

CHRIS'LL DEAL WITH IT

episode notes




EP 38 - Principle #6 - Don't be afraid to ask for help

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This is part 6 of our summer PRINCIPLES series. It can be listened to by itself, but for greater context refer back to the intro Episode #32.

Note that the principles in this series are what work for me. They allow me to thrive and live my values as best as I can. I'm not advocating the adoption of my specific set of principles. Rather I'm attempting to showcase the power of principles by providing more context on how they can be defined, codified, and embedded into the thoughts & actions of our lives.

Principle #6 - Don't be afraid to ask for help

Where does the principle come from?

- It's a persistent reminder that none of us gets through life alone.
- We all need help & support to accomplish anything - whether directly or indirectly.

- Our very survival depends on a deep, interconnected web of current & historical relationships, efforts, accomplishments, sacrifices, and our visions for the future.
- The help we need at any given moment varies greatly in scale & form.
- Even as you validate the need for help with something, the act of asking for it brings it's own fear. So this principle is worded as a reminder to push back against that fear.

Why is it important?

- Help is a tool:
 - It's crucial for human connection & development of our civilizations
 - It allows us to share resources, knowledge, and perspectives
 - It helps us build things bigger than any one of us can build alone
- Admitting you need help means you're recognizing a cost that's going to need to be paid. This cost can come in a large variety of forms:
 - Time: Putting in the effort needed to asking for & receiving the help needed.
 - Social Equity: Asking for help or favors comes with this social cost. One shouldn't take and take without building some equity by giving where and how they can.
 - Financial: Hiring experts, paying for education or equipment to facilitate receiving the help
 - An important side note regarding money: Money is really just an abstraction for time. It's an imperfect construct for comparing the value of our efforts.
 - Pride: The admission could be of a failure to accomplish what you said or desired to do. It can damage one's pride to admit they weren't up to a task
- The world is a dangerous place - traps exist in many forms and in many places: Financial, legal, bureaucracy, social, physical, predatory scams, and also within ourselves.
 - The inside of one's head can be the worst trap of all. The ultimate echo chamber.

- It's fueled by our thoughts, our bodies, and our environment. The pace of modern life makes it easier to fall into the traps of poor decisions or habitual patterns: Even when we think we're being clever to avoid them.
- Find trustworthy people who can help keep you mindful of your patterns and blind spots - and hopefully able to help rescue you when you fall in.

How does living it impact myself & others?

- Everyone is the hero of their own story: And few people are as invested in your plot as you might think.
- The involvement of others' in the plot of your life's story may be requested or unsolicited. Both have value - although the latter may not always be welcomed. Or correct.
- Most people are content with the brief roles they play in others' stories. And they're not likely going to be aware when their role is poignant in your story.
 - Yet any interaction (or story beat to use a writing term) is shared by all involved.
 - The lenses through which that story beat are told will be different.
 - This awareness of the power of intersecting plots can help you be more aware of the potential impact of the help you give, and thankful for the help you receive.
- It's nice to help other people - when requested. Aside from immediate, acute need, crashing someone else's party is rarely welcomed.
 - Each of us has enough of our own tasks in life.
 - There's no reason to work those that belong to others.
 - To do so threatens to remove their authorship, their sovereignty.
 - It can also be a trick we play on ourselves to avoid the introspection & work on our personal tasks that scare us.
- So ask for help with honest intention.
 - Asking for the sake of asking is virtue signaling.
 - Not all advice will be worth following, but to not give that advice fair scrutiny & evaluation cheats ourselves and those providing the help.

- We shouldn't fear receiving help even when it isn't explicitly requested. Something as small and innocent as a side comment challenging an action, or a kind word in passing can help us if we're open to it.
 - Yet whenever possible you should use discernment with any unsolicited help. What is their intention? How well do they understand you and/or your situation? Does it move you closer or further from your objectives?

What does living the principle look like in action?

- Recognize that help isn't always acute. Often we're being helped without ever realizing it. For example, multiple technicians and officers worked through the night rebuilding a traffic light after an accident, creating smoother & safer conditions for our morning commute. Recognizing this reality, it gives you a mindset to consider how things we take for granted came to happen in the first place, is a mentality that helps us be more generally appreciative of people.
- Parenting brings our awareness of help into crystal clear focus.
 - For the first time, it's possible for us to recognize how much our parents sacrificed to bring us into the world.
 - You better appreciate the fragile nature of our very existence: Without help and community there's no way we would survive as a species.
 - And you understand innately that the job of helping your children will never end.
- **6 tips for asking for help**
 1. Be clear on what you need help with
 2. Review all your options: Which will be the most useful? Which are the most realistic?
 3. Respect the probability you'll succeed with the option(s) chosen
 4. Tailor the request to whom you're asking: Ensure you understand the commitment you're asking them to bear and any compensation required.
 5. Set realistic expectations for what being successfully helped looks & feels like
 6. Recognize that the help delivered is unlikely to fully reach your expectations or vision. It may look drastically different than expected, for better or worse.

Episode 38 Quote:

I love this quote, which is spoken by the fictional character Alabaster in [Gabrielle Zevin's incredible novel *Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow*](#).

And what is love in the end, except the desire to put evolutionary competitiveness aside - in order to ease somebody else's journey through life.