

## 9 Simple Steps to Effectively Support a Friend

- Your friend just walked up to you. He looks upset. “What’s wrong?”, you ask. He is about to graduate and isn’t sure about what to do after. He feels lost. You **ACTIVELY LISTEN** to him.
- “It sounds like you’re feeling lost”, you restate. He nods in agreement. You want to make sure you understand the root of the problem. This isn’t the time to make assumptions. You ask another question to **CLARIFY** the dilemma further. “It also sounds like you’re conflicted between honoring your passions and respecting your parent’s wishes,” you add.
- He couldn’t agree more. “It’s understandable that you feel so conflicted. I remember feeling that way when I was selecting a major for undergrad,” you say as you **EMPATHIZE** with him and **VALIDATE** his feelings. His distraught expression relaxes a bit.
- It feels good to be heard. “I don’t know what to do,” he says. It’s time to **EXPLORE WITH QUESTION and HELP HIM IDENTIFY HIS OWN OPTIONS** “what options do you see for yourself?”, you ask. He says he can either pursue journalism like he’s always wanted- or start studying for the MCAT like his parents have always wanted him too. “Are those the only two options? Can you see any middle ground?” you ask.
- He thinks for a bit. “I’ve always enjoyed conducting research and writing about it,” he says. “Science Journalism!”, you exclaim. “What do you think?” He looks hopeful. It looks like you’ve **HELPED HIM SELECT AN OPTION**. “You know yourself and your parents best, so only you can find the best way to move forward.” you assure him. He decides to look into the career and discuss it with his parents.
- Looks like you’ve just helped him **MAKE A PLAN**. He appears hopeful. You help him look up some resources that may aid him in exploring the career option to give him tangible steps to follow. He thanks you. “It’s no problem, I think it’s great that you’re being honest with yourself and taking initiative to problem solve.
- With that attitude you can only make progress,” you say as you end with a **FINAL ROUND OF VALIDATION**. You remind him he can come to you again if he needs more help. As you part ways, he is determined.