

Seeking Advice - Things to Remember

When was the last time you sought advice?

Who did you ask? and why did you ask them?

Sometimes we seek advice because we really haven't got a clue. We're usually looking for an expert then. Someone who can give us some specifics, preferably this expert has also been there, done that and got the t'shirt. That way they can also tell us of some pitfalls to avoid.

Sometimes we seek advice because we want to test our ideas or thoughts. So we're looking for a sounding board. Someone we trust who'll give us honest constructive feedback without massacring our ideas or making us feel really stupid.

Other times we seek advice because we want the strokes, we want someone to tell us we're doing good. Now clearly here we don't want any advice, but we ask away looking for and expecting the praise....and when they give us some constructive feedback we're amazed / hurt/ offended / angry * delete as appropriate.

So what can you do to be a great advice taker?

- avoid being reflexive / defensive / closed minded. Putting it another way be open to new ideas, points of view and suggestions.
- ideally seek advice when you're calm. When you're stressed your ability to judge and make decisions is very different, and for many of us that means less effective.
- learn to listen and I mean really listen, pay full attention to all that's been said. That includes body language as well as tonality of voice.
- have a network of advisers already established. The investment in establishing these relationships means that a) you know the best person to ask based on your needs and b) if you're in a crisis then they'll be more inclined to respond in a time frame that helps you out as well as the advice.
- Lastly know your own end point, as in the goal, the outcome, the purpose. If you go seeking advice without this then you make it harder for them to help you. Very often the advice they give you is context specific.