



Adopt the Nedlog Rule

Bởi:

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“If we learn to accept our imperfections with humor, as the reflection of our very humanity, we will experience humility and tolerance, we will understand that we are already filled with forgiveness, we will see the gift of our lives, the chains will fall away, and we will be free – free not so much from fear or ‘dependence,’ but free for love, for life itself.”

Ernest Kurtz and Katherine Ketcham: *The Spirituality of Imperfection*

We are all familiar with The Golden Rule: *Do unto others as you would have them do unto you*. And there’s a reason that, in one form or another, it appears in the scriptures of every major spiritual tradition – it’s the right thing to do. The Nedlog Rule is The Golden Rule in reverse (don’t look up the word Nedlog – I made it up by spelling “golden” backwards):

Be willing to ask others to help you in whatever ways you would be willing to help them.

In healthcare we ask “who cares for the caregiver?” It’s an important question because, as is often said, you cannot pour out of an empty pitcher. It’s wisdom as ancient as the *I Ching*: every now and then, the pitcher needs to be taken out of service and refilled.

In our Lone Ranger culture, we are often reluctant to ask for the help we need. We mistakenly think that it’s a sign of weakness to ask for help. But actually, the reverse is true. It takes a strong person to ask others for help. Paradoxically, when you ask someone else to help you, more often than not both of you benefit – isn’t it true that most people feel good about being needed and about being able to help someone else?

Think of how much more positive and productive our organizations – and our families – would be if everyone were to practice the Nedlog Rule:

Passive-aggressive behavior would be replaced by people openly and honestly confronting the issues and discussing their differences.

Martyr complex would be replaced by people asking for help before they become overwhelmed, and asking for a break before they reach the breaking point.

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Chronic complaining would be replaced by people asking for help to fix the problems that can be fixed and to cope with the predicaments that are beyond immediate solution (obviously a restatement of the Serenity Prayer).

Burnout would be replaced by the sort of collective spirit one sees in a support group, where people who are facing intractable problems reach out to one another to share hope, inspiration, and courage – and a culture where it's almost impossible to distinguish between helper and helpee.

Carrie Anne Murphy, the fictional character in my book [The Healing Tree](#), wrote this poem to convey the message to a nursing audience, but it applies across the board:

Growing Soul

Take care of your garden, caregiver

Don't plant it with brambles and weeds

You won't grow orchids and roses

If in spring you plant dandelion seeds

Take care of your garden, caregiver

Nurture it with kindness and care

Help delicate buds become lovely flowers

With water and sunshine and prayer

Take care of your garden, caregiver

Protect it from bugs and from blight

Walk daily the rows with a vigilant eye

Shelter it from frost in the night

Take care of your garden, caregiver

At its heart erect a maypole

Then dance and sing as twilight falls round

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Cultivate this home for your soul