



Other People Mindset

Supporting others when they struggle



WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

When other people are struggling, I do my best to help them out.

Supporting other people when they struggle is a critical piece of being human. There is a Chinese saying that sums this up: “If you want happiness for an hour, take a nap. If you want happiness for a day, go fishing. If you want happiness for a year, inherit a fortune. If you want happiness for a lifetime, help somebody.”

There are many different approaches to helping people who are struggling. These can include: listening while they describe an event and their feelings about it, taking action to help people in need, or simply just being there and sitting together in silence. Talking through a problem is a common way to help a person who is going through a tough time. When thinking about how to help them through conversation, it can be useful to (a) validate, rather than dismiss, their feelings, (b) help them reappraise the situation, and (c) *carefully* point out logic/thinking errors that may block them from healing.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

On an individual level, the research is clear that when we help others we also help ourselves. Dr. Roy Baumeister found that individuals who are “givers” and help other people lead more meaningful lives – with meaning defined as “a cognitive and emotional assessment of whether one’s life has purpose and value.” This goes beyond being happy in the moment and connects your past, present, and future.

On a group level, it’s critically important that we help each other out. Everyone faces tough days needs support. And, this support leads to a chain of pro-social behavior that makes us feel good about ourselves and our group. As Sebastian Junger explains in *Tribe*, natural catastrophes can elicit paradoxical positive emotions, because “self-interest gets subsumed into group-interest...(creating) a social bond that many people sorely miss.”

Individuals who live with this might be described as:

- Kind
- Giving
- Supportive
- Encouraging
- Uplifting
- Caring

Individuals with this are likely to think, feel, or behave in the following ways:

- I am consistently looking to make people around me happier.
- When a family member is sick or in the hospital, I go to visit them – or at least call them.
- I feel good when I can help lift someone’s spirits.
- When a teammate of mine has had a bad game, I let them know that it’s okay and they’ll get the next one.
- When someone is in emotional pain, I listen to their story and work to understand their perspective.

QUOTES ON THIS

“Life is not a solo act. It’s a huge collaboration, and we all need to assemble around us the people who care about us and support us in times of strife.”
-TIM GUNN

“Giving back is as good for you as it is for those you are helping because giving gives you purpose.”
-GOLDIE HAWN

“We make a living by what we get; we make a life by what we give.”
-WINSTON CHURCHILL

“Making money is happiness; making other people happy is a super-happiness.”
-MUHAMMAD YUNUS

“No one is useless in this world who lightens the burdens of another.”
-CHARLES DICKENS