



A Cl.E.A.R. Path Forward™

Welcome to the June 2017 edition of A Cl.E.A.R. Path Forward™. This newsletter is written for the friends and clients of Kathy Hart who are navigating personal or professional change in their life. Each month you are provided with a monthly question, personal actions for clearing the fog, and a recommended book.

Thank you to several of you who shared your insights on self-care. See the information below.

Care By Others - Do You Make Known the Help and Support You Need?

Recently I had a friend who was diagnosed with cancer. When she shared the diagnosis I immediately asked her what I could do to support. We agreed, particularly since I would be traveling, that bringing over some fun to read historical-mystery books would be my best input. Certainly since then I have called, stopped by when appropriate, and just texted when she was on my mind. During the whole time I felt appreciated, and know that my ministrations were welcomed and needed.

At about the same time another friend I know also became ill. When I asked what she needed, her response was "whatever you can do." After I closed my jaw, I responded that was a pretty big territory, and asked if she could please narrow down her needs. Her answer stunned me. "If you really care about me, you'll know what I need." From my perspective, it felt like the ultimate friendship test, which I knew I was doomed to fail. When we parted later that day, I responded with what felt like a trite reply of "When you determine what you need, know that I am available."

After reflecting on these two situations, I realize that care by others is a two-way street. There is both the giver and the receiver of care. As the giver of care, we need to reach out and ensure that our friends, family and others know we are open and willing to respond when asked for support. This is not a passive or mental exercise, but rather the opportunity to have a conversation about our willingness to step in and take on this responsibility. If concerned you will be asked when you don't have the time (which of course can happen) share that you are open to being asked and, if you are not available, are willing to help think through others that might be better suited. As an example, I had a friend who asked me if I would be willing to help with some dinners for her and her kids. I knew I was good for a few nights, but her real need was going to be more extended. I used my contacts through church to set up a dinner lifeline, and various friends and members of the church provided a month's worth of food; just the amount she needed to be stable and on her feet.

There is also the responsibility of the care recipient to be open with their needs. Generalized statements like "Whatever you can do" are not helpful to anyone. There is too much of an obligation on the part of the care giver to figure out what's needed. Be frank about what your limitations are and recognize that asking for help is not a sign of weakness, but rather a position of strength. It takes strength and courage to acknowledge what you cannot do for yourself. It was so tough after I broke both my ankles. My biggest concern was how I would manage to be mobile and get to client sites for my work. When I shared this with a friend, she suggested I set up a timetable for what my needs were, and then have a listing of people who were willing and able to drive me at different times and days. It was brilliant. I felt in charge of my care, the ultimate project manager, coordinating my team of drivers. All my client needs were met, and many of

those people who drove me a round became even closer as friends.

ACTION: Share with me an action or something you have learned and would like to contribute to the community on care by others. Email me at kathy@clearvisionconsult.com with the information. I will share everything I receive in July's newsletter.

Clearing the Fog - Personal actions for care by others:

- *Take Time to Share Your Willingness to Help Others:* Don't assume that others know you are willing to support them. Be specific and clear to your family, friends and others. This isn't to have them make a big deal over it, just to acknowledge to them that if the need should arise, you are willing to lend a helping hand. Make sure the invitation is open and known to them.
- *Be Proactive in Determining Your Ask and From Whom:* Think through your specific ask or need. Be clear on how much time, the particular activity, and the expected duration of the need. Sometimes the activity may need to be divided into multiple tasks. And while family and friends may be the first line of defense, also consider those people you know who you don't really think to ask. They may feel quite honored to be included on your support team roster.
- *Recognize Asking for Help Takes Courage:* Think back to when you were younger and those who provided life models. Were they good at asking for help? Many of us, me included, may have been exposed to life models uncomfortable asking for help. If this is true, realize what it may take for you to feel comfortable asking for help. Reach out and share your concerns with a close friend. One way I used to support my mom was in re-framing. People would often ask me as her daughter how they could help her, as they knew she was so independent. I would share with my mom that she was not enabling friends to be a part of her life. Once she realized this, asking became a little easier.

Recommended reading - Presence: Bringing Your Boldest Self to Your Biggest Challenges by Amy Cuddy

This is a fascinating book about how to be your most authentic self, both mentally and physically. Amy shares how to tap into your personal power for those intense situations. She provides exercises and activities to bring your physical self into the conversation. I loved the activity of going into the bathroom and stretching your arms and legs out to rise and expand to your full self. She talks about body-mind nudges, as opposed to verbal self-affirmations of power. And I especially enjoyed the chapter on fake it until you become it. None of us does everything perfectly, but it's better to take baby steps forward knowing we will step into our personal power long before our brain actually acknowledges the result. If you don't have time to read Amy's book, then check out her TedTalks: [Your Body Language May Shape Who You Are](#) and [Fake It Til You Make It](#).

Tips on Self Care:

- Institute a deep breathing regimen. Focus on taking very slow, measured breaths of air.
- Set up specific journaling time
- Develop a gratitude practice
- Take yourself out for a manicure, pedicure and/or massage
- Have a spa ritual at home

Kathy Hart, Ed.D. has a driving passion for human change and transformation. She has witnessed too many people silenced and leading lives of quiet despair. Her goal is to provide everyone with the support and resources needed to re-imagine and lead a more abundant, joy-filled and purpose-driven life. If you are struggling to reclaim your voice and live your life to the fullest, take concrete action by contacting Kathy at kathy@clearvisionconsult.com. The choice is yours!

Services that Kathy offers:

- 1:1 coaching in support of significant work or personal changes you are navigating
- Small group work or team development for changes that are happening in your company
- Trusted advisory work for leaders who are navigating work changes and need an expert guide

- Facilitating large and small groups to work more effectively together
- Speaking and workshops on human change, group dynamics, coaching and decision making