


Lifesaver 10

**Ten Phrases to Take
You From Tongue Tied
& Kicking Yourself to
Knowing Exactly What
to Say in Tricky
Situations**



A RebelQueen Empath's Guide
Harriet Morris

Lifesaver 10

Often in life we are stumped for the right thing to say, especially when as empaths we feel overwhelmed by other people's negative energy.

Therefore it is time for a phrase book! Want to know just the right thing to say for any difficult situation, whether it is with Energy Vampires or Well Meaning Energy Drainers?

Try any of these out as necessary. Please let me know how they work out for you. Email me *info {at} theshiftinside.com*

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Before We Begin – Managing Your Expectations

Before we get going with these lifesaver phrases, I think it is very important that I help you manage your expectations.

Just as a phrase book will only help you manage certain situations when abroad, what you are about to read has limits.

I doubt that every phrase will work. But please know this: *these phrases are power moves*. Just by using them, you get closer to your inner Queen or King - however they are received.

We will come back to this question in the conclusion, and I'll tell you about **The Office Principle**.



I have divided this guide into five sections: dealing with moaning, dealing with rudeness, fear of seeking reassurance, deflecting fake PR compliments and managing your own negative thoughts.

Situation A: Dealing With Moaning and Whining

Many people just love moaning. Ranting against the injustices of life actually activates them. It creates a cheap and easy sense of significance for them. However, we empathists are the ones paying the price for this. It can feel like the whingers are sucking all calm and positivity out of us; some kind of toxic emotional two-way transfusion.

Here are several responses to this sort of behaviour.

#1 How To Interrupt The Rant

The first thing you may need to do - which could well be a new experience - is to interrupt them. We empaths are so good at listening quietly that Energy Vampires and Well Meaning Energy Drainers will expect us to sit attentively during their soliloquay. Trying to get a word in edgeways may prove fruitless. So this is what you do:

LIFESAVER NO.1

Cut off their flow by holding a hand up, palm facing them, at neck level (not in their face) and interrupt: “Let me just ask you a question...”

The next phrase is gold dust:

LIFESAVER NO.2

“So, what have you decided to do about it?”

This is clever because it allows you to shift the balance of power without them even realising.

NB this phrase may seem a little too confrontational, so if you feel nervous about being so direct, I have an alternative. Try this:

LIFESAVER 2 ALTERNATIVE: (Smiling, as if you have good news): “Hey, you know what? I heard about someone the other day who did a no complaining experiment. What you do is set a timer for 5/15/30 minutes and you are not allowed to complain in that time. In fact nobody you are with is either. So why don’t you continue but see if you can avoid complaining?”

The moaner will not, of course, have decided to take any action at all - they are having far too much self-important fun being the victim. They will probably not play ball with the no-complaining game.

But it doesn’t matter. *The point is NOT to try to change the moaner, but to find ways to stand up for yourself.*

You are just setting them up for your next lifesaver.

You can counter with either #3 or #4, or both in succession:

LIFESAVER NO.3

“I heard someone say the other day that there are only two solutions to a problem - to change it or accept it. So if you can’t change it, you need to accept it.”

LIFESAVER NO.4

“Look, to be honest, I’m not really the best person to talk about this to. We have discussed this issue before, and I haven’t been able to help you. Anyway, I want to talk to you about X...”

Some thoughts on lifesavers #3 and #4. Phrase #3 might just encourage the moaner to rant even more, trying to disprove your point. On the other hand, if you are super fed up, you can bore them into submission by repeating this *ad nauseum*!

Lifesaver 4 is my absolute favourite of the ten and it always makes me feel better when I use it, and I have a feeling of getting the upper hand. You can say it in quite a detached, weary way that transmits you are done with this. It neatly sidesteps conflict. Instead of trying to get them to change, you are simply resigning as the hapless ear for their rantings. There is a kind of backhanded, sarcastic joke at work here: *I am not qualified enough for the mind-bendingly boring rants you keep subjecting me to!*

LIFESAVER NO.5

...is to introduce a new topic.

This is what you introduce at the end of lifesaver 4.

It takes a little prep but it is so worth it to be able to take 100% control of the convo by *completely changing the subject*. Beforehand, think of a topic that is interesting to you.

Have you got any projects or bucket list items you want to discuss? A choice of two holiday destinations. A friend's birthday coming up. Is there anything that the moaner has genuine expertise on you can ask them about? Do you have a book you could bring to lend the whinger?

If all else fails, read them something from [*The Daily Mash*](#) or in the US, [*The Onion*](#)

Situation B: Rudeness

We've all been there. You are in a conversation and suddenly out of the blue comes the rudeness. Be it a snarky comment disguised as a joke or straight up derision, we empaths tend to clam up in shock. Actually, living in the UK, I would add that most Brits clam up at aggressively rude behaviour. So this one might help non-empaths too!

If the person speaking is shouting, take a deep breath and say as quietly as possible:

LIFESAVER NO.6

“Do you realise you have raised your voice?”

OR

“Could you lower your voice please?”

When I was a teacher and kids were shouting, speaking very quietly always had an amazing effect on them. They wanted to know what I was saying. Here it allows you to take control of the conversation. It is very hard to keep shouting if the other person is speaking quietly. And note you are challenging them indirectly.

For nasty comments disguised as jokes, try this response:

LIFESAVER NO.7

“Do you want to rethink that comment?”

OR

“Do you realise how you are coming across at the moment?”

Optional add on: **because I wouldn't say anything like that to you.** Here you are subtly communicating that your standards are higher than theirs.

Situation C: Fear of Seeking Reassurance

You will know this situation, where you leave a conversation and you worry that you have annoyed someone. I worked with Susie on this fear. She wanted to send a text to check everything was Ok, but felt unable to. She just wanted to know what to say. Here is what I suggested she text:

LIFESAVER NO.8

Just checking after seeing you earlier...are we OK?

NB Do not text *'are you OK?'* because that question focuses on the other person's needs instead of your relationship. You are not responsible for anybody else's feelings. Also that question might be misunderstood. Say you ask because you are worried that you offended your friend joking about her husband's/wife's obsession with racing. She might think you are just asking how things are with her partner and get a load of moaning that starts to drain your energy.

Situation D: Deflecting Fake PR Compliments

Fake PR Compliments are something I took years to get wise to. Energy vampires will often use compliments very strategically to keep you in your place as their emotional baggage carrier.

These compliments are nothing but PR, an attempt to keep the power dynamic lopsided in their favour. You can tell these compliments are not genuine because 99% of the time, their major topic of conversation is...them.

So what do you say when a gushing, but oddly hollow-sounding compliment comes out of their mouth?

LIFESAVER NO.9

“ ”

(Your eyes are NOT deceiving you. The empty space means: *say nothing*)

Now change the subject.

Situation E: Negative Thoughts

Let's finish with a different type of phrase - one that you say to yourself.

It is far too easy to get stuck in victim thinking as an empath. Nobody has taught you to manage your empath nature or honour your needs. Self-pity can start squatting in your head, and before you know what's hit you, unanswerable questions like *Why meeeeeee?* and *What if I hadn't..?* start infecting your thinking.

The antidote to this is simple, but powerful:

LIFESAVER NO.10

“What’s great about this problem?”

OR

“What is this apparent failure teaching me?”

OR

“How do I need to show up differently next time this happens?”

Very few problems do not offer some opportunity for change. Maybe you can no longer tolerate what you should never have put up with in the first place. Could it be that this problem is so bad that it gets you to actually ask for help?

Perhaps you now realise that being a better role model for young people around you is more important than constantly having to say yes like a good little empath.

How does this problem you are worried about help you step up and be stronger? How does it build your character?

Final Words

I hope this mini phrase book has given you some RebelQueen or King inspiration. Let me know what has worked for you, and also any variations, or even other phrases that have worked for you. I will add them to this guide.

What if some of the lifesavers didn’t help?

How did these lifesavers work for you? Were they helpful?

In the introduction, I discussed setting your expectations at the right level, and understanding that a 100% success rate for all 10 phrases would be miraculous.

If you found that some of your lifesavers fell on deaf ears and didn't turn things around for you, **I still contend that they are valuable.**

How so?

Because now we are going to uplevel this whole discussion with The Office Principle.

The Office Principle

Have you ever watched *The Office*? Either the UK or US version.

If not, all you need to know is that this is a sitcom set in a paper company. The main character, David Brent (played by Ricky Gervais in the UK version) or Michael Scott (Steve Carrell in the US version) is the office boss and a narcissist.

We see the lengths that both Brent and Scott will go to in order to fuel their (clearly wobbly) self-confidence. David Brent is an especially nasty piece of work who ends series one by announcing that some of the staff will be made redundant, but on the plus side celebrations are in order because he has been promoted.

Imagine using any of these lifesavers on David Brent or Michael Scott. How do you think they would react?

My guess: *not well*. They are so self-absorbed that they feel they need to keep feeding their sense of self with pathetic one upmanship, constant fishing for compliments and putting others down. Your needs are non-existent to them.

I would imagine that if you have any Brent/Scott energy vampires in your life, they will probably ignore these lifesavers.

So do you then conclude that these phrases don't work?

Of course not. The only conclusion that you should draw is that *a different approach is necessary with them.*

This is The Office Principle: do not give up when your first attempts at standing up to energy drainers fail.

Remember that you have tolerated people draining your energy probably for years. It is a dynamic that everyone is used to – including you. You have had good reasons for accepting that dynamic - but now things are different. It can take time and the right empath-friendly strategies and mindset shifts to start to inhabit your inner RebelQueen or King.

In all the great stories of heroines and heroes going through a transformation, change takes time. There are obstacles. Katniss Everdeen got thrown into a deadly arena, teamed up with a boy she mistrusted and a drunken mentor she despised. Harry Potter got to his exciting new school only to realise that the most evil wizard in the world wanted him dead.

You are Katniss. You are Harry. Are you going to see being ignored or put down as the end of the story? Or will you use lifesaver #10, and ask yourself: what does this setback teach me? How do I need to pivot now?

Don't have any answers to those questions? Don't worry, because I really want to help you.

Email me *info @ theshiftinside dot com* telling me how you got on with the lifesavers. Please use the subject line '*Lifesavers Feedback*'. If you did get a reaction that wasn't great, I want to know. I will reply personally.

Apparent failures are signposts to the next step.

Cheers now!

Harriet



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