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5 Ways to Identify Those in Need
because [you are beautiful] when you serve



It would seem that in our modern day communities, everyone is stressed out, overworked, overburdened and undervalued. But is that really true? Many of us spend more than 20% of our time on social media, we're less physically active than we've ever been (largely due to technology making our lives easier), and we spend more on entertainment (adjusted for inflation) than ever before.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not here to say that you're lazy and should do more for others. Chances are you're a hard working person who is service-oriented. You may even be one of the ones who really is overworked and stressed out, but the majority of us have a couple hours or more a week to help those who are truly in need.

Research shows we're less likely to help when we don't have a clear idea of who to help. We also know that those who need help are less likely to

ask for it if they don't know you want to help. Additionally, people won't help if they think it doesn't make a difference.

Clearly, there's a lot of work we have to do in order to be closer-knit, more effective communities, but this guide will help you to better identify who needs help, and in turn, will help those in need realize you're able to help.

- 1. Develop Empathy**
- 2. Build Trust**
- 3. Who's Not Asking?**
- 4. Check-In**
- 5. Ask the Universe**

1. Develop Empathy

HEP's (or Highly Empathetic People) are those who have, as the title states, high levels of empathy. They are curious about people, they seek to find commonalities with strangers and they work hard to put themselves in others' shoes. They are great listeners and they don't empathize with just the poor or the marginalized, but with those who are wealthy and in power. In a word, they are open. They are open to really experiencing and feeling what those around them may be feeling. They seek connection and understanding. As you can expect, they "search and find" those in need, easily.

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2. Build Trust

Have you ever had a friend tell you a deep dark secret, or look to you for advice about a choice they are considering making? Of course, we all have. Consider, though, the events that led up to that moment. Months, perhaps years of friendship-building probably took place before your friend felt comfortable opening up to you. The same goes for someone in need of help. Most of us won't ask a stranger for help, we won't even ask an acquaintance or a new friend, generally. But exposure after exposure to a friend who displays that they are dependable, kind, loving, open and empathetic, is the perfect recipe for building trust. Show your friends that they can depend on you. Be reliable. Show up. You'll find those who truly need help will reach out when they feel safe with you.

3. Who's not asking?

Who's not asking, *but should be*? I've witnessed, several times, people revere someone because they are seemingly stronger than the rest of us. Phrases like, "I don't know how she does it" and "I could never go through what she's had to go through" get thrown around a lot when discussing people who are going through periods in life that seem like they wouldn't be doable for the rest of us. The truth is, it's not that people who experience hard things are superhuman. It's that we humans are strong and resilient and hopeful. We carry on, when we feel we are breaking, because we hope for

better days. If you notice someone who is going through a soul-crushing experience in life, don't assume that she's just fine because she's dressed and her hair is done. Chances are she fought to get out of her bed this morning and you can make a huge difference in her life.

4. Check-In

I had a woman, twenty-years my junior, ask me one day if I was doing ok, if I was taking care of myself. We had begun a friendship, but the relationship was largely professional still. I asked her later what had compelled her to ask. She replied, "...I was at a place that day where I could ask it. I had been very nurturing of myself. ...I did a lot of listening and observing and watching... I noticed that you seemed to need nurturing as much as our client." She listened and observed and wasn't afraid to ask. I make a practice of doing what I call, "text check-ins." It's where I try, regularly, to pick a couple friends and send them a random text. It usually looks something like this: "Hello dear. How're you feeling? Physically? Emotionally? How's the new job? Kids?" I always get a response and it's a great tool for helping to identify those who may be struggling.

5. Ask the Universe

We underestimate the connections and messages the universe gives to us each day. Sitting quietly and meditating can bring thoughts of friends and

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loved ones that we wouldn't otherwise consider. The word, "meditation" sometimes brings fear to people who aren't sure how to do it or haven't had great success in doing it. When I'm trying to identify those in my life who are may be in need, I don't necessarily meditate, but I quietly sit and picture the faces of those to whom I'm closest, and imagine surrounding them with love and peace. You'll find that, often, those who could use your help will come to the forefront.

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