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# A Better Way to Ask for Career Advice



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*By now you're smart enough to follow the lead of people who are ahead of you in their career. Watching these people and figuring out how to mimic their success is one of the most effective ways to reach your goals. But when it*

*comes to asking for advice, you might be among the many insight-seekers who are going about it the WRONG way. If you're asking, "What advice do you have for me?" you're shooting yourself in the foot.*

### **Here's why: the question isn't specific enough.**

It's not specific enough for you to benefit because it's not clear what you want to learn.

What should you do instead? You should ask more targeted questions, inquiries that will actually help you dig down into the nitty gritty of what has helped this role model of yours succeed.

You should ask questions like:

- What's the one skill I should learn to make myself more marketable in [insert industry]?
- Is there anything you didn't do when you were my age that would've helped you better prepare for [insert career]?
- How did you use [insert industry tool] to help you [insert goal]?
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But just asking "for advice" won't get you anywhere.

### **Why you should ask specific questions**

For one, asking general questions doesn't guide the person you're talking to, doesn't give them any clue as to how they can best help you. Asking good questions means you'll get more out of the conversation. It means you'll be more likely to walk away with action items, things you can do to get where you want to be.

But even worse, phrasing your question that way can actually ANNOY your could-be mentor. Why? Because it gives the impression you haven't done your research. You haven't done your research because you don't know what you don't know. As someone who wants to help

you, I expect you to use my time effectively, by knowing specifically what you're hoping to gain from our conversation. (And if you end up learning something you didn't expect, that's a bonus.)

In other words, asking a targeted question shows you value my time.

### One exception to this rule

There's only ONE exception to this rule of not asking for general advice. The exception is this: if you're at the END of a conversation and have already asked specific questions to guide your career.

If you've already asked targeted questions—and hopefully received helpful, detailed answers—then you can ask one last question: "Do you have any other advice for me?" Or "Is there anything else that's important that we haven't talked about?"

When you ask a general question at the end of the conversation, it works like MAGIC.

Here's why: since you've already guided your mentor toward helpful answers, he now has an idea of the type of information that benefits you. And now that he has an understanding of your goals, asking a general question that leaves the door open for ANY information often results in a brilliant answer.

This works because it gives him a chance to share with you the most helpful idea he has for your particular situation. And since you're still learning about whatever that mentor knows about, you probably didn't know enough to ASK about that specific detail.

Make sense?

So next time you ask for advice, make sure to do it the smart way.

The Big Mistake You're Making When You Ask for Advice | Brazen Life

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