

The People Who Benefit Most Are Those Who Serve

How to use this card:

*Pass this card around. Each person please state your name and read a small section of the content on *The People Who Benefit Most are Those Who Serve.**

CONCEPT 22: The People Who Benefit Most are Those Who Serve

Volunteering provides both social and health benefits.

When you host, facilitate, do email, set the table or make a phone call to someone who needs support, you are simultaneously serving others and yourself. There is a strong relationship between providing service to your community and lower mortality rates, increased function, and lower rates of depression. And the greatest benefits seem to accrue to the older volunteers! Suppers is an inside job. Most of our work is done by facilitators who get the “helper’s high” and volunteers who care and benefit from caring.

Barbara’s Story: Cooks Will Save the World

I can’t say that I remember getting lessons on how to cook. In those days, grandmothers, and aunts, mothers and daughters just turned out meals together and somehow young women arrived at adulthood with practical skills in the kitchen. We arrived with something else that was just as important, comfort in the kitchen. Maybe there are young women out there who are as comfortable as those of us in our 60s, but it’s just not what I’m seeing.

When I got diagnosed with an autoimmune disease, my doctor told me I should see if changing my diet would reduce the inflammation. It was daunting to think of all the foods I would give up and all the cooking I would have to do, but at least I could imagine it. And I could imagine it because I already knew how to cook. My doctor was right, food was a big trigger for flares. She obviously didn’t have the time to cook with me or practice her motivational skills to get me over my resistance so she sent me to Suppers. It took me over a year to travel the distance from debilitating pain and obstinate resistance to change to virtual freedom from pain and eating only the foods that spare me the inflammation.

I pinch myself every day! I’ve become almost evangelistic about Suppers, dropping off brochures at the local health food stores, collaring people at my local library and telling them my story, inviting the people in my community to come to meetings at my house. Naturally I had to start hosting my own meetings, where else was I going to go with all this energy and gratitude?

Programs that hang on to customers and members by making you feel like you’ll never recover unless you keep attending hold no interest for me. I host Suppers because it’s joyful. Providing service to the organization that helped me feels really good. Plus, I don’t know where young people are going to learn to prepare food when they start getting the diagnoses for which real food is the only solution. I’m cooking as fast as I can! And I want to teach people because – let’s face it – I’m retired and the world needs me to do this work while I can still do it!

I really do believe that cooks will save the world. Look what happened when grandmothers and aunts, mothers and daughters stopped turning out meals together.

Continue around the table by briefly sharing how you relate to the Suppers concept of The People Who Benefit Most Are Those Who Serve.

Describe a time when you enjoyed providing service to others.

Discussion Prompts: (Each person select a prompt that works for you.)

- Describe the reward you feel in volunteering.
- If there is an older person in your life whom you admire – a grandparent perhaps – talk about their service to family and community.
- Is there some skill, knowledge or hobby you'd like to teach or share? If so, please describe it.

Ideas for Next Steps:

Experiments and Observations

- Do a thought experiment: Imagine you are taking great pleasure in sharing something you love to teach with an eager learner, what's happening?
- Take the risk: Offer to share or teach something you know and observe the response.
- Do a service experiment: Perform a random act of kindness and do not let anyone know. Observe how you feel.
- Make gift certificates for acts of service you enjoy giving – “a lesson on salad dressings”, “a lesson on rolling flatbreads” and observe the group interactions.

Between Meetings:

- Read how other Suppers members related to this concept.
 - For inspiration on forming community, read [Lina's story](#) on page 298 in the 2nd edition of Logical Miracles or on the Suppers website.
 - For people who want to come out of isolation; read [Kiki's story](#) on page 301 in the 2nd edition of Logical Miracles or on the Suppers website.
- Offer to perform an act of therapeutic friendship to someone whose struggles are familiar for you.