



How to Deal with Unsolicited Advice

We've all had to deal with unsolicited advice in some form of another and it can really sting. And it when it feels like a constant barrage, it can certainly be overwhelming.

This is for you whether you face unsolicited advice while trying to build a business, deal with a health issue, be in public with your crazy children...or ANYTHING else. We've all been there.

If you're open to it, I hope to give you some tools to manage it better and to set some boundaries around unsolicited advice. You can also [watch the video here](#), if you prefer.

Why Are We Defensive?

From discussions in our Facebook Group ([please join us here](#), if you haven't already), I think it's worth examining why feel defensive when people we know or don't know offer unsolicited advice.

Defensive about comments. Defensive about suggestions. etc. I am included in this because I absolutely experience the feeling of defensiveness is well.

It is tiring when people make suggestions (often the same ones but coming from all angles) all the time...but is it really about those people or ourselves?

A number of people I've talked to say it feels like other people don't have confidence in them to take care of themselves or think they are unaware of their various options dealing with whatever they are dealing with. They feel these people might be questioning our intelligence, experience, ability, etc.

But if we are confident in ourselves – our intelligence, experience and ability - would we be so defensive? I personally don't think we would be. We doubt ourselves, so we allow what others say to highlight for themselves.

You are doing the best you can and if you're not, take some steps to do some things better. Have that difficult conversation with yourself to dig deep on what bothers you about what they said and how you can turn that into something good for yourself. And in turn, that will make you more confident and immune to the opinions of others.

Suggestions Are Just Suggestions

One thing to remember is that suggestions are just suggestions. It doesn't mean you have to take them seriously or even consider them in any sort of matter. If we want people to listen and hear us, can we not also extend that to others who think they have our best interests at heart?

(And maybe they don't have our best interests at heart...but we'll talk about that later.)

Isn't a simple, "Thank you for the suggestion" possible? And then you change the subject to something you do want to talk about. The taste of the coffee you're drinking together, exciting news from a mutual friend or family member, your upcoming vacation...anything they might be interested in or have an opinion about.

Or if they make a suggestion for something that you know in theory could be helpful, but you've struggled to make it happen (and you trust this person), can't you just say that?

Something like, "Yeah, I know that if I lost a few pounds, it would make things a whole lot better, but I struggle with XXXX."

There is NO SHAME in admitting struggle in specific areas. And in fact, talking about it, will give you a better handle on it, whether the person has good suggestions or not. Talking allows you to admit the specific problem and perhaps give you some renewed sense of getting to the bottom of it.

What I've believe in people who are struggling with various issues don't always know how to ask for help. And I don't mean just help with fixing the problem, but help with COPING with the problem. Get into the habit of telling your loved ones what you DO need and very gently, telling them what you don't need and how it makes you feel. Someone who cares for you will listen.

Examine Your Role in These Discussions

In every interaction, you have a role and you have a LOT of control in how these discussions go. But it's easy to accidentally open the door to use having discussions we don't want to have. You are in FULL control and have a choice...so make the right ones that respect your own personal boundaries.

Now it's true, you can't directly control what other people do, but you can present yourself in such a manner that you are less likely to receive unsolicited suggestions, or at the very least...make it HIGHLY UNLIKELY to continue conversations about someone's unsolicited advice.

Talking with People You Love

If the people you love seem dismissive or judgemental, it's probably because they are really unaware. Help them become aware. THESE are your loved ones. You need to tell them what is helpful to you and what isn't. But don't turn it into argument...just help them help you.

"I just wanted to let you know that I have a difficult time when you XXXX. I am obviously facing some challenges and what I could really use right now is XXXX."

Give them a chance to do it right.

Talking to People You Don't Know Well (Or Loved Ones Who Don't Listen)

If it's people you don't really know...maybe consider you might be oversharing or allowing discussions to turn into areas you don't want to go. Redirection and learning to change the subject is a great skill to have.

If you don't want to talk about your health problem, struggling business or difficulties with your kids...don't bring it up. Don't complain about anything to do with it in the company of people you don't trust. Most people just simply don't have to and don't deserve to know.

And that goes for loved ones who haven't listened to your explanation of what you need. If they continue with what they were doing, create some space between you and that person. Someone who doesn't have your best interests at heart, after you tell them what your best interest is, doesn't need to be close to you until they do that.

There's no need for drama or to tell them off. Just take your space.

When Sharing Publicly and Creating Awareness

And if you're sharing publicly because you want to help others who may be struggling too...learning to let it slide off your back and often choosing not to respond is best.

Because if you have posted something, you have welcomed comments. People always read things from their own perspective, so they may misunderstand your reason for sharing or they're usually simply just really concerned.

Or maybe they ARE judgmental. Honestly, it doesn't matter, in my opinion. Their opinions come from limited knowledge and they don't even matter. YOU matter, so take care of you and that includes not putting so much weight into what others have to say.

Protecting Your Energy and Well-Being

It's important to build your own confidence in yourself and to protect your boundaries, but that takes some time to develop if you're not used to that.

The most important thing you can start with be very aware of what you're putting your energy into. And by energy, I mean what you are engaging with and what you are taking on emotionally through your thoughts.

I have a few personal rules you might want to use to help you protect your energy. Because the more energy you put into things that upset you, the more negative thoughts it will bring you...and ultimately, the more likely you're to get more of these unwanted interactions.

The Rules for Setting Boundaries Around Unsolicited Advice in Your Life (you may or may not choose to use):

1. Don't engage with unsolicited advice you want to reject outright, unless it's to say thank you. If it's an in person conversation, like I already mentioned, say thanks and redirect the conversation. If it's online, say thank you or probably better, just don't engage at all. When you engage, you simply invite more of it.

2. You NEVER have to defend yourself when it comes to your own personal business. EVER and for most cases, just simply don't do it. Again, when you defend, you simply invite more conversation you don't want to have.
3. If you feel someone is judgemental and you want to call them out on that specifically, that is different than defending yourself. Sometimes it's useful, but for the most part, it's better to just let go – especially when you're your emotions are high or you're doing it from a place of self-doubt. But if you do it, say your peace and let it go. Avoid engaging that person further, unless you see the discussion they are creating around that as valuable. The more emotionally centered you are, the easier this is to do...so proceed with caution.

I've called people out myself – especially when it comes to my children. I have had to remind people that they have no idea what is actually going on here and that my child can actually hear the horrible things you're saying about them. They are the adult here and they should know better.

But my comments to them have nothing to do with me or my ability to parent. It has to do with their inappropriate behaviour.

I hope this has sparked a few things for you. I truly believe we shape the world around us...so take the steps you need to protect your well-being. Find the rules that work for you and work at it until things start changing.

If you have any questions or need a help, join the [Design Your Dream Life Facebook Group](#). I'll keep sharing and am always happy to help!