

International Conversation Cafe

Lifestyle Topic: Advice

Read the following quotes and choose the questions your group would like to answer.

I have found the best way to give advice to your children is to find out what they want and then advise them to do it. ~Harry S Truman (1884 - 1972)

*This quote assumes that children do not like to take advice from their parents. Tell about a time you were reluctant to take advice from your parents.
Tell another time when your parent's advice was helpful.
Do you think parents should tell their children what they want to hear as opposed to what they need to hear?*

Advice is what we ask for when we already know the answer but wish we didn't.
~Erica Jong

*When you seek advice, whom do you usually ask? Why?
When are you more likely to ask for advice?*

In giving advice, seek to help, not to please, your friend.
Reprove thy friend privately; commend him publicly. ~ Solon (638 B.C.- 559 B.C.)

*What do you think these quotes means?
Why is it hard to give advice that might not please your friend?
Have you ever received advice you thought was worthless?*

Dear Abby has been a popular advice column in many papers across the U.S. since 1956. People ask her for advice to difficult personal problems. Some problems are amusing and some quite serious. Read the letter to Dear Abby. Before reading the response, suggest what your advice would be.

Example #1

DEAR ABBY: My future son-in-law recently moved in with us for financial reasons. He's 27 and a nice guy, but he's a habitual knuckle-cracker. He cracks every finger of each hand twice (back and forth) every half-hour or so. He also cracks his neck and wrists, but less frequently. As an added bonus, my daughter is also beginning to crack her knuckles now.

I am sensitive to noise (loud chewing, gum cracking), but I don't want to cause him more stress (he's also a nail-biter), so I keep my mouth shut. It's driving me crazy! What do you suggest? -- PATTY IN PENNSYLVANIA

Your response...

Abby's advice

DEAR PATTY: Knuckle-cracking, like nail-biting, is a nervous habit that has been known to defuse anxiety. While it may be crazy-making to listen to, unless it's a symptom of an underlying nervous disorder, the practice is relatively harmless. (In some people, it has caused swelling of the joints or swelling of the hands, so mention that to your daughter.)

Because you are sensitive to noises -- which your daughter should already know -- talk to her and her fiancé and ask that when the impulse strikes, they walk out of earshot. Because they are living under your roof, they should respect your request.

Example #2

DEAR ABBY: Last year, my 40-year-old stepson, "Rod," gave his father a beautiful robe for Christmas. The problem is, we had given the robe to Rod for Christmas several years ago. I didn't say anything at the time, but, of course, I recognized it because I was the one who had bought it for him.

Should I have said anything? Or was I right to have played dumb (which is what I did)?

Rod has "saved" other presents we have given him and regifted them to us years later. This man has a high-paying job and isn't hurting for money. I think what he's doing is insulting. I have suggested not exchanging gifts, but he ignores me. What can I do about this in the future? -- "RECYCLEE" IN THE SOUTH

Your response...

Abby's response

DEAR "RECYCLEE": Rod may have forgotten that he got the robe from you. As I see it, you have two choices. You can be offended, or you can turn it into a joke. For this Christmas, give him the robe back.

Are there any famous words of wisdom or advice from your home country?