

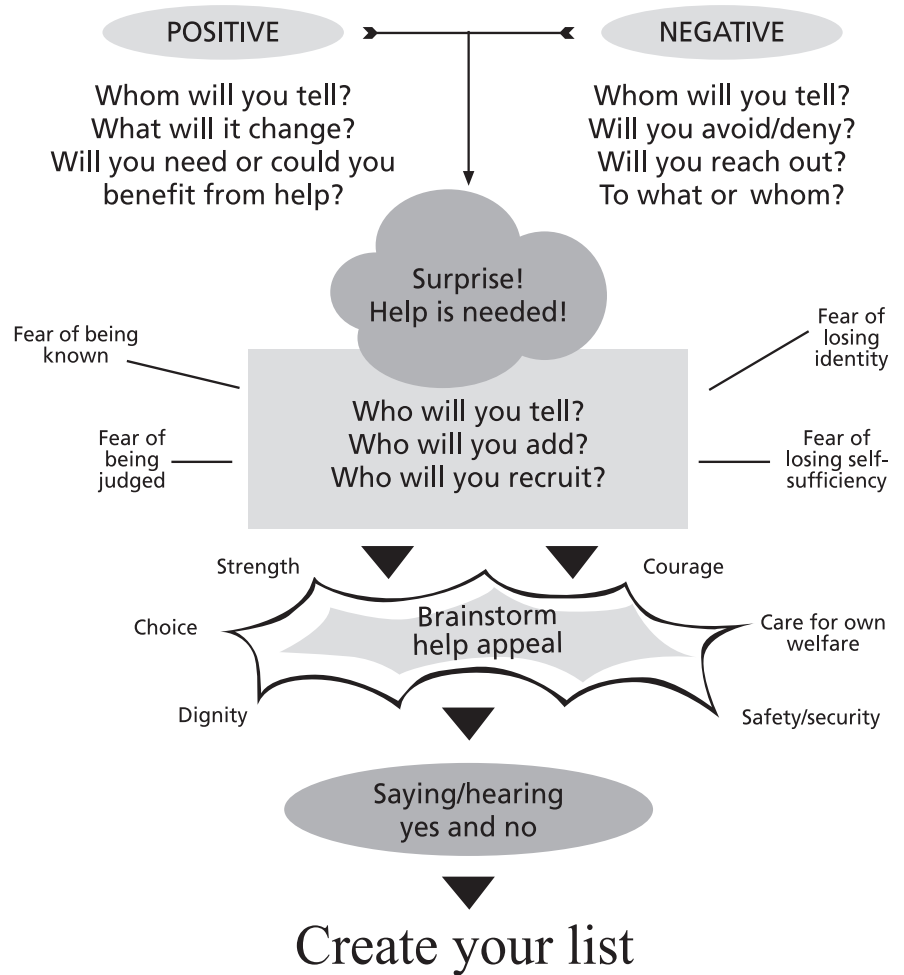
Pulling Your Team Together

Change can surprise and challenge us, whether the change is “positive” or “negative,” whether it’s a surprise or planned, change is guaranteed to rock our world.

In case of emergency

- STOP before you act! Take several deep breaths.
- RELAX as much as possible.
- ASK: who would you want to quickly talk this through with before taking action? Let your feelings out to get them behind you.
- BUILD a short-term plan.
- GATHER more data about what’s happening and what options exist, with probable consequences of each.
- DEVELOP a longer-term course of action, including a team.

Change or challenge in your life



Notes: _____



Five lessons from Personal Safety Nets:

1. Tell people what's going
2. Ask for help—early
3. Be specific in requests
4. Don't take "no" personally
5. Keep giving to others

Pulling your team together

Before the first meeting:

- Review your "A" and other safety net people lists.
- Meet with two of your best team members to determine:
 - Invitation
 - List
 - Location
 - Agenda
 - Goals

By the end of this first meeting, you hope to have the following:

- Roster of those who want to join in (remember not to take "no" personally!).
- A list of tasks and who will initially do them and for how long, and who will provide backup.
- A schedule for tasks and for the next meeting.
- A group mission or intention.
- Some ground rules for working together.
- A list of remaining questions or wishes.
- A good feeling about what's been accomplished.

Possible ground rules for the team

Start with these as examples to get your team going. Then include your own definitions of each, and enjoy writing your own ground rules:

- Maintain confidentiality (privacy).
- Set limits on your time and energy.
- Respect the time of each person.
- Keep money out of the relationships.
- Honor endings.
- Create your own.

Words to work by

*Choice, dignity,
respect, safety,
self-care, perspective*

*Truth walks toward us
on the paths of our ques-
tions ...As soon as you
think you have the an-
swer, you have closed
the path and may miss
vital new information.*

*—Jacqueline Winspear,
Maisie Dobbs*

Using “people capital” wisely

We all want to be valued by those around us, seen in a positive light, and treated with respect. Further, most of us want to use our skills, talents, and time as efficiently and maximally as possible. In the team context, this often translates to scheduling, having a backup plan, and taking seriously our responsibilities to each other.

This is not at the cost of important human inter-
sections or of interpersonal bonding. Nor does it
ignore the social aspects of the team. Rather, it's
centered on avoiding disorganization, redundancy,
or confusion. It focuses on the needs of everyone
involved. Whenever it's possible for team members
to use strengths, skills, and time in ways that are
fulfilling, individual team members will flourish to
everyone's benefit.



If you want a response, you have to ask for it.

—John Huenefeld

Tips for brainstorming

1. Start by defining the goal, problem, or question broadly and/or in several ways.
2. Everyone's input is valuable, and no ideas are excluded or too far out.
3. Keep notes. Have paper and markers at the ready.
4. After ideas on any given topic are generated, then prioritize and sequence. Take on tasks. Write down who'll do what, by when.
5. Create a plan and keep it doable. Come back to less essential parts or to those that come up along the way.
6. Have fun and build a stronger team through shared effort.
7. Create goals: What's the first action? What's most important? What is to be done now?

Sheldon Solomon, professor of psychology at Skidmore College, defines stress as when the demands on an individual are greater than the resources available to that individual. With time, education, and outside help, the stress level can change. Creating and using a safety-net team is one good way to decrease stress.

Pulling your team together

Our goal is to help you build a dependable team by communicating clearly and effectively.

Steps to having an effective team to support you or someone you care for:

1. Think and plan for who you think might be on your team.
 - How will you ask them?
 - What will you ask them for?
 - When will you ask?
2. Talk to these people.
3. Share your hopes, wishes, needs, plans, questions.
4. Communicate clearly (see pages 22-23).
5. Don't take "no" personally, and prepare to hear it sometimes.
6. Appreciate all support that comes your way—learn to see and acknowledge the small things too.

Join the team

Script for an emergency: Discussion example 1

Tony: single dad

Julie: 17-year-old daughter

John and Susan: Tony's friends

Tony: John and Julie, our daughter, Beth, has just been in a major climbing accident. You've been key members of my safety net, and now I'm asking you to help me form a care-share team to get through this terrible time. Will you help me pull together a team and give me direction?

Susan: Boy! How awful! We don't know why she went off to that godforsaken wilderness area to try her skills, but helping her and you through this now is the point. John and I'd be glad to help. Why don't we invite Carlos, and your friends Sylvia and Clay, to join in? They each have good strategizing skills and will contribute. Maybe we could meet here tonight after work. We can call for pizza and map out a plan.

Tony: That's wonderful. I'm scared and overwhelmed! I thought it was hard raising her as a little kid, but this teenage part often has me wishing that Rose were still here. I'll call the other three and make a list of things I hope to get help with.

Notes: _____



Discussion example 2:

Sarah: Beth, I would be happy to try to help you and Jim out while Julie is receiving her treatment. I'm so sorry that she's ill.

Beth: I can't tell you how much it means to me that you're there. Jim and I are trying to line up a number of people who can help. In this way we hope we won't have to ask too much of any of you.

Sarah: I think it's really wise of you and Jim to try to line up a whole team. I know that I'll have many time commitments with my part-time job and with the kids.

Beth: I know. Your plate is already full, and I feel bad about even asking.

Sarah: No, Beth, don't feel bad. What are friends for? I always want to know what's going on in your life, and I want you to ask me for help. I will always do what I can.

Beth: Well, Sarah, let's make a deal. First, Jim and I will do our best to recruit a large team to help protect all the members of the team. And, secondly, I'll promise to feel free to ask if you promise to always feel free to say "no." Is it a deal?

What does being a member mean?

- Being committed.
- Recognizing that at times you won't feel like helping or being there, but will choose to help and be there nonetheless.
- Being honest and caring.
- Knowing that you'll sometimes choose to say "no" for various reasons.
- Feeling good about participating.
- Being able to balance and rebalance your life and values while being a team member.
- Being healthier.
- Living longer.
- Being supported while helping.
- Asking for team support when something is hard for you while remembering that the primary focus of the group is not on you.
- Giving up control to benefit someone else.
- Offering support to other team members.

In each of our lives there is a time when we need others in a way we don't expect.
—Peter Grimm, MD

How could I use my safety net members?

Sometimes knowing what type of help we need or could accept allows us to better choose our personal safety net members.



Help with children

- Pick up or carpool
- Child-focused time
- Lunches
- Babysitting
- Other

Eldercare

- Company for elder
- Personal care
- Reading/TV time
- Other

Health/personal care

- Exercising/walking
- Nail care
- Shampoo/haircut
- Massages
- Other

Resource/delegating

- Medicare/Medicaid/Insurance
- Track MD visits
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- Finding options
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Meals

- Grocery shopping
- Cooking (delivering?)
- Helping with eating

Meals (continued)

- Dishes
- Other

Financial

- Bill/mail sorting
- Balancing statements
- Insurance papers
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Household chores

- Light house cleaning
- Windows/floors
- Cleaning refrigerator
- Laundry
- Other

Pets and plants

- Feeding and exercising
- Watering and trimming
- Mowing/trimming/raking
- Other

Telephone

- Calling to check in
- Medication reminders
- Telephone tree
- Other

Reading/writing

- Recording life story

Notes: _____



What help, guidance, or support do I need? What information would be helpful? Is a meeting the best way to get this?

- Reading (continued)
 Reading books/papers
 Letters/cards/mail
 Other

- Home repair
 Painting
 Closet/garage
 Moving
 Installing grab bars
 Other

- Transportation
 To and from MD visits
 Shopping and errands
 Car maintenance
 Other

- Medical
 Preparing for visits
 Accompanying
 Tracking details
 Other

- Medications
 Remembering
 Procuring
 Coordinating
 Tracking
 Other

- Friendly companionship
 Social outings
 Visits in hospitals
 Talking/visiting
 Personal shopping

Your own ideas:

Anticipating needs

Bill Gates Sr. added this endorsement to our book, *Personal Safety Nets*.

This is a really valuable book. The idea of anticipating the toughest personal or family tragedies by pre-arranging a support group is a wonderfully novel but practical idea. Beyond that the authors have provided an all-inclusive list of practical tips on how to do this effectively. I was particularly attracted to the wisdom of being sure that those you ask for help understand that you are perfectly willing to accept a "no" for an answer.

Hosting your first care-share team meeting

Telephone script for calling a care-share meeting for someone else

Hi, this is (name), and I'm calling you at the request of (name of care partner or care partner's significant other). As you know (name of care partner) has (describe circumstances that make the care-share team needed).

You have been an important part of (name's) life and we're happy you'll join in helping figure how to go through this situation. Many people have found that they are better able to meet challenges with the help of a care-share team. No one is expected to contribute or do any more than he or she is comfortable with.

We are planning on holding an initial information meeting on (two or three dates). Would you be able to attend?



Notes: _____



Written invitation to a first care-share team meeting

You're Invited!

*Please come to hear more about
what's going on with
Julie and Tony, her dad.*

*September 11, 2008, 7pm-8:30pm
John & Susan's House
123 Main Street
Refreshments
RSVP to Susan 206.937.6543*

Sharing is healing

When we tell our stories to one another, we, at the same time, find the meaning of our lives and are healed from our isolation and loneliness.

Strange as it may seem, self-knowledge begins with self-revelation.

We don't know who we are until we hear ourselves speaking the drama of our lives to someone we trust to listen with an open mind and heart.

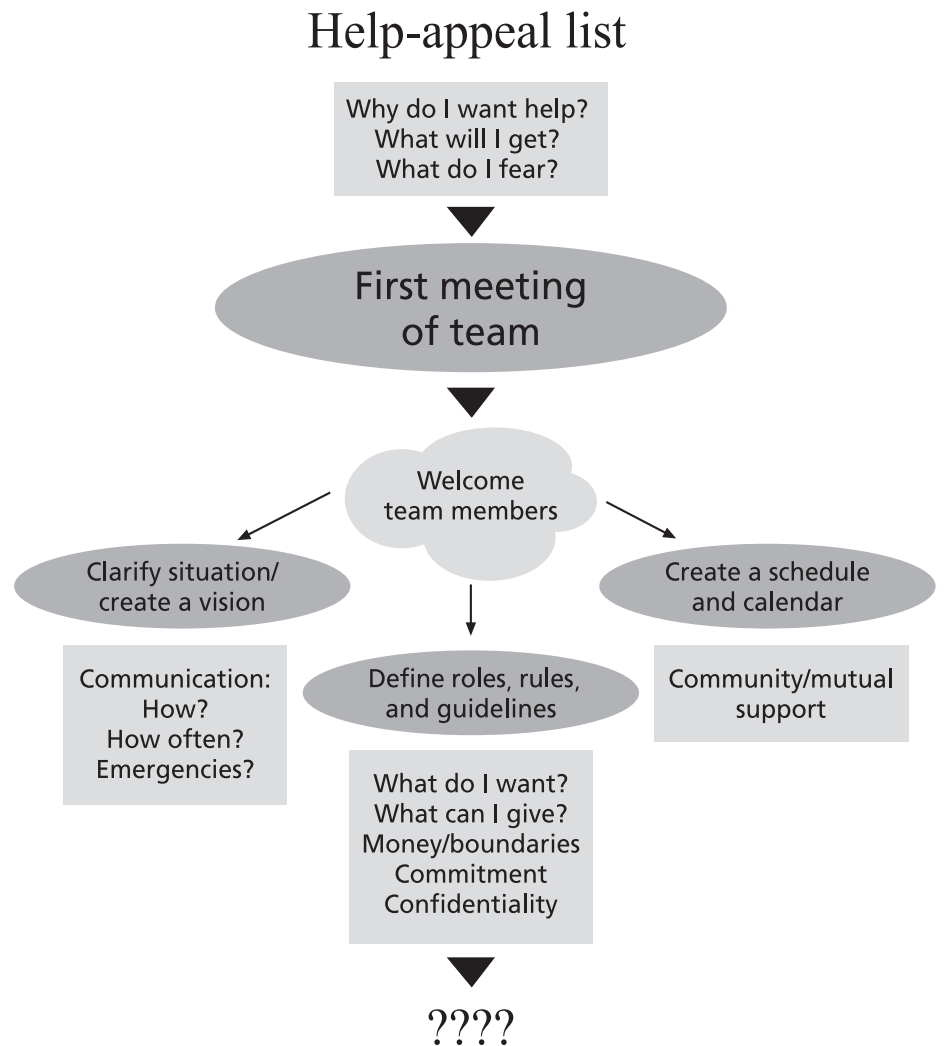
—Sam Keen, Your Mythic Journey

Keep your team running smoothly

Below are brief pieces from discussions of understanding and agreements about teams.

The capacity of many to accomplish with ease what would have been extremely difficult or impossible for one or a few is illustrated by this example:

A retirement center needed to evacuate all residents after an ice storm shut off electricity. Ben couldn't walk. Fellow residents put a blanket under him, curled the corners, and shuffled along toward the exit. With ten of them together they all thought of the approach and found it easy to do.



Notes: _____



Lisa's care team was called together by a friend. Lisa says, "I was overwhelmed by the generosity of my friends [who helped me do] all the things that are impossible to do by yourself!"

Going forward

Regular meeting of team

Doing what's needed in subsequent, regular meeting

New business

Adjust schedule and calendar

Research
Prioritize
Brainstorm
Recruit

Group self-care

Reschedule to accommodate changes

Community support
Emotions
Problems
Appreciation
Celebration

PREDICTABLE PROBLEMS

Lack of follow through	Too many needs
Hurt feelings	Personality conflicts
Anger	Fear
New issues	Other

Thanks and good-bye

Safer, smarter, more satisfied, and more connected

Personal safety

"[A personal safety net is] usually managed reactively, when there is little time for planning, etc. In a sense, [here is] ... a roadmap for contingency planning, the sort of planning that is 1) very important and

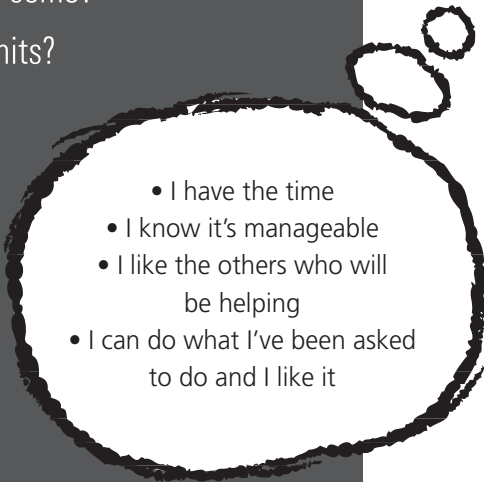
Before you say yes, ask yourself:

- Why would I like to help?
- Why wouldn't I want to do this?
- What would I get from saying yes?
- What would I worry about/ what would I fear? So, do I say yes or no?
- To all or some?
- With limits?

Why I might say yes to requests for participation/ assistance/help



- I like/love this person
- I was helped before
 - To pay back
 - Sense of duty
 - Guilt
 - Responsibility
 - Can't back out



- I have the time
- I know it's manageable
- I like the others who will be helping
- I can do what I've been asked to do and I like it

What will I get out of saying yes?

How do I feel when I think about participating?

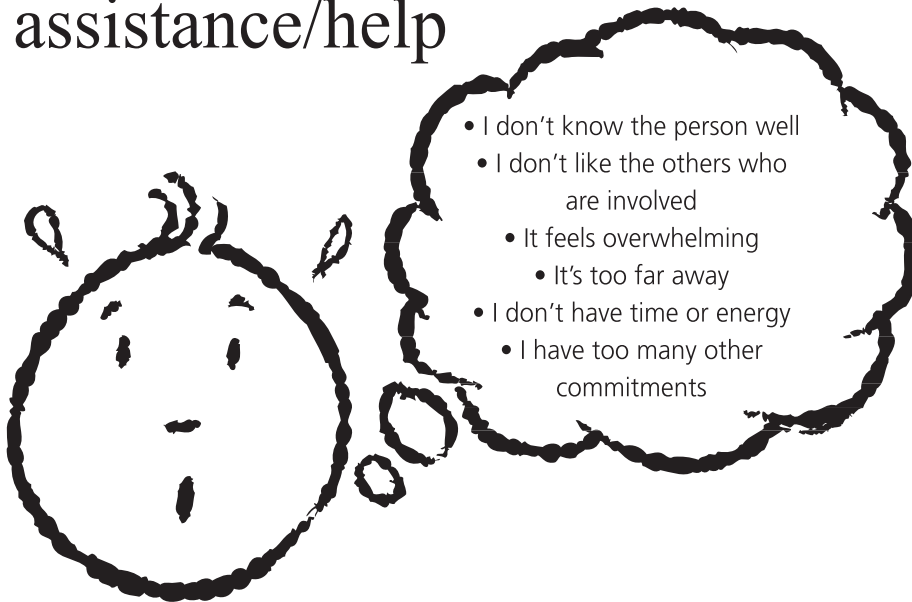
What scares, worries, or concerns me?

2) needs to occur when [there is] time and other resources available to do it. Municipalities have contingency plans for earthquakes, floods, nuclear war, etc. But how many individuals have developed comparable plans for themselves?"

—Chad Lewis



Why I might say no to requests for participation/assistance/help



If you are declining, period, there are numerous ways to do so, with kindness and respect. If what you want is to be completely out of the loop, you might try something like this:

"I'm honored that you've asked, but it's simply that I'm not able to be part of this now. I wish you all the best as you go forward."

If you'd like to be in, later or for a different type of involvement, then you might try something like this:

- I'm not able to do that at this time.
- I'd rather not do that particular thing. Is there another?
- Just now I'm overcommitted, but please call back.
- I can't say yes to that, but how about ____?
- Here's something I'd like to offer. Would it be helpful?
- Could I be a backup person?

What can I offer?

“I firmly believe we all have the capacity to create our lives afresh all day long, and it’s worth a try to recognize those small choice moments. I already am enjoying the chance to live creatively and intentionally minute by minute, as opposed to reactively. It seems well worth a try.”

—Sally B.

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