

WHAT MIGHT SRV SAY ABOUT ... HELPFULNESS?

Kane Morgan began supporting people with disabilities as a volunteer while still at school back in the 1970s. Since then he has held a variety of roles serving young people, people with disabilities and the elderly. He is passionate about SRV and its potential to transform people's lives and the communities in which they live. Kane is a member of the Australian SRV Group and a keen SRV student.

When people are exposed to Social Role Valorisation (SRV) they discover what is really happening for people who are devalued. Furthermore, SRV equips them with practical strategies that can dramatically change people's lives. However, they often lament that SRV is not more widely adopted and begin to imagine a world of *harmonious helpfulness*. Harmonious helpfulness is a way of thinking about a 'social contract' that unites us all.

SRV can create a restless dissatisfaction with how things are and ignite a drive to make them otherwise. Unfortunately, devaluation is widespread. For many it is ever present. Many are so disempowered by the downward spiral of devaluation that they are unable to escape without the helpfulness of others.

So where will this helpfulness come from and what motivates people to be helpful? Alternatively, what motivates people to be unhelpful, even harmful, yet think they are being helpful?

One of our primary purposes in this life is to help others. If you are unable to help someone, then please, do not hurt them! -
Attributions include David Kreger and the Dalai Lama.

Helpfulness can be defined as providing useful assistance. However, helpfulness is not simply kindness with good intentions. What someone believes unconsciously peeks out through their actions. So, if they have unhelpful beliefs (like a person is a menace) then their actions will be unhelpful, even if their intention is to be helpful.

SRV teaches us that we are often unaware or unconscious of what we believe. It is said that our ways of looking at the world, our mindsets, are often negative. If we aren't clear about those attitudes and beliefs, our assistance may be useless or even harmful. So, it is critical that

we strive for consciousness to make sure that our assistance is truly useful.

SRV, with its *if this then that* approach, lays a plan for useful assistance and true helpfulness. True helpfulness is grounded in the appreciation that devaluation is a root cause of people's suffering.

I raised the common lament earlier of why SRV is not more widely adopted. We could also ask why helpfulness is not more widely adopted. Could the adoption of both enable a *harmonious helpfulness* that would be very useful indeed to vigorously oppose devaluation?

Earlier I spoke about us not being aware of our negative beliefs. SRV calls this *unconscious negative mindsets*. And these perpetuate harm. Similarly, might there be unconscious positive mindsets that await awakening and, if engaged, could create helpfulness? Moving people from blissful ignorance to restless dissatisfaction and then into harmonious helpfulness? This could be the 'mindset reset' that would create an ongoing motivation for people to be truly helpful.

SRV can create a restless dissatisfaction with how things are and ignite a drive to make them otherwise. But the 'mindset reset' only comes when people's values are engaged and they feel a motivation to be helpful. We know that SRV is not a religion or values system. Importantly though, it certainly can give people pause to ask themselves what they are going to do with their new found knowledge given that it has exposed the ongoing suffering of others.

SRV can expose devaluation and its impact on people's lives and give practical strategies to combat devaluation. It can be a guide to do good and to be truly useful. Most importantly, though, it can bring about a 'mindset reset' whereby people are left motivated to bring about change in a way that is most helpful. A harmonious helpfulness that unites us all.