

## Table of Contents

### Chapter 1

WHAT IS HELPING? .....	1
What Does it Mean to Care? .....	1
The Language of Caring .....	1
Help .....	2
Support .....	2
Rescue .....	3
Thinking as a Form of Caring .....	4
The World of the Helper .....	5
Your Job .....	5
Being Responsible .....	5
Burnout Potential .....	5

### Chapter 2

WHO IS A HELPER? .....	7
Helper Secrets .....	7
Self-reflection—Expectations of Yourself .....	7
Self Expectations .....	8
Natural Born Helper .....	10
Your Expectations of Those Who Receive Your Help .....	11
Those We Try to Help: What Do They Expect of Us? .....	12
Why Am I Here .....	13
Need vs. Want .....	14
Not Being Needed .....	15

### Chapter 3

WHAT IS THE PRICE OF CARING? .....	19
What is the Price of Caring? .....	19

Caring Overload .....	23
Responsible to BUT not for the Client .....	26
Measuring Success .....	27
Recipients .....	27
Relatives and Friends of Your Client .....	28
Our Friends .....	28
Ourselves .....	29
What You've Gotten From Your Efforts to Help .....	29
Tips for Caring .....	30

### Chapter 4

CHALLENGES IN THE HELPING PROFESSION .....	34
What is Perfect Caring? .....	34
Guilt vs. Regret .....	35
If You Care Too Much .....	36
If You Care Too Little .....	37
Boundaries and Personal Issues in the Professional Setting .....	38
In Your Helping Do You Create a Bubble? .....	39
How Do You Respond to the Following Scenarios? .....	39
Responding to High Trauma or Drama .....	41
Honesty .....	42
Coping with Colleagues .....	43
What Have You Learned from Caring for Others? .....	45
The Role of Hope .....	47
Supporting Hope .....	47
Instilling Hope .....	47

### Chapter 5

SELF CARE .....	50
Listen to Yourself .....	50
Your Back-up Plan .....	52

### Who is a Helper?

Please take a moment and put your Personal Code of Honor into words—into one or two sentences that begin to capture the essence of your caring. We've provided a box for you to imagine or write these words:

Why is this important? (By the way, have you filled in the box? Please do so before you read on.) Gentry reminds us that we do not want to live in violation of our own principles. To do so leads to burnout—something we will discuss in Chapter 3—The Price of Caring. We agree with Gentry when he says that true caregivers are called to this work. One example, of this “calling” is something known as a natural born helper. Let's look.

Consider the two times you looked at the expectations list. If there are few similarities between the lists, then it might be worthwhile to examine more closely your intent in being a helper. Those who are most successful in providing care for others do so from the core part of themselves, giving from the heart rather than from the head. When caring comes only from the head, burnout and stress reactions are far more likely to result.

#### Natural Born Helper



Are there some people who are such “natural” helpers that they begin their helping careers long before leaving the crib?

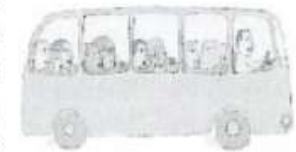
Is there some instinct that kicks in at birth that creates a natural-born helper? Some children do seem to be more at ease helping and listening to others. Some people do seem to be able to extend their hand to others more readily. When did your helping career begin? Were you the child who was always the helper in preschool? When a toy was lost, a knee was scraped, a tear was shed, or a heart broken were you always first on the scene? Did you instinctively have the right words or the caring touch that helped to heal the pain? If so, your career path as a helper was already in motion.

### Who is a Helper?

Does this next scenario sound familiar?

You are standing at the checkout stand and the person behind you starts to share their current trauma. And before you walk away with your groceries you realize that you have spent the last 3½ minutes with your “caring hat” on. Why you? Did you have on your “I care” t-shirt? Is there a neon sign flashing across your forehead that says, “Share here.”?

Or, what about this scenario: you are sitting on the subway or a bus and by the next stop the person beside you has given you their life history. The next stop, even if it's not yours, begins to look good. When you do get off, you look around at the other 15-20 people and realize that any of them could have been chosen, but, oh no, it was you. Are you nodding your head as you read this? Hello, Natural Born Helper.



#### Your Expectations of Those Who Receive Your Help

What kinds of things do you expect of those who receive your help? It is valuable to become aware of our wishes, hopes, or expectations we hold for others. At least then we know when to be disappointed!

For this list we want you to think of one person you are seeking to help at this time. Which of the following expectations do you have of this person?

- They will be grateful and will show their appreciation for my help.
- They will feel better or get better as a result of my efforts.
- They will not be excessive with their demands.
- They will see me as competent and caring.
- They will participate more in their own care.
- They will not take out their frustrations on me.
- They will understand that I may not have all the answers or the answers they want.