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The "Strong" Person In Your Life Needs You To Show Up For Them, Too

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Dipali Gupta, Tasha Stukes, and 3 c

On behalf of the people who are always showing up for others, *you’re so strong!* is not always a compliment. Being “strong” is a label that is stamped onto people who have had a colorful experience with life in some way. Being “strong” never really is a choice, but once that title is given there is an unsaid responsibility to become the unsung hero for everyone else. There is a question that challenges this idea of heroism: *Who heals the healer?* It’s time we dissect this a bit, for both the “strong” people and their beneficiaries.

Tim Dahi

As someone who is considered the “strong friend,” I’ll be the first to admit I don’t think that way of myself. I am actually very sensitive, emotional, and anxious. Over time, what I’ve learned is what people actually mean is they admire how you have come out of what you’ve been through. If what you’ve been through is not known, they admire and respect your compassion. However, for the “strong,” compassion for others may come with the price of lacking it for themselves.

Michelle Marie Warner

Sumera Rizwan and Miguel Adrove

When discussing a “strong” person, it’s as if these people have achieved this great measure of life that is unattainable to most. Compassion and vulnerability are the true components of said strength and anyone could technically be “strong.” What sets them apart is their ability to put others before themselves. This typically comes as a forced, learned behavior from even the simplest things, such as being an older sibling. This leaves them, unintentionally, conditioned to always be available for others and, unfortunately, being emotionally available for themselves takes the hit.

Sakhawat Ali and Tasha Stukes

Michelle Marie Warner

When there is a lack of attention to self, the burden of stress, anxiety, and depression ensues, except its double the pressure — their own and others. When you’re conditioned to shrink yourself to be present for others, the signs of the “strong” person in your life breaking down could go unnoticed. If this person decides to suddenly pull back, instead of taking offense, allow them to have that space they need to process. If anything, encourage and support their boundaries. Remind them you are here for them if they ever need anything and actually show up.

r.j. quirk, Tasha Stukes, and 2 other

Sumera Rizwan, Miguel Adrover, ar

This is not a pity piece for your “strong” friends or people in your life, but rather an amplification that they need an outlet, as well. Successful

relationships involve balance and transparency. It is always important to pour back into what has poured into you. "Strong" people are human, too. Affirming your love and support for them just as much as they do for you will go a long way.

Dipali Gupta, Letters from E.K., and

So, if you've reached the point where you're assessing what you can do to show up for that "strong" person in your life, it's simple. *Be thoughtful and intentional with your words and actions toward them.* The next time you're about to call someone "strong," think of how they may perceive that and how much pressure that may put on them. Are you taking advantage? Are you asking if they are in the mindscape to deal with your stress? Could they use a break? Be mindful and use discernment to ensure you are maintaining balanced relationships with the "strong" people you love in your life.

r.j. quirk

Michelle Marie Warner

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