



Do you like to be helpful?

Have you noticed how, as a mum, that your sensitivity to an event can be heightened? Things that wouldn't have made you cry before children, now have you reaching for the tissue box? It's one of the changes that motherhood causes: hormones + looking out for the needs of another = heightened empathy and emotional sensitivity.

Swimming or drowning?

Empathy is the ability to put ourselves in another's shoes, to see the world through their perspective and know it's true for them, without judgement. In doing so, we can sense how someone else is feeling, more or less. Empathy has its pluses and minuses.

As your empathy grows so can the risk of wanting to "rescue". The moment you try and solve another person's problems (fix it) or minimise their pain you're on the slippery slope to losing your ability to be helpful and falling into the problem with the other person (drowning). Women, mums in particular, are at risk of feeling the need to do it all for everyone, wanting to be indispensable and helpful. It doesn't work well though and unfortunately this doesn't promote resilience for anyone else involved.

How you can really help...

- Trust that people are innately resourceful, even the youngest of children.
- Accept that if someone wants your help they'll ask you for it.
- Listen, without judgement or trying to change the situation. This is real empathy. If someone shares a difficult situation or feeling, often all they really want is **connection**.
- **Let people solve their own problems**, while providing support through genuine acceptance and listening. **This builds resilience**. It's not helpful to drown with a drowning person.
- Ask questions like, *"Is there anything that I can do that would help you right now?"* (this leaves it open for the other person to offer a suggestion) This enables them to be a problem solver.
- Enable others to be resourceful and resilient. Your job is not to be a fixer, but to teach others how they can fix it for themselves.

- ✓ **Motherhood can heighten emotional sensitivity.**
- ✓ **Empathy is connection, listening and acceptance.**
- ✓ **True empathy enables another person to be their own problem solver.**

"My dad has always been really helpful. He taught me that talent is a bonus, but persistence is what wins out."

Zosia Mamet

Roxy loves helping women develop emotional resilience so that they can enjoy fulfilling and contented relationships, which survive the ups and downs of life. Having experienced the challenges of being a single parent, juggling being a mum and a practitioner, building a business or two and overcoming anxiety and post-natal depression, she has a vast knowledge of how to minimise the struggle and use practical strategies that really work!



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Bare Hands
Practical life strategies for women

Bare Hands is run by allied health professionals committed to helping women embrace positive change by providing access to practical education. To find out more give us a call, email us or visit www.barehands.com.au