

Don't Hide Behind Good Advice

Take the risk of thinking for yourself. Much more happiness, truth, beauty and wisdom will come to you that way.” – Christopher Hitchens

People get confused by conflicting prescriptions for success because they go about the process of analyzing advice all wrong.

Advice is an invitation to explore. Nothing more.

When you uncritically act on someone's advice without being prepared to own the implications for yourself, your act of advice-seeking becomes just another form of responsibility-shifting.

Seeking advice is not about finding the right answer or doing what you're told. It's about using personal experience as a laboratory for experimenting with promising ideas.

It's about keeping your thinking cap firmly intact while you make an open-minded effort to discover something new.

Sometimes your experiments with advice will yield exciting results. Sometimes those experiments will go nowhere. But each experiment is useful when the goal is to “explore and expand” instead of “trust and obey.”

If you're overwhelmed by your options, the alternative to confusion is curiosity.

Instead of asking “What should I do?” ask “How can I turn my decision-making process into an adventure where I have the opportunity to learn something new?”

Instead of asking “What's the one right strategy for how I should handle this situation?” ask “How can I investigate my possibilities in a way that's right for me?”

Don't just seek good advice. Seek the wisdom that comes from weighing all advice against what your own experience is constantly teaching you.