

Giving and Receiving Advice

Advice is based on the giver's opinion

Advice is something we all need from time to time. We may request it, or it could be given freely by a well-meaning friend, relation, and occasionally by a complete stranger. Whether it is of any use depends on the situation. We might decide to take it, in part at least; or choose to ignore it altogether. The thing to remember is that, if the result of taking the advice turns out badly, the recipient may lay the blame squarely on the giver's doorstep. The fact remains, though, that the eventual outcome of advice received is the responsibility of whoever chooses to act on it.

So, why do we need advice at all – why can't we work it out for ourselves? Often it is required to fill in the lack of knowledge and experience in a particular field. For instance, you might comment: "The bathroom tap's leaking again. I'll have to call a plumber." Then your neighbour says: "Don't waste your money. It just needs a new washer. Do it yourself – it's easy." Maybe it would be for the neighbour who knows about this stuff; but for someone who hasn't a clue how to change a light globe, it could prove disastrous. In this case, apart from some minor flooding, no real harm would be done. When it comes to health, however, this is a whole new ball game.

Exercise is one area where there is advice aplenty, often from those who already participate in physical activities that keep them fit and healthy; but when they suggest that someone else should try it, that someone ought to be very careful. Going jogging or taking up martial arts may well be okay, as long as their body and any medical conditions will not be compromised. But for someone like me who has a degenerating spine, these activities could see me in a wheelchair. As for going to the gym, personal trainers might claim to know the right kind of exercises for an individual; but do any of them insist on looking into a person's medical history before starting them on a routine that could have serious consequences? My advice is to see a medical professional prior to launching into a new exercise program which could be totally unsuitable and dangerous.

Advice isn't always handed out on a person-to-person basis. Commercials abound: on TV, in magazines and newspapers and in the post-box as junk mail. Needless to say, these Ads are aimed at the general public; a kind of one-size-fits-all advertising campaign. Staying with the health and fitness for the moment, we have found some of the products on offer might possibly be of help for either or both of us. We have been around long enough, however, to know our own individual health requirements and are rarely swayed by claims that may or may not be of benefit. And, of course, the odd one could be a definite risk. A particular example was a vibrating foot massager which, it was said, helps make walking easier and more pleasurable. My wife thought it could work for me, but she decided to do some research into the product before we bought one. It was as well she did, because it was apparently no good for anyone like me who has a pacemaker; a fact not mentioned on the commercial.

Money is an area that confuses many, especially older people who have limited experience. Financial institutions are forever changing terms, conditions and protocols making it harder to switch and juggle accounts and policies for the best advantages. Here is where the experts come into their own, financial advisors who should be able to point a person in the right direction to make the most of what they have in regard to investments and savings. In the past, my wife being an accountant at the time was the one to organise our finances; and she did so very well. At one point we had a chat with a financial advisor who claimed he could suggest changes that would save us money. After looking at the way my wife was handling things, he had to admit that it couldn't be improved.

Around this time we were talking to my brother-in-law who was comfortable with his financial arrangements; but being the sort of person he was, he listened with interest to the way we juggled our various accounts. A little later, he informed us that he had taken our advice and made some changes of his own. That would have been fine except for two things. Firstly, apart from us he hadn't told anyone about what he had done, particularly with regard to new bank accounts and passwords. And secondly, he died a short time after leaving his family with a financial conundrum that took an age to resolve. Needless to say, we felt bad because it was our advice that caused the problem.

When it comes to any advice given or received it's best to be wary. No-one really knows another person except what they divulge about themselves and the way they normally behave in the presence of others. Alone and behind closed doors they could be completely different; so their reaction to a situation may be at odds with what might be expected. Often it is best to let them work it out for themselves. As for taking the advice of someone else, just bear in mind that their suggestion might not be first- or even second-hand. It could be like a Chinese whisper that's been passed on so many times that its true value has been lost along the way.

A Season of Happiness - helping you towards a better lifestyle

For a look at some more informative articles on a variety of subjects just return to the web page



Where every effort has been made to be accurate and fair-minded, comments and opinions expressed on this website are based on personal experience and do not necessarily reflect the views of the wider community or those groups and institutions mentioned. A Season of Happiness and its staff accept no responsibility for any outcome based on suggestions offered. What works for one may not work for others. Please bear this in mind.

Copyright © 2025 All Rights Reserved