

"This warm, funny book shows how magical the effects of giving and getting help can be."

RITA MCGRATH, PROFESSOR, COLUMBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL

# GO TO HELP

31 STRATEGIES TO  
OFFER, ASK FOR, AND  
ACCEPT HELP

DEBORAH GRAYSON RIEGEL, MSW  
& SOPHIE RIEGEL

## How to Get Better at Offering, Asking for, and Accepting Help

By Deborah Grayson Riegel

# What We'll Cover Today

1. Why Offering and Asking for Help is Hard
2. The 31 Strategies: An Overview
3. 5 Strategies You Can Use TODAY!

# Why is Offering and Asking for Help So Hard?

- Help is surprisingly complex
- Your go-to way of helping isn't enough
- People are wanting and waiting to help YOU

**Help is  
Surprisingly  
Complex**



How we help  
***should be***  
based on the  
kind of  
challenge  
someone is  
facing.

### Technical Challenges:

- The knowledge to solve the problem already exists.
- Requires acquisition and application of knowledge in an efficient and rational way.
- Have linear, logical solutions.
- Are like a puzzle, with one right answer.

### Adaptive Challenges:

- There's no ready solution.
- No technical expertise is fully adequate.
- People need to make difficult adjustments in attitudes, work habits, basic assumptions, while learning their way into the creation of a strategy that doesn't exist yet.

How we  
***should help***  
is based on  
where the  
gaps are.



# Why is Offering and Asking for Help So Hard?

- Help is surprisingly complex
- **Your go-to way of helping isn't enough**
- Other people are wanting and waiting to help YOU.



You have a  
way or two  
of helping  
that **you**  
**keep**  
**coming**  
**back to.**





You've  
been  
**recognized  
and  
rewarded**  
for your way  
of helping.



You're  
confusing  
the **intention**  
of your help  
with the  
**impact** of  
your help.

### How often do you...

1. Offer help without asking for feedback on how helpful it actually was?
2. Say "I told you so" when someone didn't take your help?
3. Expect to be thanked repeatedly for your help?
4. Consider yourself more of an expert than the other person thinks you are?
5. Assume you should share your own experience?
6. Assume that helping means "fix it for them" or "tell them how to fix it"?
7. Offer to "assist" or "support" and then take over and do it yourself?
8. Have strings attached to your help?
9. Let the other person know (overtly or covertly) that they shouldn't need help?
10. Offer to help even when you can't, don't want to, or shouldn't?

# Why is Offering and Asking for Help So Hard?

- Help is surprisingly complex
- Your go-to way of helping isn't enough
- **Other people are wanting and waiting to help YOU**

Your  
**mindset** is  
getting in  
the way of  
asking for  
help.





Name 3  
people who  
you know  
**would help  
you right  
now.**

**GO!**



What  
**mindsets** are  
you willing to  
try moving  
forward?





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1. Why Offering, Asking for, and Accepting Help is Hard
2. **The 31 Strategies: An Overview**
3. 5 Strategies You Can Use TODAY!

### *Get curious*

1. Listen
2. Help you/me focus
3. Interrupt a story to get to the point
4. Ask powerful questions

### *Offer support*

5. Empathize
6. Invite you/me to admit something vulnerable
7. Help you/me tolerate discomfort and ambiguity
8. Summon your/my strengths
9. Raise the bar for you/me
10. Help you/me focus on what is working

### *Give direction*

11. Tell you/me what to do
12. Take something off your/my plate
13. Do it with you/me, side by side
14. Teach you/me how to do something
15. Recommend an approach to try
16. Recommend what to avoid
17. Offer resources
18. Share my/their own experience

### *Plan and execute*

19. Set S.M.A.R.T. and S.M.A.R.T.E.S.T. goals
20. Create an action plan
21. Anticipate and overcome obstacles
22. Point out "solution aversion"
23. Challenge catastrophic thinking
24. Reflect on blind spots
25. Encourage commitment and accountability

### *Evaluate and celebrate*

26. Offer helpful feedback
27. Evaluate both process and performance
28. Help you/me see progress
29. Invite self-evaluation
30. Promote a pause
31. Celebrate

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## Help Strategy #4

### Get Curious: *Ask Powerful Questions*

#### Dirty Questions

- Why didn't you do that?
- Shouldn't you consider how this will impact the other stakeholders first?
- Why does this keep happening?
- Can't you just move on?
- Don't you want to fix this once and for all?

#### Clean Questions

- What got in your way?
- Who else will be impacted?
- What patterns do you notice?
- What's keeping you stuck?
- What do you really want to happen?

## Help Strategy #5

**Offer Support:**  
*Empathize*

### Three Kinds of Empathy

1. Cognitive
2. Emotional
3. Behavioral

## Help Strategy #5

### Offer Support: *Empathize*

## Workplace Empathy Signals

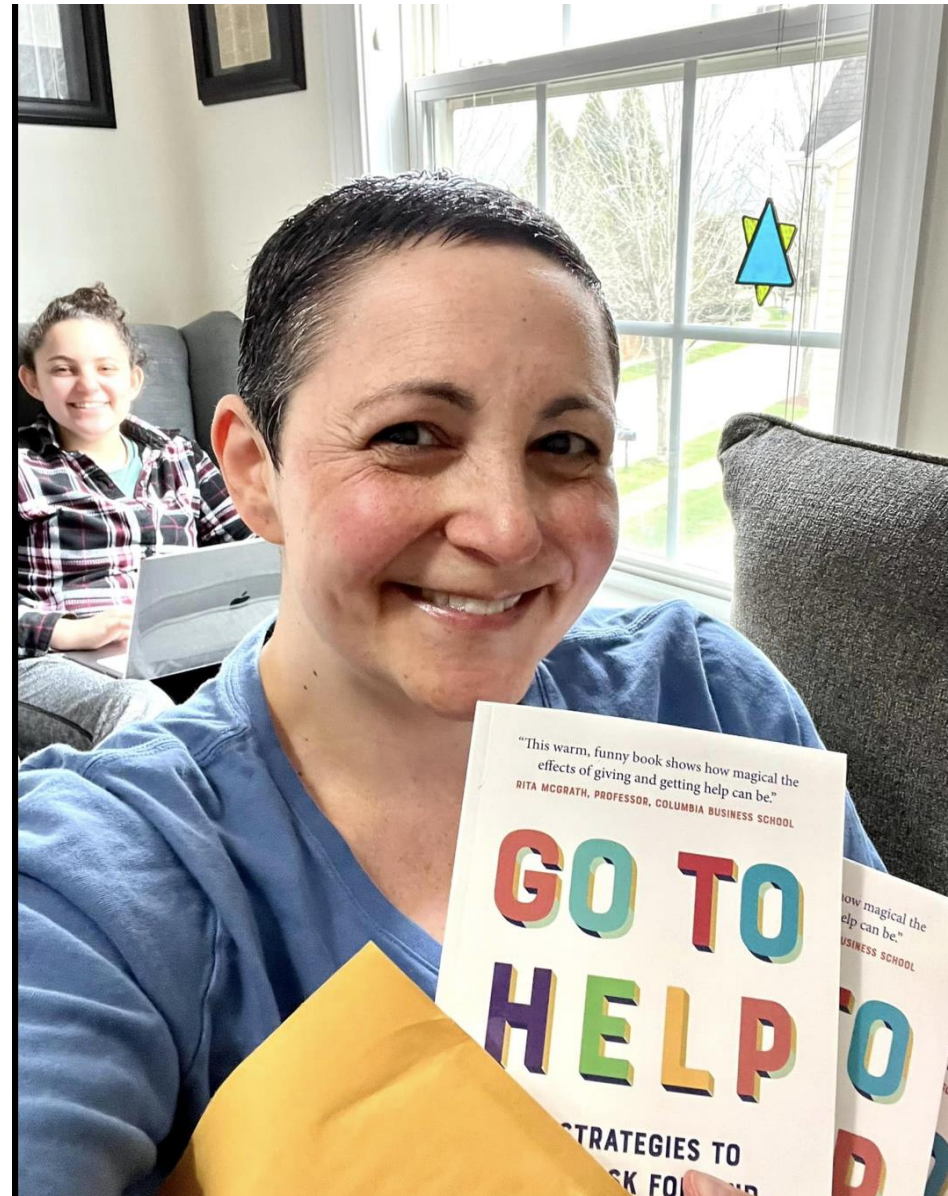
- What can I take off your plate?
- If you could change one thing about your job, what would it be?
- What can I do to make it easier for you to contribute fully?
- What's getting in the way of you doing your very best work?
- What's most/least energizing about this job for you?
- How can I set you up for wild success?

*Anne Morris and Francis Frei "Unleashed: The Unapologetic Leader's Guide to Empowering Everyone Around You"*



# Help Strategy #13

Give  
Direction:  
*Do it with  
them*



## Help Strategy #24

**Plan and  
execute:**  
*Reflect on  
blind spots*



“We all  
have a  
blind spot  
and it's  
shaped  
exactly  
like us.”

Junot  
Diaz

## What are we sometimes blind to?

1. How committed we really are
2. How many things we're committed to at once
3. How "secretly committed" we are to the current situation staying the same
4. How hard or complex it is
5. How much time it's going to take
6. How many things we couldn't have anticipated (or could have but didn't)
7. How much energy it requires
8. How quickly or easily we may get discouraged
9. How challenging it may be to get others on board, or who else we needed on board but didn't realize
10. How engrained our patterns and habits are



# Help Strategy #30

Evaluate  
and  
Celebrate:  
*Promote the  
Pause*



## Help Strategy #30

Evaluate  
and  
Celebrate:  
*Promote the  
Pause*

What is **ONE** thing you  
can **STOP** doing today,  
because it's interfering  
with something else that's  
important to you?

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