

Two Cents & A Penny For Your Thoughts.

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Two Cents: Beyond Being A Fixer...

The term “fixer” often brings to mind an image of a compassionate individual tirelessly working to solve problems for others. In relationships, a fixer is someone who applies this mindset to the people in their life. This mindset can be driven by a desire to be helpful or a sense of responsibility. While the initial impact of fixer tendencies can be positive, the long-term effects lead to strained relationships dynamics and burnout for both the fixer and those they aim to help.

The fixer mindset impairs personal connections, often leading to a dynamic where others feel they are being controlled rather than cared for, resulting in resentment and dependency.

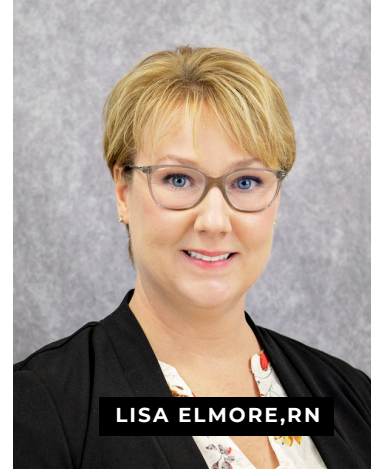
Research suggests that while the initial impact of fixer tendencies can be positive, over time the relationship suffers. Partners of fixers can feel a lack of space for personal growth, and, fixers themselves begin feeling unappreciated. Both can experience burnout. Chronic fixing prevents the establishment of healthy relationships.

How to stop being a fixer. Be the lighthouse in the storm.

A storm represents chaos, confusion, and destruction. It's overpowering, unpredictable, and often leaves a trail of damage in its wake. In contrast, a lighthouse stands steadfast, unwavering, and illuminating the path for others. It symbolizes strength, guidance, and safety.

A lighthouse does not chase boats, swim out to save them, or try to control the ocean. It simply stands in its light, unwavering, allowing ships to find their own way. This is a completely opposite way of thinking. Instead of saving others from pain, absorbing all of their troubles and rushing to solve their problems, try:

- Observing without absorbing – acknowledge what others are going through without taking responsibility for their emotions.



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*"Let your light shine so that others can see their way out of the dark."
- Timber Hawkeye*

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- Hold space – offer love, presence, and support without trying to control the outcome.
- Trust their journey – remind yourself that everyone has their own path, and it's not your responsibility to walk it for them.

By doing this, you provide a gift of trust and confidence in them, verses sending them a message that something is wrong with them. This shows them that you believe in them, that you trust they have the answers, and that they ultimately know what is best for them.

If you find yourself stuck in fixer mode, here are some steps to help you embrace the lighthouse approach: Recognize the urge to fix. The next time you feel the need to jump in and solve someone's problem, pause and ask yourself:

- Why am I taking responsibility for their emotions, their problems?
- Why do I believe they need me to fix this for them?
- Why am I uncomfortable letting them solve their own problem?

Offer your presence, not solutions.

Holding space means being there for someone without trying to change their experience. You can say: I hear you, and I'm here for you. I trust that you will find your way through this. You are stronger than you realize. These words empower rather than enable. You allow them the greatest gift: the opportunity to find their own strength, their own wisdom, and their own healing.



There is freedom in letting go.

Letting go of the need to fix people doesn't mean you stop caring. It means you care in a way that is healthy, sustainable, and empowering for both you and them. When you release the burden of carrying others' emotions, and problems you create space for deeper, more authentic relationships.

If you or someone you know is struggling with mental illness, has questions, or would like resources for support contact Van Buren County Hospital at 319-293-3171 or Senior Life Solutions at 319-293-8740. We are here for all ages. 988 is also a wonderful resource. It is not just for suicide support. When you call / text 988 you will be connected a skilled counselor who will initially ask you if you are safe. After they ask about your safety, your counselor will listen to you, understand how your problem is affecting you, provide support, and share any resources that may be helpful.

You are not alone. Help me put an end to the stigma. Together we can guide those in need of support toward mental wellness by talking about mental health.

Contact Van Buren County Hospital at 319-293-3171 for resources and support.

Send your mental wellness thoughts and questions to seniorlifesolutions@vbch.org, we look forward to connecting and sharing what is important to you in the next quarterly edition of "TWO CENTS AND A PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS".

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