

Believing in Others¹

Tamir and Sharon have been friends since their first year of high school when they met during their school's production of "South Pacific." While Tamir realized musical theater was not the right fit for her, Sharon continued performing throughout high school and went to university to get her Bachelor's of Fine Arts in musical theater. In university, Tamir fell in love with philosophy, an alternative outlet for her creativity. Now in their last year of university, Tamir and Sharon are finalizing their plans for after graduation. Tamir plans to attend graduate school so that she can one day become a professor and Sharon plans to move to New York so that she can one day star on Broadway.

After getting passed over for the part of Ariel in a local production of "The Little Mermaid," Sharon questions her plans to move to New York. Hoping that Tamir will reassure her that she is making the right decision, Sharon asks Tamir whether or not she thinks the move is still a good idea. However, Tamir is unsure that Sharon will be successful in New York. Sharon plans to take on a job in a restaurant to support herself in New York so she will have limited time to go to auditions. While Sharon is a talented actor, there are many talented actors in New York who are struggling to make ends meet and never make it to Broadway. Tamir wants to be a supportive friend, but she also doesn't want to lie to Sharon and pretend that she is confident that Sharon will be successful.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Knowing that Sharon is looking to be reassured of her decision to move, what should Tamir tell her?
2. What does it mean to believe in someone? Does it mean believing that they will achieve their goals, even when the evidence says that they won't?
3. It seems like it is usually best to believe what the evidence says. Can there ever be any good things about believing something even when the evidence says otherwise?

¹ This case was inspired by <https://philpapers.org/archive/PAUBIO.pdf>

