

# THE EXCHANGE

This issue's featured subject is "Giving Advice."

## THE ALTERNATIVE TO "DEAR ABBY"



If you have ever read the newspaper column "Dear Abby", then you have surely disagreed with some of the advice given. Let's face it, sometimes the lady is just clearly wrong.

For a moment, think about advice that people give you. People like your parents, boss, spouse, and friends. How often do you heed what is offered? It is more likely to be given serious consideration if you admire or respect the person or value the experience they have. Sometimes we follow advice because it agrees with what we want to do in the first place.

Regardless of who gives the advice or if the person initially agrees with it, the wisdom imparted will be best received if the listener is in a receptive mode. Just how do you ensure this key element is in place?

First, you can wait until you are asked for advice. Sit on your hands or clamp your jaw closed, whatever it takes. Let the person talk it through. Give evidence that you are willing to listen by slowly nodding your head and occasionally making a neutral sound in your throat such as, "uh-huh." Eventually, a question will come your way. When it does, pause before you respond. This is your last chance to edit what you want to say before it is out there for possible rejection. Choose your words carefully as you give your advice.

You can suggest or ask questions that lead a person down a path you think they should at least explore. If the question begins with 'how' or 'what', the person will tend to give a longer response. This is usually helpful because while you may be unable to talk them into something, they can talk themselves into it quite easily.

You can request to give your opinion. This can be accomplished by asking, "Would you

like to know what I think?" If this is the option you choose, don't rush into it too quickly. Realize that the answer may be 'no', and you did ask. Respect their answer.

Sometimes, just listen. Most people are capable of making their own decisions. Even when they are emotional, if you just listen to them they will calm down in about six minutes. When they stop repeating themselves, this is a positive sign that rational thinking is around the corner.

In a group setting, listen first. Refrain from being the first person to offer advice. Get the facts and first understand how others view the situation. Remember, whatever is said last, lasts.

Pretend that the advice you give costs you \$500 each and you will handle it with thought and give it away sparingly. That is so much better than being a dime a dozen. Advise with care.



Remedy it, or welcome it: a wise man's only two choices. ~Terri Guillemets

Don't get your knickers in a knot. Nothing is solved and it just makes you walk funny. ~Kathryn Carpenter

Never undertake anything for which you wouldn't have the courage to ask the blessings of heaven. ~G.C. Lichtenberg

Fear less, hope more; eat less, chew more; whine less, breathe more; talk less, say more; hate less, love more; and all good things are yours. ~Swedish Proverb



## SEPTEMBER 2005

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### LOOKING AHEAD:

◆ **Leadership - the focus of the October issue of the Exchange.**

### LOOKING BACK:

◆ **For previous editions of The Exchange, go to our [back issues](#).**

◆ **Re-read the [05/2003](#) edition: Coaching.**

**Advice is like snow; the softer it falls the longer it dwells upon, and the deeper it sinks into the mind.**

**Samuel Taylor Coleridge**

## What Our Clients Are Saying

"Your session was outstanding and we all walked away with valuable tools."

Nancy Lee, Washington DC



### Helpful Hints:

- Wait to be asked before giving your opinion.
- Allow the other person to try it their way before you offer an alternative.
- Ask questions to fully understand the situation before giving advice.

It is more easy to be wise for others than for ourselves.

Francois Duc de La Rochefoucauld



To learn more about it, click here!

## I WOULDN'T DO THAT IF I WERE YOU!

By Vincent Ivan Phipps, B.S.

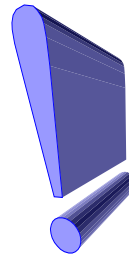
These childhood words ring in my ears even today! For every major mistake I made in my youth, I remember someone either telling or yelling at me, "Boy, don't do that!" Or, "If I were you, I wouldn't do that!" I'm sure that everyone from my grandmother to my first grade teacher all meant well.

What would have helped me more than that halting advice was telling me what I **should** do! Following are three examples of when the advice to NOT do something hindered me:

1. Carrying too many boxes at once.
  - The advice I was given: "I wouldn't carry that many boxes if I were you."
  - What happened: I dropped them all and they rolled downhill doubling my workload.
  - What I advice I needed: "To prevent dropping the boxes or injuring yourself, carry only one or two boxes at a time."
2. Scratching poison ivy.
  - The advice I was given: "I wouldn't scratch that poison ivy like that."
  - What happened: I scratched differently and it still spread.
  - What advice I needed: "Put some calamine lotion or an anti-itch cream on that rash to prevent itching. Scratching will make it worse."
3. Signing a document before reading the fine print.
  - The advice I was given: "You shouldn't sign that yet."
  - What happened: I signed and committed to buying 100 CDs in 10 days!
  - What advice I needed: "Before signing, read that information at the bottom about your level of obligation."

By giving informative advice, it helps in two ways. First, it allows the person receiving the advice to have clear direction about what to do. This increases the likelihood of the person following through and getting the desired results.

Second, it increases your credibility. You may be viewed as someone who is clear on the situation and knows what they are doing rather than a person who is just spouting



instructions.

Of course, those who care about us want to protect us. Sometimes they have to protect us from ourselves. When you give advice, it should be to improve a situation. The next time you feel like advising someone on, "what not to do," remember to advise them on what "to do".

## FEEDBACK: TLC SEASON TICKETS

Our new Season Tickets program has been a hit with the attendees. Read some of the feedback we have received from the participants:

- "I thoroughly enjoyed the course on 'Presentation.' I have already benefited from your lesson and my level of confidence during my presentations has greatly improved. I look forward to the next course." (Topic: Presentations That Get Ovations!) Tanya Wildgoose, TVA
- "I enjoyed the group session - using "real" situations to get the results you need." (Topic: Intuitive Interviewing) Lisa Martin, Chattanooga Police Department
- "I liked everything! Honest! A day well spent. I also enjoyed the resume comparison. The five rules for asking questions during an interview were also very useful." (Topic: Intuitive Interviewing) Jason Herndon, CBL & Associates
- "Vincent's subject matter knowledge on how to interact with different types of people exceeded my expectations. The day was money and time well spent." Kevin Tarver, Credit Payment Services

Give yourself or your people the skills to succeed! Team up with TLC for dynamic and interactive seminars provided each month at a convenient location near you. Match the seminar content with your people and send a different person each month per Season Ticket!

Call today for information on topics, pricing, or to reserve your seat. Ask for Don Wheeler at 423-622-8255.

## TWO CENTS WORTH



When it comes to giving advice, who do you know that is eager to “put in their two cents worth?” This is a commonly used expression that describes the act of offering input, opinion, perspective, or advice in any given situation. Regardless of how sound the advice may be, it is often un-requested. But, what does “putting in two cents” have to do with giving advice?

When multiple people invest into one unit, each person’s amount of control is dictated by how much they put in. If a person puts in half the money, then they have a 50% say in what is done with the whole. When a person only puts in a small amount, such as two cents, their input is not as influential. Sometimes the person who makes the smallest contribution wants the most influence in decision-making.

Advice is helpful and needed. When offering a suggestion to improve a situation, be clear of your role in the process and ask if an alternative is welcome. This way, you can invest or offer your “two cents” and get the most on your return.

## ASK THE EXPERTS



**Dear TLC,**

I recently attended one of your interactive workshops. After applying what you taught, I received a promotion. Now that people are reporting to me, I find myself dishing out more advice than ever before in my professional career. The problem is that now it seems as if my team cannot move unless I give them advice or tell them what to do. How and when should I administer advice?  
End of My Rope

**Dear End,**

Congratulations on your achievement!

Before giving advice, ask yourself, “Is my advice what is needed right now?” If not, use other TLC tools instead. Specifically, use Probes (questions), or use the ‘Requesting Response.’ You could ask, “What would you do?”, “What are our options?”, or, “When this last occurred, how was it handled?”

As an effective manager/supervisor, it is not your job to do everything. It is your job to ensure everything gets done. Begin by building your team’s independent thinking skills and encouraging them to make decisions for themselves.



A very happy birthday to our clients whose birthdays are in September:

Jennifer Berkhoudt  
Catherine Vreeland  
Tyler Bransfield  
Sibby Tansill  
Lamar Carver  
Karen Webb  
Harvey Pearman  
Lori Meredith  
Jed Ravenholt  
Brian Blust  
Patricia Skeete

Christine Dennis  
Dawnette Fowler  
Donald Huffman  
Joe Side  
Gregory Park  
Gary Busby  
Petra Francis  
Niecee Andrews  
Karen Savage  
Steve Barbour  
Linda Summers

## IN THE NEWS



Our CEO, Beverly Inman-Ebel will be in London, England on September 17th to facilitate an international meeting of entrepreneurs from ten countries.

From September 19-21, she will be in Libya to establish the first ever Women’s Business Council.

## SEEK AND YE SHALL FIND

When it comes to asking for advice, you’ll find that just about anyone has an opinion. Unless you are conducting a survey, you probably do not want everyone’s read on something, rather you are seeking wisdom. How do you find it?

- Get the right question before you ask.
- Find someone with experience in the particular area.
- Remember to ask someone who you admire that will surely have a different view than you have.
- Take notes.
- Ask for the source of their information or facts behind their opinion.

After gathering the advice, go to a quiet place and think. If this is an important decision, sleep on it before you make your decision. When you sleep, your left hemisphere, or logical mind, shuts down allowing your creative right hemisphere to guide you. Make your final decision after the left hemisphere is back on the next morning.



**Remember to...**

- Be specific about what you are advising.
- Keep your feedback positive.
- Focus on solutions or on what is required.

**Advice is what we ask for when we already know the answer but wish we didn’t.**

**Erica Jong**

**Some people like my advice so much that they frame it upon the wall instead of using it.**

**Gordon R. Dickson**



## CEO CORNER: "Take It Or Leave It"

By Beverly Inman-Ebel, MA CCC-SLP

I have been quite proud of myself in the past for refraining from giving advice when it was not sought. When it mattered most to me, I would ask, "Would you like to know what I think?" Lately, it seems harder to hide my abundant wisdom and experience, especially with younger people.

Since I have abhorred waste for most of my adult life, it seems a shame to avoid using such sound thinking. So, I am breaking my former rule and offering the following advice:

- Look for the good in people, for that may be the only way you find it.
- Let go of guilt and worry; one has you in the past, the other in the future, and both rob you of your present.
- Laugh today.
- Eat off of the good china just to make you feel special.
- Listen before you talk.
- Do a random act of kindness each day.
- Never go to bed mad.
- Enjoy the moment, for it shall never return.
- Forgive yourself. Period. Now! Forever!
- Think before you take action.
- Listen to your inner self.
- Give someone unconditional love.
- Pick up trash.
- Plant a tree.
- Get over it.
- Believe in yourself.
- Notify your face that you are feeling fine.
- Call your parents today.
- Keep your cash neatly sorted in your wallet.
- Tell a story to a child.
- Take your life off of "auto pilot."
- Value your body.
- Look for joy.
- Don't take yourself too seriously.
- Expect a miracle.
- Vote.
- Realize that failure is the catalyst for success.

TLC establishes long-term relationships with our clients. If we have helped you or if you believe our approach to change would work for someone you know, please communicate with us by email [tlc@talklisten.com] or phone [1-888-232-2873]. We work with individuals and groups on the following subject areas: attitude, listening, body language, voice, leadership, compliments and corrections, behavioral style, teamwork, effective meetings, public speaking, accent reduction and much more!

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- Be passionate about something!

So there is my unsolicited advice. Take it or leave it. I can't stop myself from giving one more piece of advice: take it. Live your dreams!



## FEATURED SERVICE: Understand Your Leadership Capabilities

Learn the skills to take your leadership traits to the next level! Whether you are in the boardroom, team room, or a cubicle, leadership is the skill that will set you apart and ultimately be the key to unlock the code to success.

Often people are given the opportunity to lead without being given the skill set to succeed. Each individual demonstrates his or her leadership in a different way. One size does not fit all. Yet each potential leader needs to know his or her style of leadership, strengths, and areas that need attention.

It is important to know when to lead and who will likely follow you. Since leadership is truly an elected honor, it is imperative to understand how to get buy-in from others. Realizing the difference between management and leadership will help to springboard you forward.

In this interactive seminar, you will learn how to:

- Identify the types of leaders you admire and would follow.
- Recognize the dimensions of leadership.
- Assess your leadership strengths.
- Improve your weaknesses.
- Compliment your style with the need of the situation.

The seminar will be held on September 16th, 2005, at 9:00 a.m. at the Chattanooga Hotel, in downtown Chattanooga, Tennessee. Call Don Wheeler at TLC at 423-622-8255 or 1-888-232-2873 for details.

**You've got a lot of choices. If getting out of bed in the morning is a chore and you're not smiling on a regular basis, try another choice.**

**Steven D. Woodhull**

**Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.**

**Ralph Waldo Emerson**

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