




LESSON 9: TO GIVE OR NOT TO GIVE

Misunderstood by Allyson Blythe



Listed on the following page are some important points to reflect on when faced with a decision or a request. Your personal state, motives, feelings, expectations, and mindset all influence your approach to people, places, and things. Remember, you are your own starting point, so it's critical to be honest and aware of each of these terms and conditions listed below. Weigh these carefully before offering a response.

- Do I want to be involved?
- How do I really feel about this?
- Is this in my best interest?
- Am I in a vulnerable place and susceptible to pressure, guilt, or pleasing?
- Do I have the time and energy to give?
- What is my motive for getting involved?
 - Dig deep at this. Motives can be tricky and subtle. It's not uncommon to have several motives at the same time. What is your main motive?
- Have I taken care of my responsibilities first?
 - Will helping someone else cause me to neglect my own life and responsibilities?
- Am I working harder on this than they are?
- Am I coming from a place of fear, obligation, guilt, habit, or seeking love, attention, or approval?
- Am I trying to control, fix, manage, or rescue?
- Am I trying to force my plan or my will onto someone else?
- Am I trying to orchestrate a certain outcome or result?
- What are my expectations or hopes if I do get involved?
- Be honest about this one too. Expectations are also tricky. Even an expectation for a simple "thank you" is still an expectation.
- Can I do this for fun and for free, without future demands, expectations, or impositions?
- Is this something they can do for themselves?
 - By all means, it is fine to be helpful and considerate to others but if you are continuously doing things for someone that they are capable of doing for themselves, it's important to look at why you're doing that.
- Has this become a pattern or habit?
- Have I considered all of my choices to weigh what feels right?
 - Perhaps I can offer \$10 rather than the \$50 they're requesting or drive them to work two days rather than every day.
- Have they considered all of their choices?
 - Have I allowed them the opportunity to explore their options? Perhaps they can call someone else, work some overtime to earn the money, or consider walking or taking an Uber instead of always relying on my help?
- Am I saying yes because I am afraid? What am I really afraid of?
- Am I prepared to follow through?
 - Statements without follow through are simply empty threats, like sounding the siren without ever writing the ticket. People can sense whether you mean what you say because your energy is different when you reach that point of readiness and determination. If you're not ready to take action, it's better not to say anything quite yet.



Answering these honestly allows you to dig deep into your needs, motives, and desires. Each of these helps establish a firm foundation from which you can build as you move further into decisions and relating. Once you have yourself and your perspective in check, you can proceed into the next section.

What is it that separates helping behavior from enabling? Have you confused love with fixing or rescuing? Are you owning the responsibilities or consequences of others?

Now that you have some personal perspective, let's take a look at the health of the relationship and the person or situation you're considering getting involved with. Below are some important points to consider when trying to decide whether to get involved with someone or something.

| Decision - Making | |
|--|--|
| Has the person asked for your help? (Am I offering effort, input, or suggestion without having been asked?) | |
| Is this something they can do for themselves? | |
| Is this a result of their own choice or behavior? | |
| How much effort are they exerting to solve this problem? (Am I working harder on their issue than they are?) | |
| How many other resources or options have they explored? | |
| Are they doing what they can to work on this? | |
| Has this become a habit or pattern? | |
| Is this a chronic issue that they need professional help with? | |
| Are they continuing the behavior or choices that contributed to this problem? | |
| Have they expressed concern or distress about this situation? (Am I more troubled by this than they are?) | |
| Are my efforts preventing someone from hitting their bottom? | |
| What is the overall health of this relationship? | |

After answering the questions above, what are you recognizing? Are you over-managing someone else's problem? What patterns are you seeing? Are you over-exerting yourself? Are you working hard in relationships that aren't serving your best interest? Is being involved in this costing you too much?

Take your time to really feel the feelings that come along with these answers. You may find that you've been heavily involved with enabling and rescuing others. You may be faced with the reality that you've been trying to fix, manage, and control someone or something you really care about. Changing these patterns can be scary and evoke a lot of emotion.

I'm starting to recognize the following patterns:

| |
|--|
| I'm starting to recognize the following patterns: |
| |

I tend to insert myself in other people's issues without being asked:

Frequently

Sometimes

Never

| | | |
|--|-----------|-------|
| I tend to insert myself in other people's issues without being asked: | | |
| Frequently | Sometimes | Never |

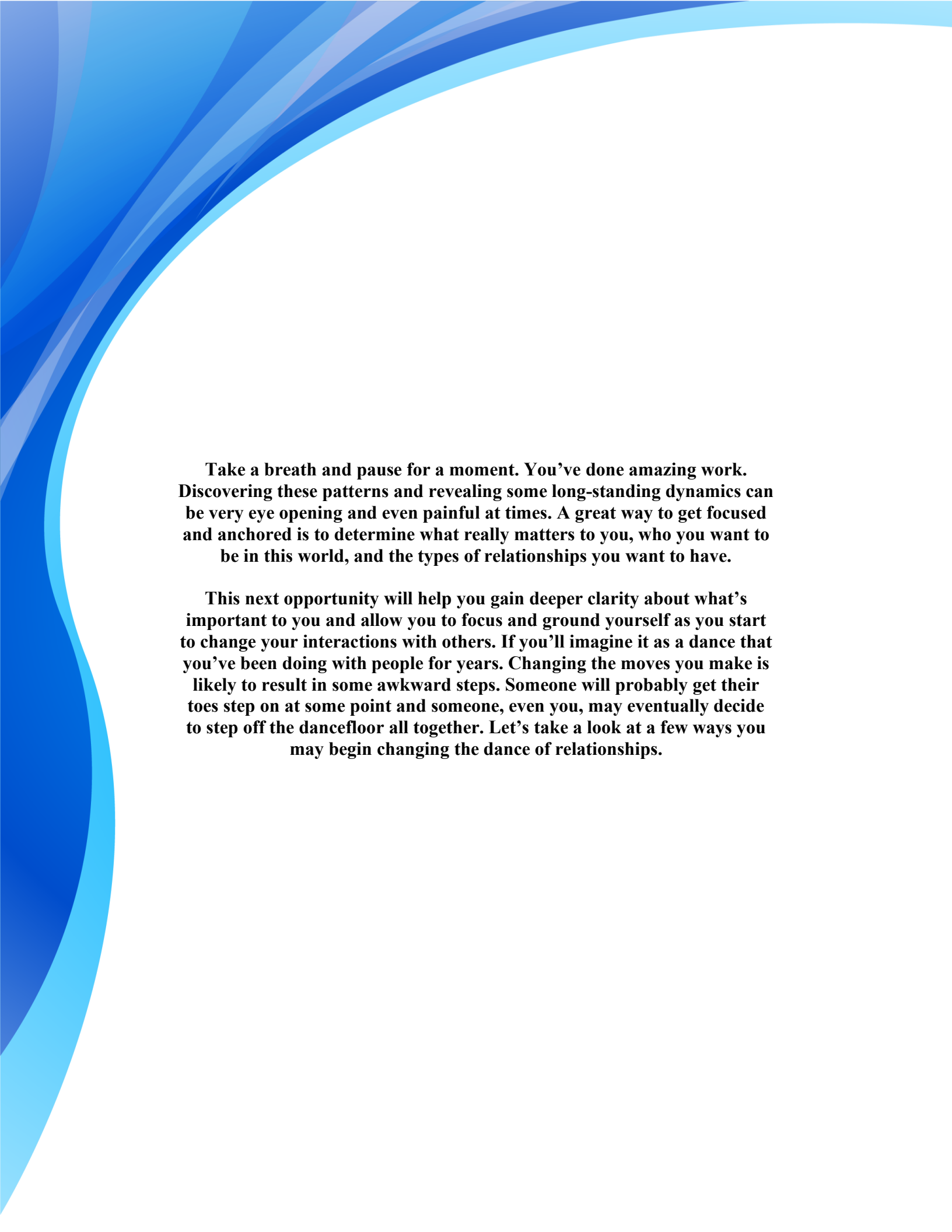
I get involved because:

1.

2.

3.

| |
|--------------------------------|
| I get involved because: |
| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |



Take a breath and pause for a moment. You've done amazing work. Discovering these patterns and revealing some long-standing dynamics can be very eye opening and even painful at times. A great way to get focused and anchored is to determine what really matters to you, who you want to be in this world, and the types of relationships you want to have.

This next opportunity will help you gain deeper clarity about what's important to you and allow you to focus and ground yourself as you start to change your interactions with others. If you'll imagine it as a dance that you've been doing with people for years. Changing the moves you make is likely to result in some awkward steps. Someone will probably get their toes step on at some point and someone, even you, may eventually decide to step off the dancefloor all together. Let's take a look at a few ways you may begin changing the dance of relationships.