

Advice for the Journey

Personal Advice and Expert Opinions



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by Arica VanGelderens, LLMSW

Clinical social worker and therapist

Q: I have always been an independent person, almost to a fault. I wait until the absolute last minute to ask my husband for help opening a jar, carrying the groceries inside, or even fixing the flat tire on my bike! I hate being seen as someone who needs help doing anything. The problem is, after my hip replacement surgery a couple of months ago, I haven't been able to take care of myself like I used to. I still avoid asking anyone for help, which means struggling or neglecting most physical tasks. My husband and daughter have realized that I need more help than I am letting on, and they are starting to hover around me to make sure I have everything I need. I hate being seen as a victim, and it's starting to affect

my relationships with them. I know I need to find some sort of balance, but I have no idea how to do that.

A: It makes sense that you are finding it hard to balance your sense of independence with this new set of physical needs. It sounds like you associate the idea of asking for help with weakness, especially since you've always taken pride in the fact that you are strong and capable. You probably feel that asking for help means admitting — to yourself and your family — that you are weak, which is why you are avoiding it.

There is much more to you and your identity than your physical body. The key to finding the right balance lies in accepting *every* version of yourself, regardless of whatever present limitations you may have in

any one area. Instead of neglecting your own needs to avoid being seen as weak, challenge yourself to accept this new version of yourself. When we allow our internal negative associations to have priority over our own needs and self-care, the result will be negativity and stagnancy, as you're experiencing now.

We all have limitations, difficulties and challenges at every stage of life. Finding inner balance is a fluid process. Pay close attention to the words and phrases you say to yourself when facing a new challenge or limitation. If you can focus on breaking down the negative correlations you've built, and soften your self-talk, you'll help cultivate a more meaningful life experience during your present challenges. Asking for help is not a weakness; it's a display of inner strength and acceptance. ♦

Note to our readers: Evan Kimble's "Advice for the Journey" column has been a reader favorite since we launched this magazine. Sadly, Evan passed away earlier this year after a brief illness. He will be missed and remembered with love by us all.