Helping Myself By Helping Others

**Purpose:** For people to share ways they can help themselves by helping others.

**What to say:**

One way to stop negative feelings is doing small acts of kindness towards others. This can be anything from volunteering at a homeless shelter to calling a person you are worried about or comforting someone that is going through a tough time. Make no mistake, this group is not meant to encourage co-dependence. Your value as a person does not rest on your ability to please others or make other people happy. Instead what it is suggesting is that sometimes a good way to get out of our head and problems is to do something nice for someone else. Often a lot of our problems are just anxieties that we have built up in our mind, but aren’t really reality. In this case, it may be that focusing our attention on helping out another person is just what we need to get out of our heads. Other problems are very real. In these instances, helping another is equivalent to giving a hug: Every time you give a hug, you get one back.

The website mindbodygreen.com came out with a list of different ways you can help others. However, you don’t necessarily need to go up to a stranger and perform a random act of kindness. Remember, sometimes it can be as simple as helping a child with their homework, checking in on someone that you know is having a rough time or helping a person that is elderly with their housework. None of these things are complicated (unless the homework is calculus...than it may be a little complicated). But it makes a difference to the person that you are helping, and you are building relationships.

- What do you think about the idea of helping others in order to help yourself?
- What are different little things that you can do to help another person?
1. Smile at a stranger.
2. Write an anonymous love letter.

Then seal it in an envelope and the next time you are on a train/bus leave it on the seat as you leave. Whoever finds it was meant to find it. Also take note of what you actually write because it was meant for you, too.

3. Send a surprise package to an old friend.

4. Give one of your favorite inspirational books away to a stranger.

5. Give someone a hug.

6. Give some of your old clothes away.

7. Let your family/friends know that you love them.

8. Workout for a cause.

There are tons of organizations and events that you can participate in such as races and/or walks for hunger and cancer. A few years ago, I rode a bicycle across the United States to raise money for affordable housing.

10. Go to a support group or start your own.

Maybe you have just recovered from an illness, eating disorder or addiction. You can mentor someone going through a similar situation. This is big. By just showing up you are reminding yourself and others that they are not alone can make all the difference in their healing.