

Helpers and Non-Helpers

By [Harrison Barnes](#)

In the book *All I Want Is Everything*, Marion Preminger discusses the viewpoint of her husband, a missionary doctor in Africa: "Albert Schweitzer says there are two kinds of people. There are helpers, and there are non-helpers. I thank God he allowed me to become a helper, and in helping, I found everything."

Preminger's life story is so instructive and inspirational because it discusses a woman who moved from being a *non-helper* to a *helper* and describes how stunning this transformation was for her.

In my experience, I would say the author is correct in saying that there really are two types of people in the world, helpers and non-helpers. Choosing to be a helper or a non-helper will have a major impact on the course of your life, no matter how much education you get and no matter what sort of job you get.

Life, in general, revolves around finding opportunity, making money, developing friendship, discovering love, moving toward those who help, and staying away from those who do not help. When you look at the most successful and the happiest people out there, you will almost invariably find that these people are *helpers*, always making an effort to contribute and aid others. In addition to doing this through physical actions, they also do this through their thoughts. They communicate and think positive messages about others. Being a *helper* is about more than just the things you do. It involves your intent, your spirit, and where you are coming from, deep down. The deeper and more powerful your positive intent is, the more of a helper you will be.

Conversely, the non-helpers are always more concerned about their immediate needs and what others can do for them. The non-helpers always make sure that their actions are calculated and that what they receive in return is more than what they put out. In addition, there is a kind of spiritual and energetic level to non-helpers as well. The non-helpers are typically the sorts of people who rationalize negative actions toward others, who are jealous and envious of others, and who are always judging others. Unfortunately, many people are non-helpers. Non-helpers may be successful for a certain period of time, but even when they are, they are unhappy.

Several years ago, when the business I run was first getting started, I was working incredibly long hours. I was in the office seven days a week and was generally there from 8:00 in the morning until 8:00 or 9:00 each night. The business was growing rapidly but was also financially challenged and short-staffed, as it was just getting off the ground. After work each evening, I would go home, order some food, and then work until midnight or 1:00 a.m. Then, a few hours later, I would get up and do it all over again. I was completely into this and was giving the business my all.

I was working with one guy in particular who had told me on several occasions that he wanted to be my partner in the business. His work schedule and overall contribution to the business was much different from mine, however. For example, he might get in at 7:00 a.m. and leave by 1:00 p.m. each day. He would never be there on the weekends. He was always asking for more money, making excuses for not working more, taking lots of trips and vacations, and telling me how he wanted all sorts of stock in the business. In addition, he seemed to spend more time thinking about the rewards the business should give him, rather than what he could do to make it better. He was earning a decent amount of money while doing the minimum amount of work--just enough to keep himself employed.

One Sunday I was working in our file room, busily organizing various papers. These papers contained information that the man and I both used on a daily basis; they were important because their efficient organization helped us do our jobs better. I had gotten to the office at around 9:00 a.m. that day and at around 11:00 this guy walked in to pick something up that he had left at the office. He had just come from a sporting competition in which he had participated, and apparently he had only planned on popping into the office for no more than a few minutes. He walked into his office, grabbed what he was looking for, and then heard me rustling around in the file room. He walked in to see what I was up to.

He looked somewhat disappointed; he knew I was doing something that I had asked him to do on several occasions. He had never done the job, so I was taking care of it. I was not upset about it because, one way or another, it just needed to get done. When he saw me, the guy said:

"I know I have been promising to do this for weeks. Here, let me help you. But I only have forty-five minutes because I want to go to a movie this afternoon, so let's finish this up fast!"

I knew there was no way in the world we could accomplish the job that quickly, but I was grateful for the help. As he started doing the work, I noticed that he kept looking at his watch. He was also being quite careless, filing papers in the wrong area and so forth--and seemed very distracted. Eventually I got pretty annoyed and said to him:

"Listen, I will finish up this work. Don't worry about it."

He looked at me with a long sort of stare. The stare seemed to say something along the lines of "this work you are doing is not that important" and "just let me slack off." This was a pivotal event in this guy's career in many respects, and it was at that moment when I realized very firmly that this person was not the sort of partner I wanted to have. He simply was not up to contributing and giving his all, and he was unwilling to devote himself wholeheartedly to the job. Taking into account that morning's events, as well as some previous incidents, it was really crystallized for me that the guy was more of a *taker* than a *contributor*; therefore he was not someone I wanted to conceivably spend the rest of my life working with.

All people have limits as to how much they are willing to give in life and in their work, and these limits are often put to the test. A law firm may choose to promote someone who works 3,200 hours versus 2,800 hours a year, on the basis that the person who works 3,200 hours is more of a contributor. I have seen this scenario before: the attorney who only worked 2,800 hours was shown the door, while the other one was promoted. These could be two equally talented people who went to top [law](#)

schools and worked hard to be partners in a law firm for ten or more years. It all came down to one person putting in that extra 400 hours and being that much more of a contributor to the firm. This is how it often works in life. The person who is seen as the greatest helper becomes the least expendable and is usually the person who gets the brass ring.

The more of a helper you are, the better you will do and the happier you will be in life. Being a helper requires that you share, give, and contribute in a manner that is unselfish. Many people are willing to share but only with conditions, and they do so for the wrong reasons. For example, some people may share just so others do not judge them in a negative light. Others may share because they feel that sharing makes them significant. Some will simply share due to a feeling of peer pressure, as the guy who wanted to be my partner did. Some may share because they want to be recognized for their sharing. People share; however, a great many people are sharing and contributing for reasons that have more to do with them than others.

It is a great challenge for people to move from being perceived as non-helpers to being perceived as wholeheartedly sharing and giving of themselves. You generally cannot *fake* being a helper. For a time someone can suddenly appear to be contributing, but people are sensitive to this and can see through someone who is *faking it*. Your sharing attitude needs to come from within and it needs to be a bona fide part of you. When you become a true *helper*, you will move into another realm of living and even consciousness. When you reach this realm your life and career will change for the better.

The story of Marion Preminger is one of the most inspiring stories I have ever heard. She was born in Hungary in a large castle. She was raised incredibly well, like an aristocrat, and had numerous privileges that very few people could ever hope for or imagine.

While in Vienna at a ball, she met the handsome son of an Italian doctor, and they were married a short time later. The marriage only lasted a year. She then returned to Vienna and shortly after that, she met a director named Otto Preminger. The two of them got married and moved to Los Angeles. Soon enough, Otto's directing career took off and he became very famous and wealthy. Marion blossomed as a Hollywood socialite, and the couple became very well known throughout Hollywood.

The stress of this life became very difficult for Marion. She became addicted to drugs and alcohol. In addition, she gained a reputation for having had multiple affairs. Otto eventually divorced her, and afterward Marion tried to commit suicide on three separate occasions. She then left Hollywood and returned to Vienna.

When she was back in Vienna, she met a doctor, Albert Schweitzer. Schweitzer was known as a missionary, and he was on leave from his hospital in Africa. She first met him when he was playing an organ in a church. After meeting him, she spent all of her time with Schweitzer, before he returned to his work. When it was time for the doctor to return to Africa, Marion pleaded with him to take her with him, and he agreed.

For the rest of her life, the woman who had spent so many years living like a princess became a servant inside the hospital. She changed bedpans, bathed people, changed bandages, and helped care for lepers and other sick and diseased people.

Very few people can make others the focus of their efforts. Instead, most people are more focused on what others can do for them, and only act when they believe they will receive a corresponding reward for their efforts. Marion discovered a new love for life as a *helper*, and she threw herself into it.

Throughout most of Marion's life, she had been taking from others and had been the constant center of attention. When she moved to Africa, her entire focus was shifted toward helping others--those who had no ability whatsoever to reward her in any tangible way for her efforts. This is the power of the life that she eventually led as a nurse and caregiver in Africa. When she became someone who shared rather than took from others, she found her own true happiness.

Sharing requires that we get out of our comfort zone. It requires that we do something for others without any hope of a reward. It requires that we make others the focus of our efforts and not make ourselves the focus of our lives. If you are going to really reach your potential and become the person you are capable of being, you need to concentrate on putting out positive energy toward others and helping those around you. When you are benefiting others, you become a better person. People seek you out in **employment situations**. People advance you in your job. People respect you. All in all, you create an abundance of positive energy coming toward you.

Many people spend their time and energy being jealous of others, judging others, and reacting in an angry way toward the world. This was the life that Marion had had before she moved to Africa. When you are judging others, are jealous of others, and so forth, you are living a life that is primarily centered around your need to feel significant. This need to feel significant pushes negative energy toward others, which ultimately comes back to you in the form of more negative energy. In Marion's case, this was manifested in the form of the drugs, suicide attempts, and the failure of her marriage. Only when she concentrated on putting out positive energy, and truly deep down being a giving person, did her life change for the better. Very few people are ever able to make such a shift in consciousness in order to become a *helper*.

When you go through life as just *another part of the crowd*, you are generally going to be in a position of reacting and taking more than you are giving. *Distinguish yourself from the crowd by unlocking the power of sharing and contributing.*

When you find that you are jealous of others, that you are angry and are constantly judging others, the best thing you possibly can do is redirect your focus and concentrate on thinking positive and compassionate thoughts about those around you. *A judgmental attitude toward others translates into a judgmental attitude toward ourselves.* You need to feel and see others in a positive light--the same way you would want to see yourself. Moving toward caring about others offers the *hidden reward* of making you care about yourself.

THE LESSON

There are two types of people in the world; helpers and non helpers. The more of a helper you are, the more you will succeed and find happiness in life. When you find yourself jealous, angry, and judging others, redirect your focus and concentrate on thinking positive, compassionate thoughts about those around you. See and regard others in the same positive light in which you yourself would like to be regarded. Caring about others offers the hidden reward of making you care more about yourself.