

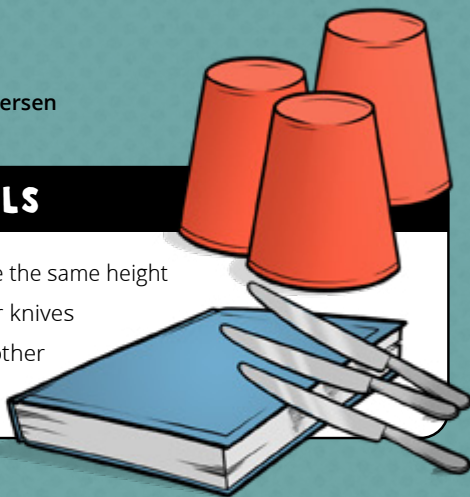
SHARP SUPPORT

When you feel like falling, try lifting instead.

By **Natasha Andersen**
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MATERIALS

- 3 cups that are the same height
- 3 metal butter knives
- A book or another heavy object



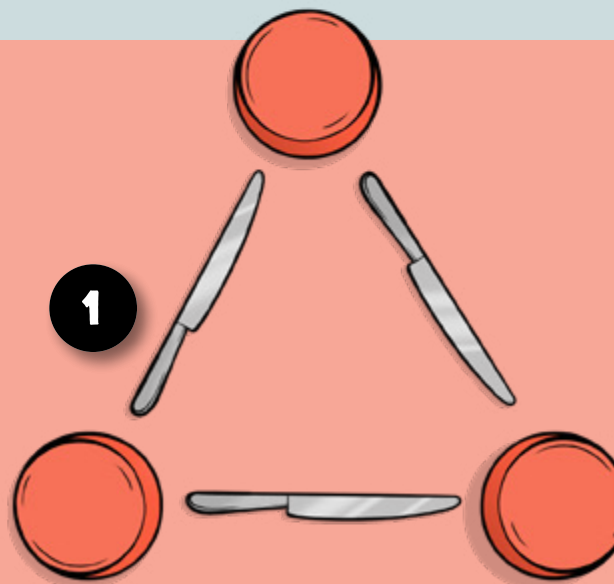
Imagine coming home from a bad day at school. You've been stressed about everything from your grades to your performance in your last basketball game, and you drop on the couch, too exhausted to move a muscle.

But then you remember your mom needs help with dinner. And your little sister could really use someone to help her with her reading too . . . but it's so hard to serve when you just want to take a break—when you might even feel that you *deserve* a break!

So how do you serve when you're having trouble even juggling your own challenges? In this object lesson, you'll show your family how supporting and serving each other helps lift *everyone* up.

WHAT TO DO

1. Set the three cups in a triangle with each one a knife-distance apart from the other two.
2. Challenge family members to try to set up the knives on top of the cups in a way that will support the book in the air without resting it on the cups or using any other materials.
3. After everyone has tried to make it work, demonstrate the way to do it: Rest the handle of one knife on top of one cup and point it toward the middle; do this with each knife, interlocking the tips to form a triangle by weaving in an over-under pattern. This may take a few tries, so you'll want to practice beforehand. You can also have family members help out—sometimes it takes more than two hands to get it right!
4. Now try balancing the book on top. (For fun, you can try balancing even heavier objects on top to see how much weight it can sustain.)



SOLID SUPPORT

After you've connected the knives and set the object on the platform, explain that when each knife is balanced both on top of and underneath the two other knives, the pressure is distributed so it pushes *up and down* on each knife. This pressure keeps the knives in place and lets them support the weight of a heavy book.

Have a family member read Mosiah 18:8–10. Explain that the knives represent each of us as members of the Church. The knives aren't long enough to reach the edges of the triangle on their own—they need to be connected to hold the book up. When we were baptized, we covenanted that we would serve God and keep His commandments. One way we do this is by bearing one another's burdens. If we stay connected to others by building relationships and serving each other, we'll all be able to support and lift each other—even when we feel the pressure of our own challenges.

Sister Reyna I. Aburto, Second Counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency, has said, "Because of [your

struggles], you may have the ability to feel more compassion toward others."¹ Having compassion will help you understand others better and know how to serve them. And remember, some of the best types of service can be as simple as lending a listening ear or helping someone with their homework.

LOOKING OUTWARD

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, "[Christlike] character is demonstrated by looking and reaching outward when the natural and instinctive response is to be self-absorbed and turn inward."² So when you're tempted to collapse inward, try looking around to see who you can help. Lifting them up might just lift you up too. **NE**

NOTES

1. Reyna I. Aburto, Oct. 2019 general conference (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2019, 59).
2. David A. Bednar, "A Christlike Character," *New Era*, Oct. 2017, 2.

CAUTION

Be careful when handling the butter knives—they can sometimes be a little sharp.

