

How to Be Caring

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Co-authored by Hyungbum Kang, MA, MSW, LCSW, MAC 🟢 and 44 contributors

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Being caring allows you to have empathy for others and to live a life based on affection, love, and compassion for the people around you. It can be tempting to fall into a life of selfishness and to focus only on your own goals and desires, but your days will be far more rewarding if you think about what the people in your life are thinking and feeling. Being caring means providing a listening ear, noticing when someone needs help, and helping your community without asking for a reward. If you want to know how to be more caring today, see Step 1 to get started.

Part 1

Part 1 of 3: Caring for Others



1 Help people in need. Helping people in need is a major aspect of being caring. You can't be a caring person if you're only out to help yourself. Helping other people means helping both the friends and family members who need help in their lives, and also helping out the less fortunate people in your community, or even people you may not know that well who need assistance. Be on the lookout for people who need help and find a productive way to get involved if you want to be more caring.

- Your friends and family members may not always admit it when they need your help. However, it's up to you to notice when they are just being polite and really need some extra help, whether they want you to do some more chores or to run some errands.
- Get involved in a soup kitchen, literacy center, local library, teen help program, or another program in your area that allows you to make other people's lives more full.
- One way to think about being caring is to think of it like giving energy. How can you give energy back to your community, your culture, your society?^[1]



2 Ask people about their lives. Another way to be caring is to put more effort into learning about how other people are doing. The next time you talk to someone, whether it's your neighbor or your best friend, ask him or her how he or she is feeling, about what he or she has going on that weekend, or about how his or her day is going. Making the effort to ask the little questions can add up to showing that you really do care. Don't just ask out of obligation, but because you genuinely want to know how the person is doing.

- Have a balance of talking about yourself and about the other person in any conversation. You don't want to ask a million questions and not reveal anything about yourself, but you also don't want to talk about yourself and not learn anything about the other person, either.
- Remember that this doesn't mean you have to pry. Asking something innocent like how the person's dogs are doing or if he or she has any fun summer plans, can make the person see that you care without you coming on too strong.



3 Apologize when you need to. Caring people care about how their actions affect other people. Therefore, they are quick to apologize when they've done something wrong. They don't deny their mistakes, and they are comfortable admitting they're not perfect. If you know you've hurt somebody, then you have to swallow your pride and say something as simple as, "I'm so sorry I hurt your feelings. I really regret what I did," to show that you're aware of how your actions impact others. Doing this shows that you do care, because you think about how others are feeling.

- When you apologize, make eye contact and avoid other distractions. Show the person that he or she is worth your time.
- Don't say, "I'm sorry you felt hurt when I made that comment," because this is an empty apology that will only do more damage.



4 Do favors for people. Caring people spend time doing favors for people and helping them out when they need it. This doesn't mean you have to become someone's errand boy, but it does mean that you should make an effort to help people out, whether you're picking up coffee for your boyfriend, giving your little brother a ride to school, or helping your best friend pick out the flowers for her wedding. While there should be a balance and the person should do favors for you also if he or she is capable of it, you should make a habit of doing favors for those you care about.

- Though you don't have to spread yourself too thin, sometimes the greatest joy can come from doing a favor for someone you don't know that well. If you shovel your neighbor's driveway while you're shoveling yours after a snowstorm, the effort will be much appreciated.
- Be on the lookout. People won't always ask you if they need a favor. Sometimes, you should just be able to tell when they really need your help but don't want to impose.



5 Share. Sharing really is caring. If you want to be a more caring person, then you should be willing to share your things. This means sharing things you actually care about, like clothes you like, or half of your favorite sandwich, not sharing something that means nothing to you, like a book you didn't like much anyway. Be on the lookout for opportunities to share things, whether it's a material object or a piece of advice. People who are caring are unselfish, and sharing is a key trait of a person who is selfless.

- Sharing doesn't only mean material goods. You can also share knowledge. Take the time to talk to a high school student about the college admissions process if you're in college. Talk to someone starting out in your career field about your experiences. Help a younger person on your tennis team master her forehand. Look for opportunities to improve a person's life by sharing what you know.



6 Check in with people. Another way to be caring is to let people know that you're thinking about them even when you're not together. To do this, you should check in with your friends or family members, whether it's through sending a text message after your best friend's exam, or calling your cousin on her birthday. Sending cards also gets the message across. Though people are busy and it's unrealistic to talk to multiple friends every day, make a habit of checking in on at least one friend a week will make a big difference.

- It's one thing to care about someone when he or she is standing right in front of you, but it's another to check in on that person when he or she is out of sight.
- If you know a friend is having a hard time, you should check in on your friend, even if you're just saying hi. You don't have to keep saying, "How are you feeling?" or that might get annoying, but emailing an interesting article or sending your friend a funny text can help cheer him or her up.



7 Remember the details about people's lives. Another way to show that you really care is to pay attention to the details that people tell you. This could mean the name of your co-worker's cat, the time when your mom is waiting to hear if she gets a promotion, or the fact that your new friend grew up in Topeka, Kansas. Hold on to these details and bring them up later to show that you care. If you keep forgetting every little thing a person tells you, then it'll start to look like you don't care very much. Make a point of remembering as much as you can about a person's life, and to follow up about it when it matters.

- Of course, you don't have to remember every little thing. But if you focus on the important details, you'll have a better sense of who the person is and what matters to him or her.



8 Volunteer. Volunteering is a major way to be more caring. You can volunteer in your community to help out people in need, and you can also find other ways to help out. Volunteer at a local bookstore or library. Volunteer to help clean up a park in your community. Volunteer to bake something for your school's bake sale. Be on the lookout for more opportunities to improve your community and to make a difference in the place where you live.^[2]

- You can also volunteer in a different city, or even a different country. Spend your spring break building houses for Habitat for Humanity in a different part of your state, or even working to help out in a different country. You'll become more caring by spending more time focusing on improving other people's lives.



1 Be sensitive to the feelings of others. If you want to have a more caring perspective, then you have to spend more time thinking about how other people are feeling. Be on the lookout to see how the people around you are reacting to a given situation, or just how they're feeling when they walk in the door. People who are caring are attuned to the moods of others and can tell when someone is feeling down or upset, and take measures to do something about it. The next time you are around other people, whether you're in class or hanging out with friends, pay attention to how they are feeling in a given situation.

- People who are self-absorbed or who only care about themselves tend not to care when other people around them are upset, even if they caused it. Make sure this isn't you.
- Even if you're not the one causing the hurt feelings, be aware of how others around you are reacting to a given comment or a piece of news. If you're in a meeting and notice that many people are visibly upset when your boss explains the objectives for a new project, you may want to talk to your boss about it.



2 Think about how your actions affect other people. You may be too busy trying to further your own needs to always think about the impact that a certain thing you do or say can have on a person. The next time you do something, whether it's leaving the kitchen for your roommate to clean up because you're having a busy day, or ignoring your best friend's phone call about her breakup, ask yourself how this person would react to whatever it is you did. If the answer is "not well," then you should think about changing your actions to something that would better suit people.

- Of course, this doesn't mean that people always have to like or agree with everything you do. Sometimes, you have to do what you believe in without trying to pander to others. But if your behavior is selfish, rude, or unpleasant, then you have to start thinking about making a change.



3 Pick your battles. Caring people tend to focus on maintaining positive, healthy relationships. Sometimes, this means having arguments or engaging with conflicts with others in order to resolve an issue. However, if you want to be caring, you can think more about cutting people some slack, and about maintaining positive, healthy relationships instead of fighting all the time. The next time you begin an argument or conflict with someone, ask yourself if it's really worth having or if you just want to get some anger off your chest. If you don't think an argument or confrontation can lead to anything productive, then you're better off skipping it.

- Caring people do voice their concerns when they are having a problem in a relationship or situation. But they tend to focus on keeping things positive instead of fighting if they can avoid it.



4 Appreciate the people in your life. If you want to be a more caring person, then you have to appreciate the people in your life as much as you can. Be thankful and grateful for your family members, your friends, your significant other, or any of the people who make your life more meaningful and positive. Don't focus on the things that you're missing or the rude comments you have to deal with sometimes, and think about all of the joy and happiness that people bring to your life instead. This will not only put you in a better frame of mind, but it will make it easier for you to care about the people around you more.

- In order to really appreciate the people in your life, you have to thank them as much as you can. Thank them for helping you out during a hard time, for doing you favors, or just for being amazing. Let them know that their presence really does matter in your life.
- Don't underestimate the power of a written "thank you" card. These cards aren't as common as they used to be, which will make the person who receives them feel all the more special.



5 Push away feelings of selfishness. Though it's hard to decide to stop being completely selfish one day, anyone can work on being less selfish in his or her daily interactions and everyday life. If you want to be less selfish, then you have to spend more time thinking about how others are feeling instead of always worrying about me, me, me. The next time you have an interaction with someone, focus on how the person is feeling and what he's been up to instead of talking about yourself or only thinking about your own needs. The more aware you are about not being selfish, the easier it will be to truly care for others.

- Remember that there's a difference between being selfish and in taking good care of yourself and not neglecting your own needs for the sake of what others want.



- 6 Pay attention.** People who are caring enter their daily lives with an attentive perspective. They pay attention to what people do when they are talking to them, and they are sensitive to their needs and feelings. Paying attention to people's facial expressions, gestures, dress, and even their offhand comments, can help paint a complete picture of how that person is really thinking and feeling, and can lead you to be more caring.
- Your friend may be telling you that she's totally over her breakup, but if you look closely, you'll see bags under her eyes or a puffy nose that indicate otherwise.
 - Your roommate may have a big exam coming up and you may notice that she hasn't had a solid meal in two days; cooking extra food for dinner can make a big difference in her life, and will show that you care.



1 Be polite. You may not think that being polite has much to do with being caring, but in fact, being polite will make you a more caring person who is determined to treat the people around him or her with respect. Being polite means having good manners, not being overly vulgar or rude in front of people, holding doors for people and asking people about their day. It also means smiling at people, having common courtesy, and not getting in another person's way. Whether you're at the office, walking down the street, or talking to your sister, you should have a goal of being as polite as possible.

- You don't have to be overly formal to be polite. You just have to be considerate of other people and make them feel comfortable in your presence.



2 Be affectionate. People who are caring give affection to the people they love or care about. Whether you're cuddling with your son or holding your girlfriend's hand, it's important to give people affection as a way of showing that you care. Hugs can be very powerful and can bring comfort to people in need. You shouldn't go around giving physical affection to the people you don't know well, but you should give hugs, light touches, kisses, affectionate pats, or other signs of physical love to the people close to you.

- Actions really can speak louder than words sometimes. Though telling a person you care can make a big difference, sometimes giving that person a hug or putting your arm around him or her can have that extra impact.



3 Listen to people. People who are caring take the time to listen to others. They don't spend all day talking about themselves because they are genuinely interested in what other people have to say. When someone is talking to you, make eye contact, put away your phone or other distractions, and don't interrupt the person. If you have advice or a comment, wait until the person is done talking. As you listen, pay attention to more than just the words; watch the person's face and gestures to get the best understanding of how that person is really thinking and feeling.

- When the person is done talking, don't just compare his or her experiences to your own or say, "I know exactly how you feel." Don't make this about you. Look at the situation on the person's terms.
- Pay attention to the details. If a person is telling you something important, don't just forget about it once the conversation is over; ask about it later.
- You don't have to say, "Uh, huh," or to nod too aggressively when the person is talking to show that you are really listening. Strong eye contact will do a lot of that work for you.



4 Be more generous. Being generous, whether it's with your time or your money, can go a long way in being a more caring person. If you want to be caring, then you have to give to others and to not be selfish with what you do have. We all have busy schedules, but it's important to make the time to donate your things, do favors for people in need, or just to compliment a person close to you. Be giving in all senses of the word without forgetting about yourself, and you'll be on your way to being a more caring person.

- Being generous with your time is very important. Though you don't want to sacrifice all of your "me time" for the sake of someone else, make a habit of taking the time to listen to a friend or loved one in need.



5 Treat others like you want to be treated. This may sound very obvious, but you'd be surprised by how few people actually live by this law. If you want to be more caring, then you have to be kind and thoughtful toward others, and think of how you would feel if you were in their shoes. You may not care much when you make a rude comment to your waiter because you're cranky, but think about how the comment would make him feel. You may not care about being rude to your little brother, but you should think about how your words really affect him. Making a habit of putting yourself in someone else's shoes can make a big difference in how you see the world.

- You may not be down on your luck, but someone else may be. Try to imagine what that's like before you're brusque or uncaring to someone who is less fortunate than you.



6 Be considerate of others. Being considerate is another major aspect of being caring. If you want to be considerate, then you have to respect the people around you, and to avoid making a nuisance of yourself. This includes not talking too loudly on the phone on a crowded bus, not minding your own personal space, and not asking your sister how she feels about you inviting her ex boyfriend to your party when she'll be there. Look out for other people and make sure they feel comfortable and respected in your orbit.

- Being considerate also includes asking people questions to make sure they're okay. Don't turn up the thermostat in your office before asking if everyone else is as freezing as you are.
- You should remember that your words, as well as when you say them, are also an important aspect of being considerate. If you have some negative feedback for a friend or coworker, make sure your language is inoffensive and that you bring it up at the right time.



Expert Q&A

Question

What can I say to encourage a friend?



Hyungbum Kang, MA, MSW, LCSW, MAC

Licensed Clinical Social Worker
Expert Answer

Remind them that they are unique and valued, which confirms your friend's identity and worthiness.

Helpful ☐ 0 Not Helpful ☐ 0

Question

How do I look after my friend who lives overseas?



Community Answer

Try to get in contact with them. Since they're overseas, consider video chatting every now or then.

Helpful 34 Not Helpful 5

Question

My crush thinks I am not affectionate. How can I show that I am caring?



Community Answer

Be there for them and tell them they are not alone. Be friendly and funny and try to make them happy.

Helpful 25 Not Helpful 9

Question

What can I do if I'm caring to everyone around me, but my needs are always forgotten?



Community Answer

Maybe you should consider moving on from those relationships and finding new and more interested/caring people to surround yourself with. Some people are just not thoughtful or considerate people, as sad as it is. You could also limit how much of your time and effort you're willing to put toward those who can't return the favor.

Helpful 25 Not Helpful 12

Question

How can I be caring again after a bad relationship?



Community Answer

Move on from the past. That person hurt you, but that doesn't mean others will, and you'll be depriving yourself of some great experiences if you try to avoid caring for people altogether.

Helpful 17 Not Helpful 9

Question

My best friend thinks I don't care sometimes when i really do. How do I show her that I do?



Community Answer

Make a bigger effort to show her you care.

Helpful 24 Not Helpful 43



Tips

- Try to have a sweet, nice and humble **voice**. Speaking calmly shows people that you

understand and you're listening.

- Always try to start each day with a **smile**; never underestimate the power of a smile!

References

1. ↑ Hyungbum Kang, MA, MSW, LCSW, MAC. Licensed Clinical Social Worker. Expert Interview. 22 July 2021.
2. ↑ <http://www.parentfurther.com/discipline-values/positive-values/teaching-kids-to-care>

About This Article



Co-authored by:

Hyungbum Kang, MA, MSW, LCSW, MAC

Licensed Clinical Social Worker

This article was co-authored by **Hyungbum Kang, MA, MSW, LCSW, MAC**. Hyungbum Kang is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker based in Honolulu, Hawaii. With over a decade of experience, Hyungbum specializes in using an integrated therapeutic approach to treat ADHD, Anger Management, Depression, and other mental health and social work struggles. He received a Bachelor's degree in English and Master's degrees in Sociology and Social Work. Hyungbum earned an MBA from Hawaii Pacific University (HPU) and is working on his Doctor of Psychology from HPU. He is a member of the American Psychological Association, the International Honor Society in Psychology, the National Association of Social Workers, and the California Consortium of Addiction Programs and Professionals. This article has been viewed 412,754 times.

★★★★★
3 votes - 100%

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