

Instructions: As leaders in social change, having trusted networks for personal and professional support helps us to care for ourselves, helping us to be more effective and enduring in our work. We invite you to take twenty minutes to consider your own network, listing out the individuals you can turn to for different types of support.

Support System Matrix:

	PERSONAL	PROFESSIONAL (People in your field/professional organizations)	ORGANIZATIONAL (People in your organization)
Clarifying			
Comforting			
Confronting			
Crisis			
Celebrating			

SOURCE: Janice Eddy

Clarifying – Someone who will help you better understand yourself (your thoughts & feelings, your goals, your impact)

Comforting – Someone who is great at giving you a safe space to feel nurtured and taken care of especially when you feel down and out.

Confronting – Someone who can honestly call you on your “stuff” and let you know when you are off track from your goals, your values, your commitments, etc.

Crisis – Someone who will be there for you during extremely challenging moments.

Celebrating – Someone who will help you honor and appreciate your wins.

Assessing Your Support System:

Mix: Are they like you/different from you – gender, age, race, etc.?

Repetition: Do you find the same people in several/most places?

Roles: Are individuals in ‘traditional’ roles? Are you limiting your options?

Number: People in your support system – too few, too many, right amount for you?

Geography: Are people in your support system close by, far away? Are you considering all possibilities?

Overall: Do you have the mix you need and want? If not, what can you do to change that?

Concluding Comments:

- Keep the system simple. It should increase your energy, not drain it.
- Maintain the system. Keep in touch with people so they are ready when you need them.
- Keep the relationship equitable – give and take without indebtedness.
- Develop back-up resources in case someone isn't available when you need them.
- Invite feedback – you tell the helper how they are doing – they tell you how they feel about helping.