



Overwhelmed? The Fine Arts of Independence... and Accepting Help by award-winning author / stress-relief expert Susie Mantell

Accepting help with grace is an art. Denying yourself help when you need some is just plain, well, stressful. Friends and loved ones can be a wonderful support. We *all* need a little help when it comes to preventing, reducing and releasing the stress that has become pervasive in 21st century life. Hopefully, we're also helpful to others. Let's explore how this compassionate exchange is actually healthy and, in fact, beneficial for optimal stress-reduction.

We live a lifetime becoming independent. Through sheer determination or by necessity, from the time we crawl, walk, or hold a cup, we hear, "Yaaay- -See how independent?" [applause] We ride a 2-wheeler, drive, graduate, work, excel, travel. [More "Yaaay."] But somewhere along the way, it all backfires. Accepting help becomes foreign, uncomfortable, impossible for some.

I hear clients describe a sense of feeling overwhelmed. While some tasks must be done solo and others with lightening speed when facing a deadline, it's worthwhile to ask ourselves, "Could someone help? Could somebody drive the kids? Shovel the walk? Start dinner? Return the videos?"

Have you ever seen a stranger with arms full, struggling with the door? What did you do? How did that feel? When a neighbor's child fell off his bike, did you run out with a band-aid and a cookie, brush him off, and help him back on his way? Of course you did. Ever visit a friend in the hospital? Few enjoy hospitals, but did you kind of like yourself a little for doing it? [*Human Nature Hint: It is infinitely easier to accept help when we have recently extended a hand.*]

10 Tips for Getting Help When You Need Some:

1. Do all you can for yourself, but within reason.
2. Set realistic goals. Reassess as necessary.
3. Need a hand with something? Remember how it felt to help. Give others that pleasure.

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4. Think about who could help get this done.
5. What affordable resources are available? Ask the high school guidance office for good kids looking for jobs.
6. Is a barter possible?
7. Ask for some help with a confident, open smile.
8. Express your appreciation in payment or barter, a note or a call.
9. If possible, return the kindness.
10. No way to do so? What goes around comes around. Put it in a 'favors bank,' and spend it on someone else.

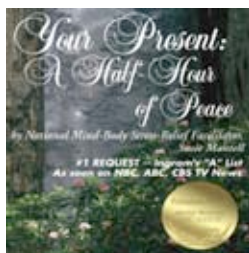
Pop Quiz:

When others offer, can you accept with a smile?
And if no one knows you need help, can you ask?

This Week:

1. Help three people in some small way.
2. Exercise your acceptance muscle: Ask for one small favor, just for practice.
3. Create a Go-To list of people you can call upon for various needs.

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