

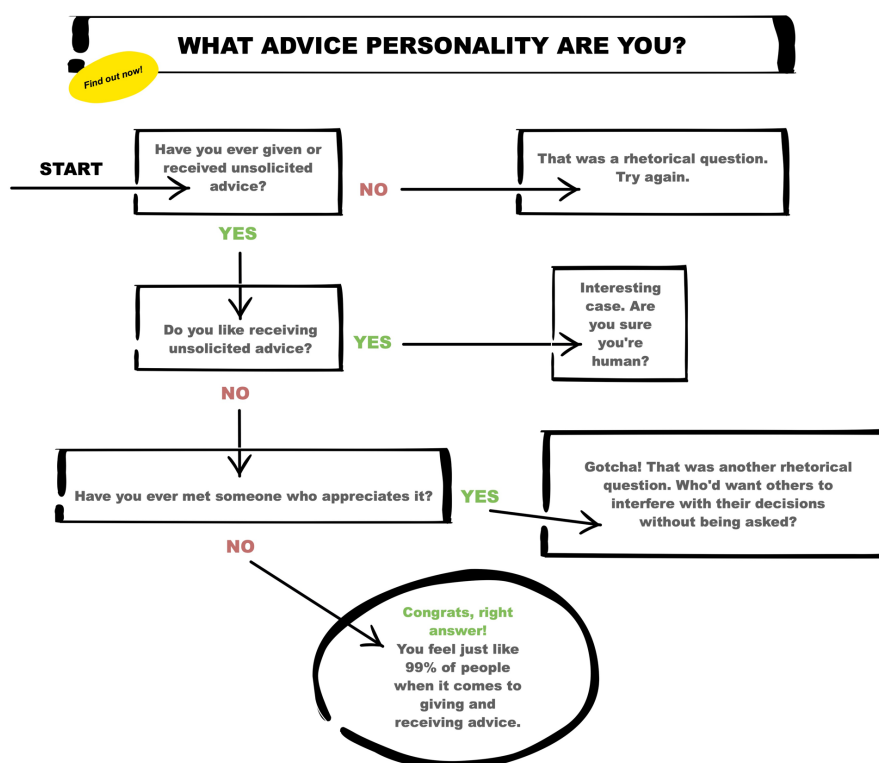
HPCG High-Performance Coaching Newsletter #19, Ralf Wolter



Dear Reader,

I hope you are well and staying safe. Don't worry, I'm not coming at you with more "How to: Home Office" advice. What we all want in times of uncertainty is one thing - clarity. That's why I'm happy to announce that this newsletter starts with an exclusive test. You can now find out how you feel about external feedback and unsolicited advice in just a few steps.

Disclaimer: might contain irony. No offense intended.



If you successfully completed the test, you may have already guessed the outcome: the vast majority of people, including you and me, do not appreciate unsolicited advice. Why is it then that we still give it to others? How can we overcome this paradox?

Instead of a psychological deep dive, let me share a statement I recently heard: "Practice Thought Provoking – instead of Thought Providing". Do you agree? Rhetorical question 😊

How can we initiate the shift towards Thought Provoking? To turn theoretic philosophy and psychology into applicable changes, here are three techniques that helped me - and people I've worked with the most.

1. Don't respond right away - Think! Pause. Turn your statement into a question.

The game changers in life often are the right clichés embraced successfully. Just because the approach is simple, doesn't mean the application is easy. The power of clichés lies in applying them: most people only know them and – unfortunately – knowledge without action does not get us anywhere.

2. Ask open questions.

If you want to challenge the status quo and actually make people re-think their “factory settings” point of view, you need to put extra effort into it. Closed yes/no questions make it harder for both of you to provoke thought and think beyond their current mindset.

3. Practice makes permanent.

Science does not yet agree on the exact number of repetitions required for changing habits. We can all agree though, it does not happen overnight. Patience and persistence will pay off eventually if you stick through with it.

How can you master these 3 steps right now? No need to wait until quarantine is over! Do not just take my thoughts - use them to provoke and stir your own thinking. This is what will step up your advice-giving-game to the next level. Provoking thoughts instead of providing thoughts can improve coaching, business relationships, and your personal life. Just be intentional about it.

Let me conclude with wise words from John Chambers, former CEO of Cisco

“If you agree with everything I say, I have failed.”

Best regards,

Ralf Wolter

HPCG® Founder, Coach and Consultant

If you know someone who would benefit from this newsletter, please invite them to [subscribe](#).

PS1: as usual, here's a new PowerSpeaking article you might appreciate: the impact your voice has on connecting remotely. Read more... <https://blog.powerspeaking.com/does-your-voice-tell-a-good-story>

PS2: if you are still reading at this point... you are probably interested in reading the final section.

Guest comment from my daughter Lydia:

“The theme of this newsletter didn't surprise me at all when my dad shared his first draft - for years he has been a big advocate against unsolicited advice. He raised our awareness to stop giving advice without being asked and to also not just taking on any advice that comes along the way.

This awareness has come to the point that now my mom is almost better at it than he is. Whenever I talk to her about things going on, she doesn't just give me her opinion on the situation. She'll always ask “May I give you my advice?” - sometimes she even stops in the middle of her sentence to ask me for advice-permission before she goes on. Sometimes I'm almost annoyed by that - why else would I ask except for parental advice on how my indecisive millennial-self should handle the situation?

However, I believe it has a huge positive impact on the health of our relationship. She doesn't tell me what to do, instead, I am given the choice whether I want to receive advice or not. Plus, although the content stays the same, the phrasing clearly marks the following words as a personal opinion and no universal truth - leaving room for thought provoking! So - the simple question “May I give you my advice?” can easily turn the entire conversation around. It takes practice, but eventually you will make a habit out of it that both you and your relationships can benefit from.”