

When Not Caring is Caring

Kids, customers, allies, associates. Sometimes the best way to be helpful is to not care.

If you let yourself care too much about the success of others, you might devolve into a condescending altruist perpetually frustrated that the objects of your assistance never just go along with your wonderful compassionate plan for their life. Teachers and professors struggle to avoid this orientation, as evidenced by constant social media posts complaining that these stupid students just won't do the thing they're trying to help them do.

Care becomes disdain if it goes unchecked. You have to let go. You can't bluff either. You can't pretend not to care in hopes that it will make the other person come round. You have to truly learn to be able to be happy even if someone else ruins their life with bad decisions. You can't need them to choose any certain thing in order for you to be happy.

Only when you're unthreatened by the decisions of others can you actually be helpful, caring, and genuinely compassionate towards them.