

By Saving Others

Oyasama says:

"By saving others you yourself will be saved."

Anecdotes of Oyasama, no. 42, "By Saving Others"

Are there nights when you cannot go to sleep no matter what you do—nights when the more you try to sleep the more impossible it seems to do so, and the more anxious you get the more awake you become? On the other hand, do you have experiences where, as soon as you let go of the thought "I need to sleep," somehow you just fall asleep even before you know you are falling asleep?

The more desperate we are for a release from problems, the greater our anxiety and distress can become. Being wrapped up in thinking about our own well-being can undermine our peace of mind and reduce our clarity. Any sense of release we may feel when, for instance, we eat something delicious, see a good movie, or go to a hot spring is likely to be short-lived. Our state of mind can be quickly back where it was.



Now, if we look around, we may notice people who are beset by problems and adversity. A new thought may arise in our mind: "Ah, this person must be going through a tough time. I wonder if there is anything I can do to help." Setting aside our own priorities, we start to use our mind and body in a non-self-centered way. Then suddenly, our spirits start to lift.

The best cure for low spirits may be to shift our attention away from thinking about ourselves to trying to do something to help others. This cure may even be stronger than any antidepressant medication. In addition, when we exert our full measure of sincerity to help someone, we may be met with a smile—something that will certainly make us forget about any problem we may have. This is one of those moments when we honestly feel that life is worth living.

People seem to truly shine when they are focused on trying to bring joy to others. Perhaps, this makes them look and feel young and beautiful even more than spending a lot of money on cosmetic products, esthetic treatments, or any famous brand fashion items.



It may be hard to find happiness if we are always on the receiving end of help. An extreme example might be those who use many servants and who are never free of worries and anxieties for the very reason that they live in that way.

Bringing happiness into our lives does not require any abstruse theory or philosophy. It only takes a shift of focus: If we help others find happiness, we can ourselves experience happiness, for, quite simply, that is the way we are. We humans are designed in that way by God—the Parent who created us.