

# Help vs Support: An Interdisciplinary Philosophy

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## Help Mindset

- “I don’t trust you to figure it out”
- Talking more than listening
- Giving your own answers
- Trying to make things easy
- Vocational awe

### In the Library

- Telling instead of asking how they do it first
- Summarizing instead of asking what was important to them
- Information Overload: “Let me show you a few more things.”

## Support Mindset

- “I trust that you will learn what you are ready to learn”
- Listening more than talking
- Asking questions to lead students to answers
- Allowing students to struggle
- Patience with the learning process

### In the Library

- “What are some challenges you face or anticipate facing with this project/library research?”
- “How do you develop keywords, keep track of your sources, take notes, evaluate sources, etc.?”
- “What are your questions? Is there anything you’d like to review?”
- “I have some other tips and tools that might be helpful. Would you like to talk about those or would you like some time on your own?”

Excerpt from:  
Appointment Notes by G.H. Greer



Doctor: I'm Doctor Nitchie. What seems to be the problem today?  
Fish Head: Actually, it's a bit embarrassing. I have  
D: A fish, yes I see.  
FH: No actually it's not about  
D: Well a wide variety of conditions can arise from  
FH: but I'm pretty sure —



D: I see. And I'm sure you googled it. I wish you people would—well never mind. Why don't you tell me what you think the problem is and then I'll explain my professional assessment.



## Ahimsa: Non-violence

### Yoga

One of the Yamas (practices of abstinence or self-restraint) in Yogic philosophy. Part of the eight limbs of Astanga Yoga created by Patanjali, the “Father of Yoga.”

### Interpretation

Violence against yourself: Are you avoiding your own needs by helping others?  
Violence against others: Not allowing them to travel on their own learning journey.

## Business: Set-Up-To-Fail Syndrome

### Help

People avoid asking for help so they don't expose more reasons why their work is inadequate. Bosses providing unsolicited help when it's not required reinforces the employee's perception that the boss sees them as underperformers.

### Support

Help is welcome if it's understood to be temporary and the goal is for the person to become more autonomous. (Greenblatt, 2022; Manzoni & Barsoux, 1998)

## Ableism: First Person Authority

### Help

Empathy motivates us to act without understanding. I know their needs better than they do. (Deroche et al., 2024; Greer, 2021)

### Support

A strength-based approach instead of a deficit-based approach. If people need help, they prefer to ask for it. (Bar-Or & Meyer, 2019; Greer, 2021)

## Education: Indirect Help

### Help

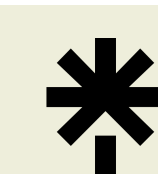
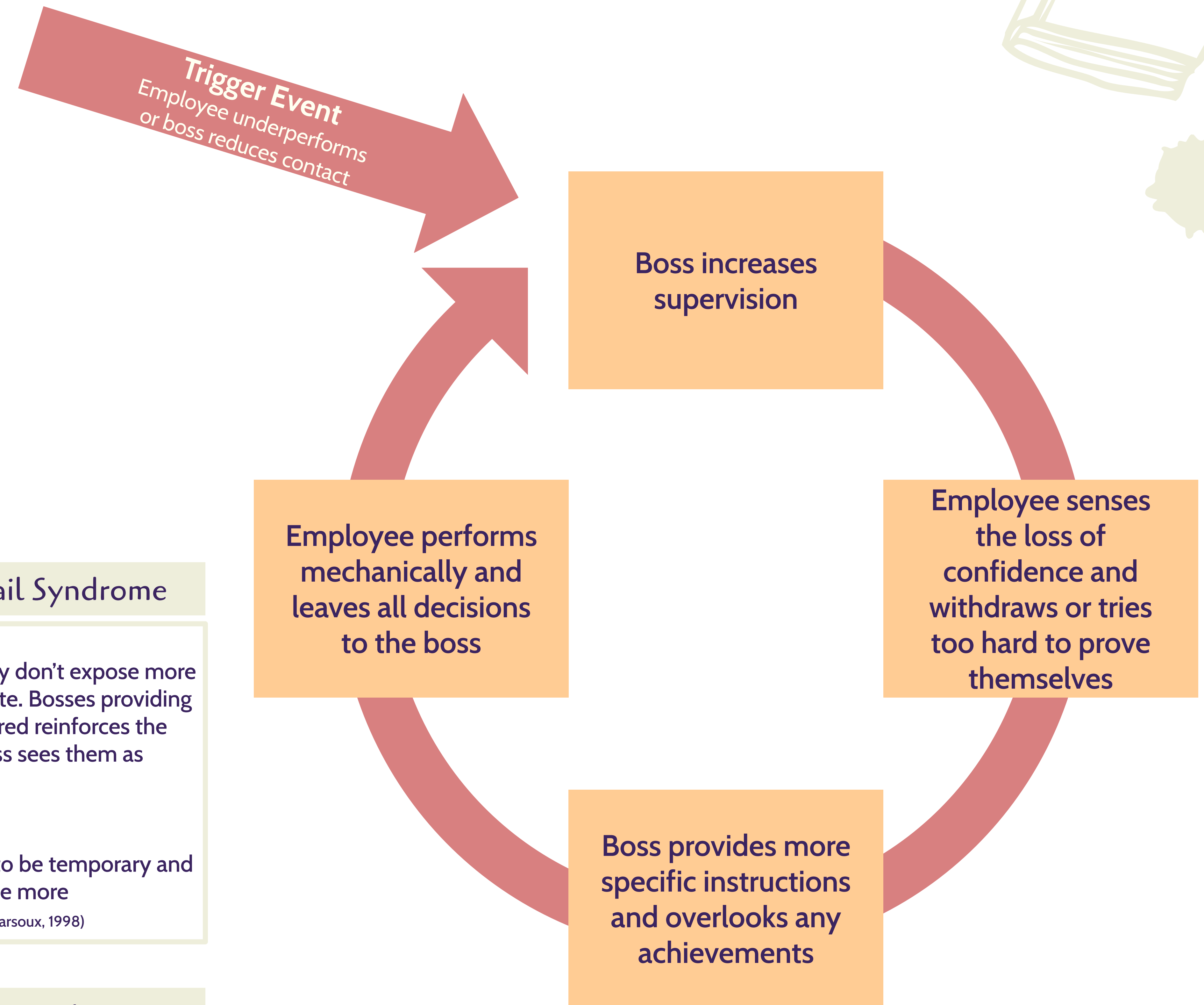
Unsolicited help is perceived by recipients and other students as a sign of low ability or deficiency affecting confidence. (Graham & Barker, 1990; Sierksma & Shutts, 2020)

### Support

Indirect help (asking questions and showing how to do something) improves self-confidence. (Mojaverian & Kim, 2013; Shell & Eisenberg, 1996)

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