The Advice Trap Summary

1-Sentence-Summary: _The Advice Trap_ helps you accelerate your communication skills and makes you more likable by explaining why defaulting to giving your opinion on how to solve other people's problems is so terrible and how to listen better to their actual needs so you can make a positive difference.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:

You love to give advice. It's easy when you hear someone around you mention a struggle they're having to just jump right in there and start trying to solve it. But how often have you paused to think about how much more you're talking than them? Or if you're even solving the right problem?

Sadly, when it comes to helping others, most of us do way more talking than listening. This is bad because it means we're usually not even solving the right problem. Or worse, your proposed solution isn't actually helpful for their specific situation and needs.

I'm really glad I could learn these things about myself and my own advice-giving habits while reading Michael Stanier's _The Advice Trap: Be Humble, Stay Curious, & Change the Way You Lead Forever_. This book is a follow-up to _The Coaching Habit_, and it will help everyone, coach or not, beat their Advice Monster and truly help others!

Here are the 3 biggest lessons I've learned from this book:

1. Your Advice Monster takes on three personas that you need to be aware of if you want to beat it.

2. Practice listening skills by using keywords to prime yourself, repetition of a single skill, and making it enjoyable.
3. Be generous when communicating with others in three specific categories.

Grab your monster hunting gear and let's discover how to take down our advice demons for good!

Lesson 1: **There are three personas of The Advice Monster to tame.**

During Stanier's childhood in Australia, he would often play dress up with his brothers. They could instantly change from being Superman to a train conductor.

He's since learned that our Advice Monsters also like to play dress-up, and take on three personas:

- Tell-It
- Save-It
- Control-It

Your Tell-It monster is the most frequent offender and also the loudest. It tries to make you think that it's your job to have an answer. Recognition and success only come from sharing in the mindset of this demon. It likes the spotlight, comes when you don't have a lot of time, and makes you think that you know best.

The **Save-It** monster is a little less outgoing but no less harmful. When you've got this costume on, you think that you have to try to help or everything will fall apart. You're responsible for everyone and everything, including outcomes. It's common in times of conflict, disguises itself as "being helpful," and gets you to think you have the most authority.

Your Advice Monster's last persona is **Control-It**, which tricks you into thinking you have to stay in control always, no matter what. It seduces you with the idea that it's possible to handle everything yourself and won't let you share power. This one usually has a hard time letting go, comes with megalomania, and makes you think you're the only thing in the way of chaos.

Lesson 2: **Practicing these skills becomes easier when you use the power of priming, repetition, and enjoyment.**

Alright, so we've got it all out there on the table and now it's time to learn how to beat these monsters.

In the Olympics, you often see athletes with headphones in before the big event. They're not just enjoying their tunes or silencing the crowd. They're getting into the zone, or priming.

Richard Thaler discusses this in _Nudge_. it simply means setting yourself up for success with cues. To make this work for you when trying to listen better, you might try repeating a mantra like "slow down" before speaking.

The Art Of Learning is another book that Stanier references when talking about how to practice well. Applying the principles it teaches to giving advice, he suggests you should break listening down to the smallest possible pieces.

Then, pick just one to focus on and repeat it. **It's not about getting 10,000 hours necessarily, it's more about how many repetitions you do that determines whether you'll become a master or not.**

And finally, Stanier mentions _The Power of Habit_ and _Atomic Habits_ as sources to look for tips on practicing correctly. The biggest lesson he brings out is to take advantage of the cue-routine-reward loop by making practice enjoyable.

You can do this by asking the person how useful the advice you've given was for them at the end of your conversation. Asking this will help you see what's going well, which will make the process more fun. Find other ways to celebrate also!

Lesson 3: **Use three skills to be generous when talking with others.**

You might think of generosity as just giving stuff to people, but it's much deeper than that. It really means having an attitude of open-heartedness and being willing to accept others and see the best in them and in the situation.

To become more generous in your conversations, Stanier suggests breaking it down into three components:

- Silence
- Transparency
- Appreciation

A few years back I was in a class about teaching. They mentioned how important pausing after asking a question is, and that you should give at least eight seconds of silence before saying anything.

I tried that myself and it was hard at first, but it works wonders because it gives people time to organize their thoughts and share them. **You might feel anxious about it at first, but as you begin to be willing you'll soon be able to be generous in your offerings of**

silence.

Next comes transparency. You do this by being willing to share how the conversation is going for you. Check-in with yourself to see if you're getting bored or lost and find appropriate ways to communicate this to the other person.

Appreciation is last and is one that we all need to be more generous with. This means you have to actually open your mouth and share compliments with others instead of keeping them inside. Anxiety is common when trying this at first, but start small and you'll succeed!

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The Advice Trap Review

Wow, what an amazing book!! _The Advice Trap_ has got to be one of my new favorites, it's tips are just what I needed because I'm the kind of person who gives too much advice. I love how actionable the suggestions it gives are, especially that it shares some really excellent ways to make practicing easier!

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Who would I recommend The Advice Trap summary to?

The 57-year-old who talks too much about themselves and never asks people questions about themselves, the 35-year-old coach that wants to learn how to communicate with their clients better, and anyone who chimes in to share advice without really trying to understand whenever someone around them mentions a problem.