you give empowering to all you help? Is it empowering for you personally?*
- 3. If you feel burdened in supporting others' needs, aside from necessary care (such as caregiver roles), what is the fundamental feeling when it comes to why you won't disengage from the dependency on you, or from co-dependency? Are some of these reasons:*
 - fear of others' reaction; e.g., they'll get mad, be sad or disappointed?*
 - fear of changing others' and your own, perception of you; e.g., it would make you look like a 'bad, mean, selfish' person?*
 - desire for recognition; e.g., to be perceived as 'a wonderful person'?*
 - because you genuinely believe good people are always kind and giving, and as a good person, you must always demonstrate this?*
- 4. Do you have any issues with receiving? Do you say "Yes" to others' offers and "Thank you" to genuine compliments? If you don't receive well, do you expect others to receive well?*
- 5. Do you give to yourself; e.g., time, space, love, comfort, healing, reassurance?*
- 6. How much time is taken to assess 'right conditions' before an offer of help is made, or a request for help is agreed to? I.e., how many of the transactions are 'running on automatic'?*
- 7. Do you feel neglected, abandoned, and hurt when you may be struggling, and need something yourself, but no one is there to help you? Do you feel resentment for all you've done for others which may in fact have had a negative impact on your own personal health and wellbeing? How much bitterness do you hold stemming from "all you've done for others"?*

For this quiz I don't summarise the answers in a neat explanation. This is a self-governing exercise to begin the process of questioning what is really happening in the giving/receiving transactions, and why.

From *Philosophy*

What is the truth behind these transactions?

Who is helped when a person helps another? The helper, the receiver, or both?

How often is help rejected, to the dismay of the helper?

How often is the receiver resented, because they didn't respond like they 'should' to the help which was offered?

What is the cost of helping if help is not actually needed?

How many people constantly help others yet feel depleted, unappreciated, and resentful?

How many givers recognise the actual effect of their giving, whether good or bad? Do they take a breather and recognise and reward themselves for their acts of good, and, are they also willing to see where their help was perceived as 'interference' and based on 'an assumption they think the offer is truly right for the other'?

From *Am I helping for the right reasons?*

To help ethically the questions need to be asked:

- *Are you doing it for you or is it also best for them?*
- *Are you truly the best authority to decide what others' true needs are?*
- *Could the other tell you what their true needs are if asked?*
- *Is there any underlying negative pull to help: insecurity; arrogance; expectation; undue obligation?*
- *Is this person being selfish, and the helping supports them being selfish? Are you being selfish?*

Suggested questions to assess whether one is giving 'only in right energy'

- *Is this task/help/support something the receiver can do for themselves? Can I support them in doing this on their own? Giving someone written notes on how to use a computer for example, or showing them how to do online searches to answer their own questions, rather than you explaining things again every visit, is a much more effective approach for both parties*
- *Is this right for me to help with, or would someone else be better suited? Keep an open mind as to other ways the help could be given*

- What is the motivation? Will I feel good about doing this because it is genuine help, it is appreciated and respected, and something I am quite happy to assist with?
- Can I offer this without any expectation of reciprocation, or particular thanks, other than common courtesy? Am I going to remember this and although I won't state it out loud, the person now 'owes' me extended courtesy or a future favour?
- If I require reciprocation, to feel all parties benefit, can I state so clearly before the transaction how I would like my help to be reciprocated?
- Can I accept that if I choose not to help to respect my own needs, this is not disrespectful to the receiver? Can I accept being the manager of others' lives (except with young children, and invalids) is not my responsibility?

From *'The Rules' for genuine helping*

Rule #1 Be neutral

Rule #2 No pressure

Rule #3 No stress

Rule #4 Self-protection

Rule #5 Ask others first!

Rule #6 Release expectations

Rule #7 Pause and trust

Rule #8 Be open to other sources

Rule #9 Universal respect

Rule #10 Be honest

Rule #11 Trust your intuition

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