

Stumble

The words for someone who can't yet find theirs.

I'm writing this from the perspective someone who once found themselves looking over the cliff edge of their life, on the brink of jumping off it. From the simple fact I've managed to write this, it'll be relatively obvious that I never jumped off that cliff; and I hope to never peer over it again.

You may have been sent this excerpt by someone who doesn't appear to be quite themselves at the moment. They may be better, equivalent, or potentially even worse than I was.

I'm fortunate to have developed a cognition to deal with my misfortunes and setbacks. Part of that practice was developing an ability to articulate how I'm feeling. The person who has gifted this to you may not yet possess that level of articulation, but is nearly dying to tell you something.

Or simply put - they need your help.

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If the person who has gifted this to you is close to you, then I'm sure you've probably already noticed something isn't right.

You may have already enquired, and they may have told you they're fine. You may have noticed they're pretending to be fine. Or you may have not yet had the courage to approach them about it yet either.

I always thought I was excellent at hiding my issues, but I'm as terrible at it now as I was then. At my worst, you would have seen it from the huge amounts of weight I gained or lost; from the permanent bags under my eyes; from the gloomy demeanour coupled with a serious disposition. In my head, I was pretending to be normal. In reality, I appeared as anything but.

The first part is for you to recognize when someone appears like this. It may sound obvious, but the response from you may not be as obvious. If you recognize these behaviours, it's going to require a response which is a little different to what you've adopted in the past.

This is particularly difficult for parents or guardians. You've likely had a lifetime of disciplining and

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managing your children. Some will had a firm approach, and others a softer one, but intrinsically, you're now dealing with a human within the stages of adulthood where a cognition has developed outside of the scope of your previous tactics. We'll move on to suggest some methods you should consider adopting to make this situation as frictionless for everyone involved; but for now, we'll start with how that person is likely feeling currently, and how a decayed state of mental health manifests.

But before that: A word on you.

You may be absolutely terrified of the way this person presents themselves to you. You may be scared they're on the cusp of taking a permanent solution to a temporary problem; but please, have hope, and maintain your support. They have given you this chapter because they want you to listen; I would suggest that potentially, you've been maybe a little too preoccupied in trying to rectify this situation out of panic or obedience to your mind and emotional state, instead of empathizing with a more coercive state to theirs.

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At their worst, they could be feeling nothing but complete emptiness. They do not want to die, but they no longer can see any merits in living. They could likely feel like they are purely existing. They have a morsel of hope, but that's it. They will be paralyzed by the fragility and fear of the future choices they need to make; they may not even recognize or understand those choices. I can assure you, no one wants to feel this way any less than them. Nothing may give them pleasure. Nothing may give them comfort, or security. If they are to be grateful of anything, they may know that, but they can't identify with it yet.

The person may have developed complete insomnia, or they can also sleep for in excess of 20 hours per day. Appetite is either nil, or purely for anything destructive. The staples of modern existence are futile to them – personal hygiene, exercise, or work – none of it matters. None of them serve to alleviate their disposition, so they're going to see no reason in pursuing them. The person's reality is such a painful place for them, they will likely be doing about anything to escape it and disconnect from it. They may not be in this state entirely; they may manifest some of

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those symptoms, or all of them. There may be others, and there may be more.

The fact this chapter has found you serves as a reassurance that they have just read a book which is aiming to help them exit their hardships. It may not have the answers, but they've at least possessed the hope to find them. If they've not found the answers, they will hopefully at least have the confidence to continue looking for something they do resonate with a little more.

I'll tell you a fact which will be of no comfort to you, but it is the truth – you can't help them. They don't want your help in fixing their problem; they've got themselves there – and for them to have any pride and develop any sense of self-worth in overcoming it, the solution is something they need to manifest by themselves too. I hope they will eventually understand the merits of sharing their problems a little more someday. But that day may not be today; and the person they choose to share their problems with may not be you. Because that's the case, doesn't necessarily mean they'll never share themselves, or value you any less. The value you need to give is an unconditional

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love, which facilitates helping them in the way they need to be helped, and that's not always the same as way you would naturally offer it. They absolutely love you too, and they need you now more than ever.

There may have been some tension between you, as you've attempted to offer solutions which have been declined or failed attempts. I completely understand that this could be an equally painful situation for you, having to witness someone that is a part of you go through this hardship. If you've been unkind, it's probably out of frustration, panic and helplessness. The other person may have held that grudge against you for now, but they won't forever. Please don't take it personally – they aren't themselves, so they probably can't bear consideration to the respect you deserve. They maybe can't muster the strength to respect themselves, so I'm afraid their capacity to empathize that is also dormant too.

In order for you to help, I can't stress the importance of you leveraging as much awareness of your own personal state in order to shape a reality which you all are striving for. The other person can't do this just yet, so please try and do it for both of you, just for a little

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while at least, if you've got the capacity to do so. In advance of this, thank you – from me, and from them – and from the bottom of our hearts. In doing this, you've just played your part in saving a life.

They're going to need to find some stability first, and I'd ask that you let them find that in whatever grounds them for the time being. I know you may have found success in dealing with your problems a certain way, but please don't force those methods onto them. The problems that exist in their lives may not seem important to you, but they are of critical importance to them. I'm sure you may have developed a resilience to deal with yours just fine – but they need to develop theirs too, in a way that suits them.

Try to avoid adopting any practices of nagging them to do something which is not going to help them – and this also applies to attempting to distract them also. Their efforts should only ever be placed in practices that is going to benefit their current state. It doesn't matter if they've not showered in a week, or if they will only eat fast food. Those aren't important – if it means that they forego those in pursuit of reading more, exploring something creative, or attempting a

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pursuit to help them put themselves on a different life path, then that's all what matters. They will eventually start to wash and adjust their diet once they develop a little more momentum.

What is needed, is an abundance of positivity and love. The actions you need to take are the fundamentals of human kindness. Sadly, the benefits of your kindness will only be truly recognized in retrospect. The other person may be distant, or annoyed, or even lash out at you. Again, please don't take it personally. But I can promise you the way you facilitate someone's recovery is instrumental to their success in achieving it at a greater rate.

You should maintain an upbeat environment, even if you don't feel like it. Give the person a hug, and tell them you love them. Tell them this is just a storm, and it will pass – tell them they'll figure out what they need to do to move forward.

Make them some food, three times per day, and sit with them while they eat it. They may not eat much of it at all. Don't force them, but do encourage them. If they read a lot, then sit in the room with them, and read your book too. If they're watching a lot of TV, then

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watch it with them. Don't try and force a continuous conversational dialogue with them – just sit, and exist with them. It may not even be the case that they don't want to talk, but more that they don't know how to articulate what they want to say. They will eventually find their words – please just give them time to find them. They've got to discover those and make peace with them before they begin to talk about it.

Your purpose is to show you're there, in whatever capacity you are needed to be. You're not forcing yourself onto them, or forcing anything else out of them. You're just there, sharing their reality.

The other person will generally feel very lonely, in nearly all attributes and aspects of their life. You can't alleviate that with your presence alone for all of those aspects, but you can help. Remember, it's not about providing a solution, it's about accruing enough hope inside the other person they believe one exists. Once that belief develops, they'll find their solution in the end.

Please be considerate before introducing other people into a recovery. It can be tempting to share the hardship with your close circle, or other family

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members. It can be tempting to force the other person to go out for a meal with you, or to throw them a surprise party with all of their friends. I'd generally advise avoiding this, especially early on. The other person will be feeling enough shame about their current state, and the last thing they need is for their misfortune to become anyone else's mindless gossip. They won't be looking their best, and certainly not feeling their best. I cannot think of any occasion where having to pretend to be fine in front of people is ever going to be beneficial. Foregoing this advice can really do much more harm than good, especially in the beginning. Do your bit and develop their confidence, and they'll soon crave a reintroduction into the world – let them do it on their terms, not yours.

As you both progress, it's helpful for you to assist them in establishing a routine, and do not deviate from it. Start with a late wake up call, and make sure they get up. Don't let them snooze for another few hours, because they will (and then some).

Run them a bath. Ask for them to help you with something. Offer everything you can – time, love, activities, work, anything. 95% of it will likely be rejected, but don't forget the key principle – you're not

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there to be the solution, you're there to give enough hope that one exists.

Everyone's approach, and the other person's receptiveness will be different in nearly every case. The other person will be fragile, but they're not broken or damaged. You know them, and you know what they respond to. Guide them away from toxic habits that feed into their state, and help to try and establish good ones that will help them out of it. If the other person is very stubborn, then you may need a tough approach. If the other person is very delicate, then a softer approach will be required.

The skills I've just spoken of here will generate as much merit for you as it will the other person. You'll develop a sixth sense of awareness for those having mental struggles. You'll spot it in the barista that's serving you your coffee, or in the mechanic that fixes your car.

That awareness will lead you to offer an extra smile to a stranger; pay for a drink forward for someone else; or help a neighbour to mow their lawn if they're not feeling up to it.

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Your new found awareness develops the practice of spreading the kindness which the world can never have enough of.

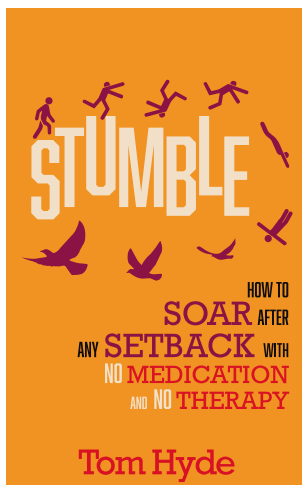
For your commitment to this role, your kindness is saving someone else's life. And if you ever find yourself in the position of needing it, I promise there will always be someone around to save yours.

To those who embrace this role, thank you.

You are incredible.

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