

STEP 6: GIVING SOMETHING BACK

We all have those days where everything seems to go wrong. We get a speeding ticket; the dishwasher stops working, and your zip splits when you're already late for meeting someone for dinner.

Sometimes what goes wrong is even bigger and more complicated. Maybe your best friend is moving away, or someone you love gets diagnosed with a terminal illness. Those times don't come without challenge and may even lead you to wonder what life's all about?

So, what are you living for? One of the best ways to cope with life's ups and down is to be secure in the value you intend to contribute back into the world.

What is it that you contribute to the society that you're a part of in the world. Knowing what your part in the world is can help you see the forest when the trees all seem negative.

Each one of us can make a difference. Every contribution towards a better world is significant. Do you know what difference you want to make? Or, are you already making one?

You'll find less significance in the judgments of others when you know that your actions are not primarily about you, but about what you are here to achieve and give back.

For example, if you speak to large audiences, you may find yourself nervous and worried. You don't want to take destructive criticism or 'fail.' If you remember that you are speaking because it is to teach something that is about something greater than yourself, then your worry and anxiety will likely decrease - it's no longer about you; it's about the message you want to share.

Perhaps you have a special talent, such as music or art or teaching young children. Perhaps you have a scientific mind or leadership skills.

Noticing and valuing your contribution on a daily basis will help you cope with the difficulties you experience and will help you stay on an even keel.

STEP 6: GIVING SOMETHING BACK

Maybe your contribution is to be of service to others. You contribute by helping your friends, family, and neighbours.

Perhaps you're the one who offers a lift to the person whose car is in the garage or takes a hot meal to someone who is ill. You find that you're at your best when you're helping other people.

When you focus on this as your way of contributing - you might find you're more at peace. Perhaps you don't need to look for more because you're living the life that you want to lead.

Your contribution can be difficult for you to see. One way to help yourself remember the importance of your contribution is the film 'Pay it Forward' (based on the book by Catherine Hyde).

In the film, a young boy creates a plan to help make the world a better place. He has an idea that involves doing a good deed for three people and then asking them to go and do the same for three more people.

One act of kindness often inspires others to do the same. Your contribution will affect other people and add to the gifts of others.

There are countless ways to contribute to others and the world. We are all connected, and our actions affect others. If you are not sure what your contribution is, then consider activities that you're passionate about.

Do those activities contribute and make a positive difference in some way? Perhaps you could ask friends who know you well to discover what they see as your primary contribution.

Be careful not to minimise your contribution. All contributions are valuable, and everyone has a way of contributing. But for your own sanity, just make sure that you're giving back something!