

Real Women

Coach's Corner: Asking for help

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I take good care of myself. Surely the heavy chest I was feeling was "just stress."

A couple of years ago I had to go to a cardiologist. A friend of mine asked if I would like her to go with me to the doctor appointment. I said, "No, but thanks very much ... no big deal." (As my grandson would say, "No, ME do it!")

Thinking about her offer, later, I had to admit that I was not listening to my own advice. How many times have I told other people, "Take someone with you when you go to a doctor's appointment or have a procedure or surgery done." They can be an extra pair of ears - not to mention an advocate - when, for a variety of reasons, people don't have time for you." So why wasn't I listening to me?

Luckily, another friend asked. This time I said yes. Instead of the diagnosis of too much stress, I was immediately given nitroglycerin and scheduled for an angioplasty procedure. I was so glad my friend was there. She helped me gather my wits from the shock and cope with "no big deal" suddenly turning into a very big deal.

Recently this whole idea of asking for help has come up again. I will be having a knee replacement and am going to need a lot of help. I don't like it! I want to be the helper, not the one being helped. It is easy for me to help others without giving much thought to how those I help might feel. Could it be that I have a bit of pride, thinking I can do it all and should never need help?

It is humbling to ask for help in most matters. But each and every one of us will have to ask for help at some time in our lives. The longer we live the more likely we'll need help. Human beings are not made to go it alone. We all need each other. So swallow your pride, deal with your denial - whatever it takes to put "No, ME do it!" aside and ask for help. You'll do better, and your helpers will have the satisfaction of helping someone else.

Coaching Question: Where can you specifically be open to others' help? What do you need right now? How can you ask for it?

Coaching Tip: Imagine how you would feel if no one allowed you to help them. Allow people to make a difference, starting with you.

Homework: Make an "advocates list" of people you feel comfortable asking help from and have it ready.

Quotes:

"What do we live for if not to make life less difficult for each other?"
- George Eliot

"Be brave enough to accept the help of others."
- Melba Colgrove

Resources: Asking for Help

www.chacocanyon.com/pointlookout/031210.shtml.

Sharon Pahlka is a life coach and speaker. In her coaching, she helps her clients live well and meaningfully, especially those with chronic health challenges. Sharon's column, Coach's Corner, offers helpful tips from her work.

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