

It's Great To Be Of Service To Others, But Give Yourself A Break ...

... A Spring Break!

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Most people like the feeling that comes with being helpful to others.

Do you?

Many entire professions are built on the principle of being of direct service to others—for example, the fields of health care, teaching, disaster agencies, church ministries, to name a few.

On a personal level, many individuals feel imbalanced on their ‘balance beam’ when it comes to “pleasing others” vs. “pleasing themselves.”

They constantly want others’ approval and do all sorts of things to get it.

Do you?

Have you ever felt guilty doing what *you* would rather do, if *someone else* you care about wants you to do something different? Do you cringe if someone accuses you of being selfish? Horrors! Do you get defensive and critical of them if you do it anyway?

While some people care a lot about what others think, we all know people who seem not to care about others’ needs at all. This paper is not for them!

How can you be kind, helpful, and of service without inviting others to take advantage of you?

How can your being of service bring *you* more joy?

Consider using these following four criteria to evaluate your “helpful” actions.

Criterion #1: In a general sense, “How’s it working for you?” Television psychologist, Dr. Phil McGraw, has made this question popular. It’s a great one!! Are the good deeds you typically provide other leading them to take you for granted, expect more, use you, think of you as a push-over, or dishonor your boundaries? If so, your generosity is *not* working for your highest spiritual interest. It’s most likely motivated by insecurity and a fear of disapproval. Not only that, you’ll be doing favors for people you will later hold against them. Not good.

Criterion #2: Do your services bring you joy in the process of the serving WHILE being free of all hidden hopes that someone will return the favors? If no one appreciates what you do, is the joy of doing it enough for you? If not, your generosity is not coming from your “Center”, it has strings attached, and once again it will accrue resentments. The day may well come when the other person “isn’t there for you,” and you say, “After all I did for you! [You selfish person, you!!]”

Criterion #3: Are you taking as good care of *yourself* as you take of others? Jesus said, “Love your neighbor *as* yourself.” He didn’t say, “Love your neighbor *more than* yourself.” He didn’t say, “Put your neighbor’s needs ahead of your own.” He said, in effect, “Show yourself every day that you love you, and give love to others from your full ‘cup.’”

You have to fill your cup to be able to give to others in a high-integrity way.

What do you do on a daily basis that could be called “taking care of you”? Filling your cup?

How does your Inner Child feel about the amount of caring you provide to others, compared to that provided to him/her? If he or she is dancing-around happy, and feels lovingly tended to and secure, you feel great and all is well! But if your care of *others* is covering up—is an anesthetic for—not feeling good about yourself and your Inner Kid, whom you ignore and neglect, I call that inner child neglect-abuse.

Criterion #4: Are your services disempowering your recipients? Or empowering them to manage their lives more effectively? Is your kindness

and helpfulness leading them to become more self-reliant, or more dependent on you?

(“Service” in this sense of the word is not the same as providing “services” to an employer who rewards you according to the terms of your economic contract. Employers are by definition dependent on employees.)

The group of teachers known as Abraham says that it is a rare thing when you do something for another and do other than disempower them. Wow! That’s a sobering thought. Think about it for a minute!

The help we give people makes a silent but “felt statement” that we don’t believe they have what it takes to do for themselves. What might be this effect on them?

Whenever possible, show your confidence in them to do for themselves. After your cup is full, help them help themselves. This creates FREEDOM and PERSONAL POWER for both you and them.

There are exceptions. Even though it’s true that when you help an emotionally needy person, you almost always harm them, this isn’t always the case. The exceptions are the times when people are in acute distress and in desperate need. When someone is so far down and they can’t do for themselves, temporary ‘hand-outs’ can be acts of enormous benefit to both the giver and the receiver.

If you can creatively help a person to help themselves, you have provided the best kind of life-giving service. But if the person does not want to help themselves, your help will increase their neediness. So be sure to notice, are the people you are helping becoming *more self-reliant* or *more dependent* on outside help?

So what does this come down to in daily actions?

- Give for the joy of it!
- Fill your own cup first, because you can’t give what you don’t have! Read things that inspire and nourish your soul, play with emotionally safe playmates, meditate, walk with a Walk-Man and your favorite music, journal, be part of an uplifting group that meets regularly, ‘get

lost' in your favorite hobby, dance alone at home to music that transports you ... and *schedule* these activities!

- Take conscious loving care of yourself and your precious Inner Child several times a week! This overlaps with the previous point. Schedule the kid into your Day Planner! Not doing so is like not scheduling physical exercise – it's a negative investment. In other words, you save a few and lose out on a gazillion.
- Give with the conscious intention to simultaneously empower your recipients.
- Notice how you *feel* about your giving. Light and flowing? Or dutiful and reluctant? Notice the difference between how it feels when you feel others are taking advantage of your good nature vs. when you feel like lightheartedly 'passing on the joy.'
- Take conscious care of the 'part of you' Self that wants you to take care of the needs of others, I call it a "Pleaser Self," *and* also take conscious care of the self in the opposite polarity within, which I call a "Pleaser of Yourself."

If this special article has been of service to you, know that it was service rendered in a way that meets all the above criteria! I have written it for the joy of doing it! I have offered it with the intention of empowering you!

Let's end with a couple of definitions.

Selfish – doing something intended to be *for* yourself and *against* someone else.

Self-caring – doing something intended to be for your own highest good.

Consider your *intention* when you take action. Is the action intended to be "for you" or "against them"?

Here's a toast, to an ever-happier, ever-healthier, ever more self-caring YOU.

Doctor Rebecca

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