

How to help a friend in trouble

a OnePageBook™



Simple and effective tools

Geir Isene and Brendan Martin

In order to truly help another person, you need to listen. And listen good. With absolute intent on understanding the person in front of you. Sit down, shut up and let the person tell you what's the matter. Do not interrupt. Ask questions only to better understand the trouble. Take notes if you need to. Do not offer your opinions or evaluations. Just shut up and listen.

When the person is fully unburdened and you have understood everything said, only then do you start offering further help.

Every person is different. Even if two people seem to have exactly the same problem, they are still unique and may benefit from very different solutions. By practicing helping lots of people, you will acquire a toolbox to help different people in a wide range of situations. The clue is to help many, and often. Practice may not make you perfect, but it will make you effective.

We will offer some of the most effective tools on this page. There are many more tools, but these will get you and the people you help a good leap forward.

To unburden a person in trouble, you can start by doing these five steps:

1. Tell the person to write a list of everything he hasn't completed. Everything that nags him, that he thinks he should have done or should do. Every bad conscience. Everything. If it takes a stack of papers, it takes a stack of papers. If the list is short, so be it. But ensure you have exhausted his incomplete actions, his bad conscience. You are not interested in why the actions wasn't done or any explanation for them. Forget prioritizations or categorizations at this point. The list can be all messy or upside-down. Doesn't matter. Just get everything down on paper.
2. Tell the person to remove everything he no longer has the opportunity or ability to do. This could be items like, "Be a firefighter before I become 25 years old" (he is now 35) – or, "Be the next great goal keeper at Barcelona Football Club" (he is 35 and has a bad left knee). Strike out anything that he can no longer do. Make sure he also removes it from his mind.
3. Tell the person to remove everything he no longer wants to do. No matter what the reason is, anything that he really doesn't want to do is removed from the list. Make sure he also removes it from his mind. He now has a list of actions that he can, will and should complete.
4. Prioritize. In the order of what is really bothering him. The worst shit goes on the top, and all the way down to the more insignificant itches.
5. Make him do the one thing that bothers him the most. Help him. Complete the action together with him, or sit there while he completes it. Then make him do the second biggest source of worry. Then the third, the fourth and so on. Until you are confident he can do more actions on the list as home work. Follow it through until the person himself is confident he can do anything on such a list all by himself.

Another great tool is to get the person to go for a walk and take a good look at the environment. It doesn't help if the person is marinating on his problems while mechanically moving his legs forward. What is needed is to get the person "out of his head" and get some distance to his troubled mind. Then it will be easier to find solutions. The aim is to help the person to help himself.

If you can get the person to realize that he is the sole cause, the sole creator of his thoughts and emotions, you have come great distance toward helping the person to help himself. Because then he will realize that the mental discomfort he is experiencing is purely his own. *Nobody else is creating your emotions.*

There may well be real, physical problems in need of handling, but the negative thoughts and emotions is manufactured by him – and they only add a burden to solving the physical problems. By stop creating negative thoughts and emotions, he will stop being his own enemy and start using all his skills in solving his problems. This realization will help the person to "not give a fuck" in situations where he would otherwise submerge himself in negativity.

Getting the person to start helping others is an excellent way of getting him to focus on other's problems and understand that his own may not be quite the end of the world after all. Helping others will boost his confidence and self-esteem – and that energy will prove useful in tackling his own issues.

Try to uncover what he really loves to do and help him do more of that. Try to uncover his real purposes in life and help him prioritize actions that move him closer to them.

Gain a set of simple and effective tools to help others with this OnePageBook™.
Help a friend, colleague, son, daughter or other family member or any person you meet.
Easy to learn, short time to master. Practice regularly and be of lasting value to others.

The publisher, "Å" (A-Circle AS, www.acircle.no) carries the slogan, "Boosting performance".
The company helps teams and individuals to higher performance and to reach their potential.

The authors can be contacted here:

Geir Isene: geir@a-circle.no - <http://isene.com>

Brendan Martin: brendan@a-circle.no - <http://brendanmartin.com>



We can't help everyone, but everyone can help someone.
(Ronald Reagan)



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Graphics by Geir Isene