

# THE JORDAN HARBINGER SHOW

## Worksheet for How to Ask for Advice | Deep Dive (Episode 321)

Asking for advice the right way is one of the most important skills we can master. It's an asset that sharpens our instincts, exposes us to guidance, and brings us closer to our goals, our abilities, and our **purpose**. Soliciting it the right way — and then processing and putting it to good use — is the difference between ignorance and understanding, failure and success. So it's no surprise that top performers take this skill very seriously.

But asking for advice isn't just a skill in and of itself. It's also at the heart of so many other skills, habits, and mindsets that elevate our lives and careers. **In this episode**, we're joined by Gabriel Mizrahi to explore the difference between asking for advice poorly and asking for it in a way that results in answers that are truly useful, and that someone else truly wants to give.

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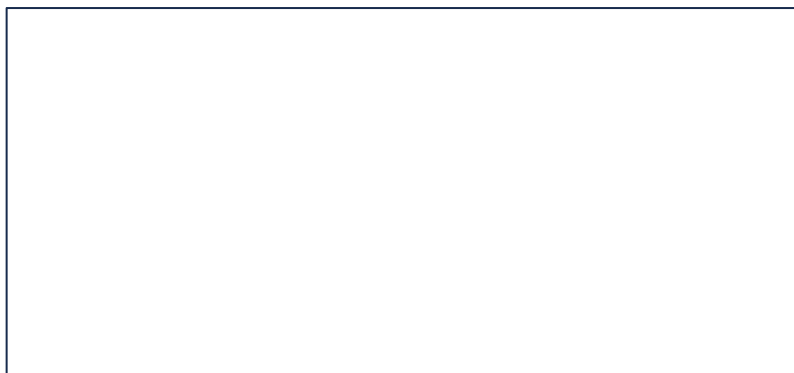
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## Advice or Validation?

I opened the show with a story about someone who asked me for advice in the wrong way. To summarize, his dream was to design an apparel line “because a lot of wealthy people have clothing lines.” Additionally, he was disenchanted by his current job and wanted to go all-in on this dream, presumably because everything would be perfect if he just “followed his passion” (itself a great example of terrible advice given way too often).

For the time I spent dishing out practical advice he needed rather than vague bromides of encouragement he wanted to hear, I earned one fewer listener who saw me as a dream killer rather than someone who could provide actionable steps toward what he believed his dream to be. I concluded that he wasn't really looking for advice, but permission to quit a job he hated to start a business in which he had zero experience.

**When you're thinking about asking someone for advice, what's your motivation? Are you looking for tips on how to realistically achieve something, or are you just hoping for someone outside of the voice in your own head to validate a course of action you've already decided upon?**



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## Know What You Need

The first principle about asking for advice that you should commit to memory: you need to know what you need, and you need to be able to ask for it clearly. Rather than saying something vague like, “I need help chasing my dream,” you should be prepared to say, “I’ve given this a lot of thought. Here are the things I need to know. What do you have to give me? How would I go about this?”

- **Vague:** “I want to be powerful and successful. So how do I do that in the business world?”
- **Better:** “So I’m considering pursuing an MBA. Do you think I’d be in a better position to rise up in the fashion world or in the supply chain world with that degree? Or should I go apprentice for somebody and go get experience that way?”
- **Vague:** “I want to guide people and be inspirational and tell great stories. How do I even do that?”
- **Better:** “Hey, so when you edited your podcast, was that time well spent, or do you think I should outsource that work so I can focus on the meat of the show?”

**How might you similarly refine the way you ask for advice to convey that you know what you need?**

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## Ask the Internet First

The person you're asking for advice needs to know you've already done some legwork and that you're relying on them to help you pick up where the trail's gone cold. You should be reaching out to them for their unique expertise, not wasting their time with questions you could have answered on your own with a five-second Google search. If your question is vague, ask the Internet first.

- **Ask the Internet:** "How do I start a podcast?"
- **Ask a person:** "I want to start a show. I've been working on my hosting skills. I'm really passionate about broadcasting. The thing is, I'm feeling a little bit lost about what I should be doing and what I should be asking people like you to make the right decision or to go about this the best way. So if you were me, what would you be asking somebody?"

**Is the question you want to ask still vague enough that your favorite search engine could give you dozens of answers, or have you narrowed it down to the point that asking is worth taking up someone else's valuable time? Don't stop on the first page of results — go 10, 20 pages deep. Exhaust every possible resource. In the process, you'll probably uncover more excellent, legitimate questions to ask when it's time to seek advice from a human being.**

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## Good Questions Build Relationships

Knowing how to ask a good question shows that you're someone who takes advice seriously — and somebody who takes advice seriously receives serious advice. Even better, knowing how to ask for advice also makes you better at giving it — by understanding what it's like to be on the other side of the conversation.

When you get a really good question from somebody who really wants to hear the answer, then you automatically want to give more. You answer their question, you geek out on the answer with them, and then they might ask you a follow-up. You're invested now, so you start to share more. And before you know it, this one question, which was formulated the right way, is creating a conversation that is so much bigger than the initial request — it's the foundation of a relationship that could last a lifetime.

One of the greatest networking tools I've learned is to share the impact of the advice I put into practice. Weeks, months, or even years later, I'll reach out to the people who counseled me and tell them what happened as a result. I'll share my appreciation for their wisdom, they'll know that it was put to good use, the good advice will keep flowing, and our relationship will grow even deeper.

**Reach out to someone who's given you good advice and let them know how it's made a difference in your life. It may matter to them more than you think!**

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## Elements of a Great Question

Top experts can give bad advice when it's poorly solicited, and mediocre practitioners can give great advice when it's masterfully solicited. So much of advice comes down to the person asking for it — both in terms of how they pose the request, and what they do with the advice once they get it. So how do you know when you're formulating a great question that will generate life-changing advice? Generally speaking, a great question is:

- **Specific** (about the answer it's designed to elicit, which means that it often includes a brief summary of or quick nod to the homework you've done up till now)
- **Goal-oriented and productive** (about the action it's designed to inform, which means that it's not just aspirational or overly broad, but practical in its purpose)
- **Open-ended** (in that the question doesn't just lead to yes/no responses or purely tactical advice, but also opens up an opportunity to have a conversation with the person beyond the immediate request)
- **Well-articulated** (in style, diction, and grammar)
- **Kind, respectful, open, confident, and passionate** (in tone, spirit, and overall handling of the question and the advice — not just in the initial request but throughout the exchange)

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If you articulate a question that hits all of the above elements, then you'll maximize the chances of receiving advice when you need it the most — and the odds that the advice you receive will be as meaningful as possible. Practice composing a question that is supported by these elements below.

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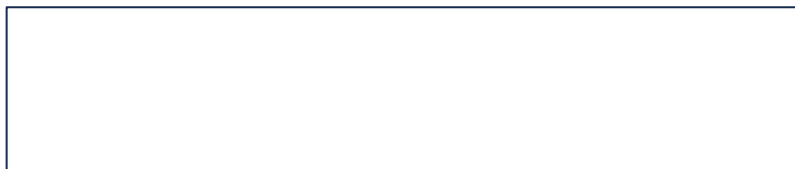
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## Don't Argue. Listen.

Asking for advice the right way is half the battle. The other half is being willing to listen to it. Whenever I come across someone who resists my advice — especially if they explicitly asked for it — I learn a lot about their character. Resistance usually tells me that this is a person who doesn't have enough self-awareness or curiosity to improve, who doesn't want to do the work to get better, who is more concerned with appearance than with growth, and who doesn't respect the value of advice. I have compassion for these people up to a point — like I said, it took me years to un-learn these instincts — but at the end of the day, I find it difficult to fully invest in people who resist the advice they clearly need to hear.

The key practice here is listening, plain and simple. Listening is the necessary and powerful first step in processing any type of data. Listening means leading with curiosity, empathy, and a genuine desire to understand. It means wanting to hear potentially uncomfortable or surprising views, appreciating why the other person has arrived at that view, and identifying exactly what that view means. Then — and only then — are we in a position to ask ourselves whether we agree with the advice, and to arrive at the right answer.

**Agreeing not to argue signals that you take advice seriously. Next time you're receiving advice, try to take in the feedback as a non-judgmental observer so you can process and take it in later as a participant.**





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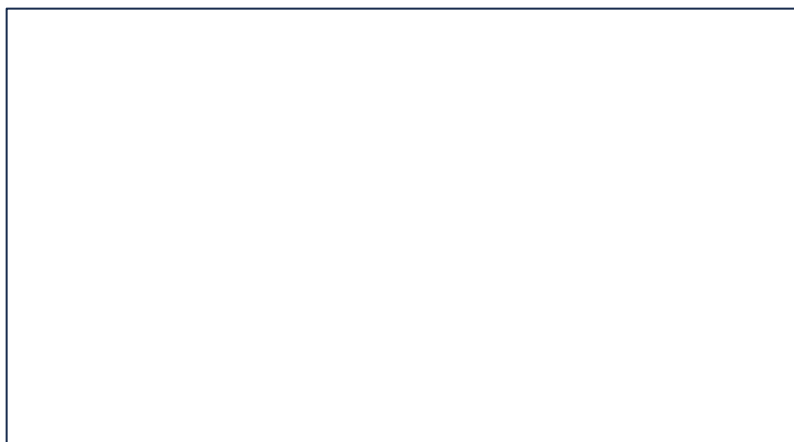
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## Put the Advice into Practice

Once you assess the advice you receive, then you're in a position to act on it. Again, this might sound painfully obvious, but I'm constantly amazed by how many people solicit advice only to let it go to waste — by not understanding it, not processing it, or not taking it seriously. Advice is just words until the advice seeker finds a way to put it into action. If you don't put it into action in some shape or form, you've missed something crucial.

Acting on advice means using it to decide the best course of action for yourself. This doesn't necessarily mean following the advice to a T, or even following it at all. It means considering the advice carefully, drawing your own conclusions from it, then factoring those conclusions into your decision, whatever your decision ultimately is.

**The value of advice doesn't lie in whether it's "right" or "wrong," but in the way you process and act on it. In what ways have you followed "good" advice into failure, or "bad" advice into success?**

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## Undermined by Overthinking

Another way to fail to make the most of advice is to anticipate the outcome before you even try. This is almost always a form of avoidance, cleverly hidden behind reasonable objections. I see this quite a bit with people who email me about our **Six-Minute Networking course**. Many of them assume that the principles of the course won't work before they even try it. "I don't want to do Connect Four," they'll say about one of the main exercises, "because I don't want to be texting people all day and booking coffee dates every weekend." "Just wait," I'll say. "You'll see that half the people you text will respond, and the rest won't engage. Just try it and see what happens to your relationships."

Without fail, everyone who goes ahead with the course emails me back and says, "Oh, my God, you were right. Sorry I put up such a fight." They realize that their concerns never came to pass, and that their objections were really ways to avoid doing the work they knew they should have been doing. When you catch yourself overthinking advice in order to avoid doing some hard work, that's usually a dead giveaway. Processing advice is key, but only when it's in service of actually acting on it.

**If your deliberation is moving you closer to the best decision, then it's time well spent. If it's moving you away from the best decision, or keeping you stuck in one place, then it's time to stop thinking and choose a course of action — whatever action is most appropriate for you.**

*Full show notes and resources for this episode [can be found here](#).*

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## About



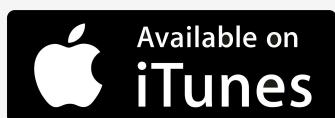
Join us as we get deep into the untapped wisdom of the world's top performers — from legendary creators to intelligence operatives, iconoclastic writers to visionary change-makers.

We deconstruct the playbooks of the most successful people on earth — and learn new strategies, perspectives, and insights you can't find anywhere else. Then, take these valuable insights into your own life and live what you listen.

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