

Caring for others with the Equanimity

Equanimity is a wonderful quality, a spaciousness and balance of the heart. We can feel this possibility of balance in our hearts in the midst of life when we recognize that life is not in our control. We are a small part of a great dance -Jack Kornfield

We can suffer a great deal when we cannot “fix” the problems of others that are in our care. We empathise for their struggle and compassionately wish to alleviate (eliminate) their suffering. Their demands, through no fault of their own, can become greater than the remedy and support that we can provide. As a caregiver, we can be concerned about the needs of someone else and feel that what we are doing is not enough. We can feel so powerless when we can't fix the situation for good and the suffering for the other person is ongoing. We both suffer. In this situation, there is a danger of burning out and experiencing empathy fatigue which interferes with the quality and effectiveness of our care. We can learn to love and care for others without losing ourselves. The compassion we have for others needs to also be applied to ourselves, to be able to overcome the various challenges of helping others. We learn to connect with our own feelings and to care for our welfare, so we can keep on giving. Here is a practice that many have found very useful to maintain a balanced perspective or equanimity:



*“Everyone is on his or her own life journey.
I am not (entirely) the cause of this person's suffering,
nor is it entirely within my power to make it go away,
even though I wish I could.
Moments like this are difficult to bear,
yet I may still try to help if I can...
when I can....”*

Offering this person and yourself some loving-kindness. Here is a list of suggested Loving Kindness phrases. Use these phrases or other phrases that resonate with you.

*May you be as well as you can be
May you be safe
May you be happy
May you have peace
May your struggles ease
May you have courage
May you live with ease
May the Universe (God) take good care of you*

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May you be safe
May I be happy
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May I live with ease
May the Universe (God) take good care of me*

This handout was written by Marie Bloomfield, Clinical Psychologist, M. Psychol., MAPS. July 2019.
A modified version of equanimity phrases from the Mindful Self-Compassion program- K. Neff and C.Germer

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