

Stop Doing This One Thing Now to Change Your Relationships

Are you making this common communication mistake? If you want to have real influence in someone's life, stop doing this one thing that is sabotaging your relationships.

Lee pressed the phone receiver against his ear, and plugged the other ear with his finger in an effort to hear the woman on the end of the phone. She had advertised a free refrigerator which his wife, Jan, thought would be a good idea for the summer. But Jan wouldn't stop giving advice, and Lee's frustration was growing.

"Lee, tell her your name!" she said, vying for his attention.

"What? Oh, yes. Sorry. I'm Lee."

"And make sure you use the straps to secure the refrigerator," she advised.

"Yes, Jan. I know. Now, please, let me talk."

Despite Lee's pleas, Jan continued interrupting. Finally, he secured the address, hooked up his trailer and made his way to collect the refrigerator, all the while fuming.

"Does she think I don't know I could do this with my eyes closed!" Lee said to no one in particular as he drove along the winding road. He was happy to do these small tasks for Jan, but sometimes he wished she understood how her unsolicited advice made him feel disrespected and resistant to helping her.

Offering advice is a natural inclination for many of us, especially when we have knowledge or experience to impart in a particular area. What we often fail to understand is how our unsought offerings are disrespectful and create resentment. Or

perhaps you find yourself in situations where you feel you are “throw[ing] your pearls before swine” (Matt. 7:6b).

For parents, teenage rebellion and lack of influence are often the outcomes of giving advice which, in effect, robs kids of the positive reward system designed by God. Dopamine, the motivational hormone, is released when we discover a course of action on our own, without being told it. Someone telling us what to do gives them dopamine, but it doesn't provide the listener with dopamine, resulting in a lack of motivation to take action. All people, regardless of what age they are, long to create their own lives. We not only rob them of dopamine but autonomy and esteem when we tell others what to do.

If you want to have more influence in other people's lives, ask them what they think they should do, what they've done in the past, how that's gone or what they think a wise friend in a similar situation would do. Coach them. Avoid resentment, and enter the realm of trusted adviser by not giving advice, and watch your influence increase.

Would you like to learn how to encourage others in a way that honors them and creates deeper connection? Then tune into today's podcast episode of *What To Say and How To Say It* with Nina Roesner on Charisma Podcast Network. {eo}

*Since 1991, **Nina Roesner** has been helping people solve their relationship and leadership challenges as a communication coach. She has a master's degree in communication, and she spent 15 years with Dale Carnegie Training, is a HarperCollins author and has led Greater Impact since 2005. She has been a wildly effective personal development coach in the areas of relationships, public speaking, communication and leadership.*

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