

Helping Ourselves First

May 9



With an in-flight emergency, attendants tell us to strap on our own oxygen mask first, and then help others.

In our fast-paced world, we rush from demand to demand. We hurry to finish tasks, help our children turn in good work, and assist anyone who asks. Anyone but ourselves. In the emergency known as life, we often leave our oxygen mask dangling while helping others with theirs. We forget the instruction is to help ourselves first.

Demands for service and attention in every venue of our lives mount until we wake up to find we have become robotic in our thinking and actions. But how can we stop? We are sure we know what needs to happen for those close to us and are positive we are the only ones who can provide what they need, how and when they need it. But it is a huge mistake to not prepare nor treat ourselves with the same attention and care.

If we stop long enough to focus our energy inward, we discover a cave of our own unfulfilled needs, dreams and aspirations, and realize they are dying due to lack of attention. If we are to be of maximum service to others, we can only lead by showing sufficient care and kindness to ourselves before anything else.

Maybe the load we carry needs to be divided. We recognize now that some- times we are the ones who need help. When this happens, we practice *asking* others for what we need. An honest look at what is important to do, or to let go of, will make this process easier.

What is our basic nature? Some of us are grateful when no one asks us to step up, yet others feel slighted when they have had no invitation to assist. The question becomes, does helping someone else drain you, or does it become your life-sustaining oxygen?

Balance *must* be our first consideration. The control we seek in doing-it-all deprives others a chance to be useful, and so we help sometimes, while allowing others to step up. It's called teamwork. No longer are we a one-man-band.

We pass on gratitude and allow others to fulfill their own long-standing need, the need to be useful.

TODAY'S MEDITATION

Just for today I remember I am no longer running the show. I slow down long enough to ask, can I do this with others, and together we accomplish more than I could have imagined.

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"Unfortunately, we do not treat others as we treat ourselves. We should try being genuinely kind to ourselves first and the rest will come naturally, like an 18-kt. Golden Rule." — Erica Goros

