How the Other Half Thinks: The Psychology of Advising

Hayley Blunden and Francesca Gino

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Abstract and Keywords

This chapter integrates research on advice interactions, motivations for advising, and the psychological consequences of serving in an advisor role to develop a more comprehensive perspective on the psychology of advising. By connecting this work, which spans various methodologies and theoretical foundations, it advances current thinking on advice giving in two primary ways. First, in examining the diversity of motivations for advice giving, it extends the set of advice-exchange outcomes to be considered beyond those previously emphasized. Second, it highlights previously unexplored aspects of the advisor role that are likely to impact the advice-giving experience. The chapter concludes by providing recommendations for advisors and identifying areas ripe for future research to illuminate the advisor side of the advice-exchange process.

Keywords: advice, advice giving, advisor, self-other, helping

At some point in our lives, nearly all of us have been called upon to provide advice. Often, we provide it (Flynn & Lake, 2008). But how do we react to such requests? How does advising affect our states of mind, experiences, and relationships? Despite the fact that providing advice is a nearly universal experience, research on the exchange of advice has largely focused on the role of the advice seeker (Bonaccio & Dalal, 2006). As a result, most of what is known about advising is centered on the recipient's point of view.

To redress this limitation, this chapter provides a broad review of research relevant to understanding the advisor's experience and the implications of this research for advising outcomes. We begin by reflecting on the similarities and differences between the advisor's and advisee's perspectives to lay the groundwork. Subsequently, we augment these findings by outlining research examining motives for giving advice and the psychological correlates of advising. We then propose a set of directions for the future, including theoretical questions and improvements on existing methods for studying advisors. Finally, we propose practical strategies for advisors to achieve their goals.

Insights from Research on Advice Exchange

Scholarly inquiry on advice exchange largely has been motivated by the desire to uncover optimal advice-seeking strategies. Consequently, the majority of research on advice has taken the perspective of advice seekers, with a particular focus on advice accuracy and use (for reviews, see MacGeorge, Feng, & Guntzviller, 2016; see also (p. 44) Chapter 4). While such work can offer advisors insight regarding when their advice is likely to be sought and followed, it does not speak directly to the advisor experience. As we outline in this section, advisors are likely to have a less complete or accurate understanding of the situations seekers face due to both situational and psychological factors. We begin by discussing asymmetry in decisions made for oneself versus for others. Subsequently, we consider the limited research that has directly investigated the advisor perspective.

Asymmetry Between Advisor and Recipient Choices

To date, the richest body of work that compares advisor and recipient perspectives focuses on comparing advisor and recipient choices. Such research both (1) highlights the asymmetry between decisions individuals make for themselves versus when they are in an advisor role and (2) documents the processes that generate such asymmetry. First, when facing a decision from an advisor perspective, individuals are less subject to confirmation bias, leading them to engage in a more balanced information search (Jonas & Frey, 2003; Jonas, Schulz-Hardt, & Frey, 2005). Those in an advisor role also weigh choice attributes less uniformly, giving more weight to the most relevant dimension of a given choice outcome (Furby, Fischhoff, & Morgan, 1991; Kray & Gonzalez, 1999). Individuals' consideration of other, previously de-emphasized dimensions spurs related self-relevant thinking for decision makers (but not for advisors), increasing the influence of these less relevant dimensions on decision makers' ultimate choice (Kray, 2000). For example, if a job seeker is considering several offers, and has identified salary as the most important aspect of this choice, he or she will be likelier than an advisor to also contemplate (and thus weigh more greatly) the other aspects of the offers, such as location and benefits.

Evidence from the broader judgment and decision-making literature provides additional explanations that could underlie asymmetry in advisor and recipient choices. Advisors are often asked to weigh in about actions a seeker could take in reaction to a given situation. Thus, an accurate view of the seeker's circumstances and options would enable advisors to provide more specific and personalized advice. However, individuals have difficulty appreciating others' points of view, for a variety of reasons. First, individuals have poor perspective-taking abilities (Epley, Keysar, Van Boven, & Gilovich, 2004). As a result, even advisors who are highly motivated to understand a seeker's point of view will likely be unable to do so completely. In addition, individuals tend to believe that others are more risk seeking than themselves in nonmonetary domains (Hsee & Weber, 1997). Similarly, when making decisions for themselves, individuals are more attuned to protecting against potential threats to their self-image than when they are deciding for others (Wray & Stone, 2005). Likewise, advisors exhibit greater overconfidence than others (Harvey, Koehler, &

Ayton, 1997). Such differences in advisors' perceptions could lead an advisor to recommend a bolder course of action than a seeker might desire.

(p. 45) Advisor and seeker perspectives may also vary because simply playing a given role can dictate one's frame of mind and behavior (Biddle, 1986; Sarbin & Allen, 1954). Research on gender in negotiations provides experimental evidence of this effect. Whereas women negotiating for themselves tend to behave relatively unassertively, in line with gender norms, they are more aggressive when negotiating on behalf of others (Amanatullah & Morris, 2010; Bowles, Babcock, & McGinn, 2005). Thus, when individuals take on the role of an advisor, they may shift their perceptions away from those typical of individual decision makers, thus distancing their views from those of the seekers.

Advising from the Advisor Point of View

Despite the abundance of research investigating the advice-exchange process from the seeker point of view, comparatively limited work has examined the phenomenon from the advisor perspective. New research, however, has begun to provide some key insights into this viewpoint.

First, emerging research has begun to address what motivates advisors to provide high-quality advice. Gino and Grant (2015) found that when an advice-giving task is framed as a learning opportunity rather than as a helping opportunity, individuals are more intrinsically motivated to expend effort in formulating advice, thus improving its quality. Additional work has also begun to expand the set of outcomes emphasized beyond advice accuracy and use, toward more relevant outcomes for advisors such as interpersonal and psychological consequences of advice giving. Such work shows that advisors view the seekers who approach them as more competent, contrary to seekers' lay beliefs that seeking advice will make them appear incompetent (Brooks, Gino, & Schweitzer, 2015). In addition, individuals are flattered when they are approached to give advice (Brooks et al., 2015), and advisors care about seekers' opinions of them, at times shifting their advice to align it with seeker views and create a positive impression (Kastenmüller, Jonas, Fischer, Frey, & Fischer, 2013). New evidence suggests that advisors may have a personal stake in seekers' decisions as well. When their recommendations are not followed, advisors tend to become offended and distance themselves from the offending seeker (Blunden, Brooks, John, & Gino, 2017). The act of giving advice can also make advisors feel powerful (Schaerer, Tost, Huang, Gino, & Larrick, 2016), a psychological state that carries numerous behavioral consequences, which we will explore later in this chapter (Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003).

Emergent research has also begun to address advisors' thought processes when giving advice. Guntzviller and MacGeorge (2013) show that whereas some advisor goals (e.g., providing a feasible solution) are positively associated with recipient ratings of advice quality, some (e.g., changing the recipient's approach to the situation) are negatively related to quality. Shi (2012) investigated advisors' thought processes by asking advisors to list their reactions to an advice scenario before providing advice. Her analysis revealed that advisors generally first consider their approach to the situation and subsequently (p. 46) evaluate the risks of this potential approach. There is also growing evidence of cultural influence on how advisors view advising (for a review, see Chapter 19). For example, Feng (2015) explored differences between American and Chinese advisors, finding that Chinese advisors held more favorable attitudes toward advice-giving than American ones.

Additional work centered on advisor message content can also provide insight into the advisor perspective. Although such work does not directly access advisors' sentiments, it sheds light on advice-giving behavior and approaches. Such work has found that when giving advice, individuals make frequent use of "accounts," or statements to justify their opinions, to prevent recipients from losing face and resisting (Waring, 2007). Similarly, advisors whose advice is challenged tend to rephrase the advice in more idiomatic language, include questions to invite the recipient's confirmation (Hepburn & Potter, 2011), and also tend to provide more specific reasoning (Park, 2014).

Research focused on the unique context of mentoring, a prolonged advice-exchange relationship with a high level of relational closeness (Kram, 1988; for a review, see Chapter 13), can also contribute to an understanding of the psychological experience of advising. Such work has largely focused on the outcomes of such relationships, and it has shown that mentoring a protégé can provide relationship satisfaction, satisfaction from passing on knowledge, and renewed energy (Allen, 2007; Allen & Eby, 2003; Allen, Poteet, & Burroughs, 1997; Kram, 1983; Noe, 1988). However, given the uniqueness of the mentoring role, the extent to which these findings are likely to generalize to other advising contexts remains unclear.

In sum, although evidence from other perspectives informs our understanding of the advisor role by highlighting how advisors' perspectives differ from seekers' perspectives, a comprehensive view of the advisor side of the phenomenon remains to be developed. Accordingly, we go beyond research on advice to build this perspective by incorporating work related to the potential motivations for advising and the psychological consequences of serving in an advisory role.

Insights from Motivations for Advising

Why do advisors choose to provide advice? This question is central to understanding the psychology of advising. Providing advice can have significant costs. Not only can doing so require a considerable investment of time and effort, but it can also result in one being identified with the seeker's outcome, which could have reputational or professional repercussions (Kennedy, Kleinmuntz, & Peecher, 1997). Just as seekers have multiple motives for requesting advice (Goldsmith & Fitch, 1997; Harvey & Fischer, 1997), advisors' decisions to give advice can also be expected to stem from a variety of motivations. Examining these motivations can provide insight into the outcomes of the advice-exchange process about which advisors are most likely to be concerned.

(p. 47) Providing Advice to Help

First, individuals may be motivated to give advice because they view it as a way to help others. Helping can be motivated by true altruism (Batson & Shaw, 1991), internal rewards (Batson & Powell, 2003), impression enhancement (Bolino, 1999), or a combination of all three (Grant & Mayer, 2009). Individuals who are motivated to give advice by genuine altruism will care about helping seekers determine the best course of action given the seeker's situation. Such a motivation is generally guided by empathy for the target of one's help (Batson & Shaw, 1991; Dovidio, Allen, & Schroeder, 1990). This suggests that an advisor is more likely to be motivated by altruism when the seeker is deemed similar, thus enabling the advisor to personally identify with the seeker (Batson, Lishner, Cook, & Sawyer, 2005; Halpern, 1955). Evidence from a study of digital knowledge repositories (i.e., user-contributed electronic forums), suggests that individuals indeed provide advice to benefit others; contributions to the repositories were driven by perceptions of the forums' benefits (Huang, Barbour, Su, & Contractor, 2013). If true altruism is the advisor's dominant motive for providing advice, he or she will likely be concerned about the seeker's decision consequences (i.e., whether the seeker's decision turns out well) and care less about other outcomes, such as whether or not the advice was used.

People are also motivated to provide advice because doing so can enhance their own psychological well-being. When individuals view others in need, they may experience a negative affective response and internal distress (Batson, O'Quin, Fultz, Vanderplas, & Isen, 1983; Hoffman, 1981), which can be alleviated by helping others (Batson & Shaw, 1991; Cialdini et al., 1987). Accordingly, individuals who are motivated to provide advice to mitigate their negative internal response to a perceived need will not be highly concerned with the seekers' decision consequences or the use of their advice; the mere act of providing it would be sufficient to relieve this negative internal state. Helping can also improve advisors' internal well-being by satisfying their psychological needs. Individuals have a psychological need for competence (the desire to attain valued outcomes in one's environment), relatedness (the desire to feel connected to others), and autonomy (the desire to drive one's own behavior); (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Giving advice can fulfill each of these needs: It can enhance advisors' sense of competence by providing them with an opportunity to feel knowledgeable, boost their experience of relatedness by exposing them to another's personal vulnerability, and advance their sense of autonomy by providing an opportunity to exhibit self-congruence (e.g., by giving advice consistent with one's beliefs); (Weinstein & Ryan, 2010). Meeting such needs may additionally generate a virtuous advice-giving cycle. Satisfying one's needs for competence and relatedness is likely to result in advisors feeling socially valued, a sentiment that predicts future helping behavior (Grant & Gino, 2010). This cycle may also be strengthened by a shift in advisors' self-views; the act of giving advice may alter one's self-perception to incorporate the advisor role, resulting in greater future advice provision (Bem, 1972). Research on mentorship suggests that motives of psychological (p. 48) well-being are warranted; mentors gain psychological benefits from engaging in this type of relationship, including enhanced satisfaction and energy (Allen & Eby, 2003; Allen et al., 1997; Kram, 1983; Noe, 1988). Advisors driven by motives of psychological well-being would be most concerned with the use of their advice. The use of their advice may also be important to maintaining advisors' initial levels of psychological well-being, because individuals can feel threatened by the rejection of their help (Rosen, Mickler, & Collins, 1987).

Individuals may also try to help others to gain social benefits and/or avoid social costs. Being seen engaging in prosocial behavior can have positive effects on one's personal reputation (Bolino, 1999), amount of social capital (Dolfsma, van der Eijk, & Jolink, 2009), performance ratings (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Hui, 1993), and compensation (Allen & Rush, 1998). Similarly, serving as a mentor also has been associated with mentor-side extrinsic benefits, including a higher rate of promotion, recognition, and career success (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz & Lima, 2004; Allen et al., 1997; Bozionelos, 2004; Ghosh & Reio, 2013). Individuals may be motivated by these external benefits to give advice. Separately, being observed as not helping can incur social costs, as it violates an implicit norm of benevolence (Flynn & Lake, 2008). Individuals who are primarily motivated to provide advice by these extrinsic factors are unlikely to be very concerned about the seeker's decision consequence or whether their advice was followed. Instead, they are likely to have an interest in the visibility and/or memorability of their advice, which could expand the reach of these social outcomes.

Providing Advice to Influence

Advisors can be motivated to provide advice because doing so provides them with an exceptional opportunity to influence others. Serving in an advisor role provides individuals with numerous avenues of influence beyond the mere communication of their viewpoints. For example, advisors have significant leeway over their expressions of confidence and the information they choose to share, both of which impact the consequences of the advice exchange (Feng & MacGeorge, 2010; MacGeorge, Guntzviller, Hanasono & Feng, 2016; Price & Stone, 2004; Sniezek & Van Swol, 2001). Thus, when individuals have an agenda, providing advice is a versatile means of advancing it.

Research suggests that people do seek to influence others through the advice-exchange process, although such evidence is not specific to the role of the advisor (Letterie & Swank, 1997; Van Swol, 2009). Even if advisors are not explicitly motivated by the potential to influence others, individuals are broadly motivated to support their own personal views (Kunda, 1990). As a result, advisors may not even be conscious of their influence motivation. One may consciously acknowledge a different motivation for one's actions (e.g., a helping motivation) while maintaining an unconscious motivation to influence.

(p. 49) Evidence suggests that providing advice is indeed an effective means of influencing others. Seekers are reluctant to disregard advice completely, even when it is provided by inexperienced others (Harvey & Fischer, 1997). Accordingly, much proffered advice is likely to generate some behavioral effect, however modest. In addition, the provision of advice can create social pressure for seekers to comply with the advice, especially when the advisor can observe whether the advice is followed and when the advisor clearly would benefit from such compliance (Sah, Loewenstein, & Cain, 2013, 2014).

If influence is the dominant motive behind an individual's decision to provide advice, that individual will be most attentive to advice use. When an advisor's advice is followed, this offers the best evidence that his or her influence was effective. Accordingly, advisors with this motive may elect to provide advice only during situations in which the outcome is observable, or they may expend additional effort to observe the recipient's decision.

Providing Advice to Elevate One's Status

Individuals may also provide advice to improve their status position. This motivation is distinct from the extrinsic social rewards one may receive from displaying prosocial behavior in that it specifically concerns the elevation of one's position within the broader community based on the advice itself—not on a reputation for helping. It can also be distinguished from the benefits one receives by directly influencing a seeker, as an advisor's status can be increased through advice giving whether or not the advice is actually followed.

Evidence supports the notion that people sometimes seek to improve their status by offering advice. Advisors may quickly develop a positive reputation (Ottaviani & Sørensen, 2006; Yaniv & Kleinberger, 2000), which often results in increased status within an advice network (Agneessens & Wittek, 2012). One study of a professional online discussion forum found that individuals contributed knowledge to the forum when they perceived it would enhance their professional reputation (Wasko & Faraj, 2005).

When individuals are motivated to provide advice in order to enhance their status level, they are likely to be interested in all advice outcomes—whether their advice is taken, whether the seeker's decision consequence is positive, and whether the advice is visible and memorable. Such advisors would be attentive to the first two of these outcomes because they would help build a reputation for giving quality advice. The third, advice visibility and memorability, would help spread this reputation, a necessary step in elevating one's status within the community.

In sum, advisors' experiences of the advice-exchange process likely vary based on their motivations for providing advice. For example, an advisor motivated by pure altruism may gain satisfaction only upon learning that the seeker's decision turned out well. By contrast, if an advisor is motivated by the opportunity to influence others, he or (p. 50) she may be satisfied to simply know that the advice was followed. We summarize these motivations and the related outcomes of interest in Table 3.1.

Importantly, we do not propose that advisors are typically driven by a single motivation, but often by a blend of them. For example, an advisor may provide advice primarily to elevate his or her social status but may also desire to influence the recipient. The relative strength of motivations within this blend will determine the outcomes to which an advisor attends. Further, such motives are likely to affect advisors' advice-giving approaches. For example, those who provide advice to gain social benefits may seek opportunities for their advice to become visible, such as disseminating it in an observable location or creating an artifact, such as a "how to" file, to publicize the advice that was given. Correspondingly, those who provide advice to influence others may present information selectively or seek other means of influence, such as surrounding the recipient with those who agree with the advisor's approach.

This multiplicity of advisor motives may additionally affect the advice exchange process by influencing recipients' reactions to advice when they become aware of their advisor's motives. On one hand, recipients may not attend to, perceive, or adequately adjust for the underlying reason that an advisor elects to provide advice. Such recipient inattentiveness has been documented within studies of advisors who have conflicts of interest: Even when advisors who disclose that they have a financial conflict of interest provide biased advice, recipients fail to appropriately account for this bias (Cain, Loewenstein & Moore, 2011). On the other hand, recent work by Guntzviller & MacGeorge (2013) suggests that recipients aware of their advisor's motivation to persuade were put off by that awareness. Future research to uncover when such motives are perceptible to the recipient could yield important insights for advice giving.

Table 3.1 Motivations for Providing Advice and Related Advisor Outcomes of Interest

Motivation	**Outcome of Interest to Advisor**
To Help—Altruistic	• Seeker Decision Consequences
To Help—Enhance Psychological Well-being	• Mere Act of Giving Advice • Seeker Utilization
To Help—Gain Social Benefits/ Avoid Social Costs	• Advice Visibility/Memorability
To Influence	• Seeker Utilization
To Elevate Status	• Seeker Utilization • Seeker Decision Consequences • Advice Visibility/Memorability

(p. 51) Insights from Psychological Correlates of Advising

Psychological Consequences of Providing Advice

Performing an advisory role is likely to initiate a variety of psychological processes. An understanding of these situationally based effects can clarify when the characteristics of the advisor role are likely to increase advisors' alignment with recipients' perspectives and when they are likely to reduce it. Such alignment can have significant consequences for the advisor experience, as it is likely to drive seekers' use of advice, decision consequences, and willingness to continue a relationship with the advisor.

First, providing advice may lead advisors to feel responsible for recipients' outcomes. Seekers often approach advisors to elicit such shared responsibility (Harvey & Fischer, 1997; Kennedy et al., 1997). While to our knowledge no evidence directly establishes that providing advice results in greater felt responsibility on the part of advisors, the advisors' relative control over their advice makes such a response likely (Cummings & Anton, 1990; Pierce, Kostova, & Dirks, 2001).

Importantly, feeling accountable can affect how an advisor is likely to think and act. First, accountability has been associated with more proactive and helpful behavior (Fuller, Marler, & Hester, 2006; Mayer, Duval, Holtz, & Bowman, 1985; Morrison & Phelps, 1999; Pearce & Gregersen, 1991). As a result, giving advice could result in a self-perpetuating cycle in which the felt responsibility one develops from serving as an advisor could lead to future advice giving. Greater accountability has also been associated with reduced heuristic-based decision making and greater aversion to ambiguity (Lerner & Tetlock, 1999), which could improve advisors' consideration of a seeker's situation, promoting alignment.

Serving as an advisor is also likely to activate a variety of additional psychological processes depending on a critical element of the advice context: whether the advice provided is solicited or not. Providing advice when it has been asked for places the advisor in a fundamentally different situation than providing advice when it has not been requested, and these situational differences spur unique constellations of psychological processes.

Psychological Consequences of Providing Solicited Advice

When individuals are asked for their advice, they are placed in a position of comparative advantage relative to individuals whose advice has not been requested. Seekers have (at least outwardly) acknowledged that those they have approached possess some desired knowledge or insight. This dynamic can set off a variety of psychological processes.

(p. 52) First, it places advisors in a position of power. Keltner et al. (2003) define such power as "an individual's relative capacity to modify others' states by providing or withholding resources" (p. 265). When asked for advice, individuals are requested to provide information or their opinions, which they could choose to withhold. As previously mentioned, advisors could indeed leverage such power in order to influence others or to gain social status. Recent work affirms that advisors perceive and respond to this relational asymmetry by experiencing greater psychological power (whether consciously or subconsciously); (Schaerer et al., 2016). Power and the advisor role are also mutually reinforcing. When individuals are asked for advice, it causes them to feel powerful, and when individuals feel powerful, they are likely to enact scripts related to having power. The enactment of such scripts can signal power to others and thus attract more seekers (Schaerer et al., 2016; Tost, 2015).

This experience of power has several potentially important effects on advisors' cognition and behavior. First, powerful individuals have a greater tendency toward action than the less powerful do. Power leads individuals to construe situations as less threatening (Keltner et al., 2003). It also is associated with greater optimism and amplified confidence (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006; Brinol, Petty, Valle, Rucker, & Becerra, 2007; Galinsky, Gruenfeld, & Magee, 2003). As a consequence of these psychological effects, powerful individuals tend to assess situations differently and take a more action-oriented approach to them (Galinsky et al., 2003; Keltner et al., 2003). For example, in a study of medical decision making, individuals were more likely to prefer active treatments when imagining themselves as medical professionals (an advisory role) than when imagining themselves as patients (Zikmund-Fisher, Sarr, Fagerlin, & Ubel, 2006). Power can also lead individuals to take greater risks (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006). Such responses may serve to widen the gap between seekers' and advisors' preferred decision alternatives; if being placed in an advisor role results in a more risk-tolerant, action-oriented frame of mind, advisors will be likely to suggest a riskier alternative than a seeker might otherwise consider. When coupled with the aforementioned evidence of self-other differences in risk-taking inclinations (Beisswanger, Stone, Hupp, & Allgaier, 2003; Wray & Stone, 2005), such asymmetry seems highly probable.

The power asymmetry created when a seeker solicits advice is also likely to widen the gap between the seeker's and the advisor's views by separating them cognitively. Powerful individuals tend to take a more abstract view of situations than those with less power (Smith & Trope, 2006). Accordingly, advisors are likely to view a given situation in a less concrete way than seekers, which may lead to them to miss critical contextual details. In addition, power results in reduced perspective taking and a diminished capacity for interpersonal deindividuation (Galinsky, Magee, Inesi, & Gruenfeld, 2006; Overbeck & Park, 2006). Thus, advisors are less likely to deeply consider seekers' unique characteristics, which may further distance an advisor's view from that of a seeker.

Beyond being imbued with a sense of power, a person who is asked for advice may also react to potentially having been selected over other potential advisors. As previously noted, being chosen to provide advice boosts advisors' egos (Brooks et al., 2015), (p. 53) which likely generates a reciprocal liking relationship with the seeker (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). The sense of having been selected, however, may also result in the formation of a suboptimal advice relationship. Because individuals feel compelled to help when specifically asked for advice (Flynn & Lake, 2008), feeling “chosen” may lead advisors to offer advice even when they do not feel qualified or confident in doing so. If such a dynamic generates unqualified advisors, it may result in worse outcomes for both parties: Seekers may receive poor advice, advisors may be exposed to reputational harm, and the relationship between the two parties may suffer (MacGeorge, Feng, & Thompson, 2008).

Psychological Consequences of Providing Unsolicited Advice

Not all advice is solicited. Whereas situations in which advice is requested require buy-in from both parties (one agrees to listen to advice, and one agrees to provide it), no such agreement precedes the provision of unsolicited advice. Accordingly, the provision of unsolicited advice is likely to produce an expectancy violation (Burgoon, 1993). While in some cases this violation may be positive, such as when an advisor correctly intuits a recipient’s needs, more often it is negative (Smith & Goodnow, 1999). As individuals are notoriously poor perspective takers (Epley et al., 2004), those providing unsolicited advice may be unable do so with an adequate understanding of the recipient’s situation and desires.

Beyond this initial disconnect, proffering unsolicited advice is widely viewed as antinormative. Within social contexts, unsolicited advice may be viewed as a direct insult to the competence of intended beneficiaries (Deelstra et al., 2003; Goldsmith, 2000; Grant & Gino, 2010), exposing individuals who provide it to negative social and personal consequences. Business contexts also have strong norms against the provision of unsolicited advice, especially when it is directed up the hierarchy (Edmondson, 1999; Morrison, 2011). Accordingly, recipients are likely to react negatively to unsolicited advice, leading advisors to experience self-threat (Rosen, Mickler, & Collins, 1987).

Offering unsolicited advice is also correlated with advisor confidence. As unsolicited advice is not always welcome and may carry negative consequences (Deelstra et al., 2003; Goldsmith, 2000), individuals who do offer it tend to be more confident in their views, which motivates them to overcome such potential costs. Recipients, however, are less likely to use unsolicited advice than solicited advice (Bonaccio & Dalal, 2006), and may even be motivated to take an opposing course of action (Fitzsimons & Lehmann, 2004). Such reactions lead to the ironic dynamic whereby the advice about which advisors are most confident is the advice least likely to be accepted (Dillon & Gilbert, 2015). When advisors are able to observe recipients’ reactions to their advice, such asymmetry may frustrate advisors, further reducing the alignment with their intended beneficiary (Berkowitz, 1989). (p. 54)

In sum, the mere act of serving in an advisor role can activate a set of psychological processes that affect the advisor experience. Providing advice is likely to strengthen one’s feelings of responsibility for the outcome of the situation. The context of an advice scenario also determines the specific processes that are activated. When individuals are asked for advice, they will tend to feel powerful and flattered. When individuals offer unsolicited advice, they are likely to be more confident and to have their expectations violated. In tracing these psychological correlates of giving advice and the likely consequences, it becomes clear that whereas some of these effects serve to promote the alignment between an advisor and seeker, such as felt responsibility, others, such as power, serve to reduce it. We summarize these effects in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Psychological Correlates of Advising and their Influence on Advisor/Seeker Alignment

Advice Context	Psychological Correlates and Consequences	Influence on Advisor/Seeker Alignment
Overall	Felt responsibility • *Proactive behavior* • *Helpful behavior* • *Reduced heuristic-based decision making* • *Aversion to ambiguity*	Promotes alignment
Solicited	Power • *Action orientation* • *Risk-taking orientation* • *Confidence* • *Optimism* • *Abstract thinking* • *Reduced perspective taking* Being Selected • *Ego boost* • *Feeling compelled to advise*	Reduces alignment
Unsolicited	Expectancy violation • *Self-threat* • *Psychological distance* Confidence • *Recipient reactance* • *Frustration when advice is not taken*	Reduces alignment

Alignment with advice seekers is important for advisors because it is likely to impact recipients' reactions to an advice-exchange interaction. Such reactions drive the advice use and decision consequences on which many advisors' satisfaction with the exchange depend. Alignment is likely to strengthen the advisor-seeker relationship (Gordon, 1988), which in turn has been shown to increase advice usage (Carlson, 2016; Feng & (p. 55) MacGeorge, 2006). Perceptions of similarity, which alignment is likely to enhance, also drive advice use (Yaniv, Choshen-Hillel, & Milyavsky, 2011). Advisors who truly understand a seeker's situation will also be able to provide more specific advice, which can improve the seeker's decision consequences (Bradshaw, Ley, Kincey, & Bradshaw, 1975). Accordingly, advisors should be cognizant of the psychological consequences that stem from being placed in an advisory role. Such effects can have a significant impact on outcomes advisors care about and thus on their experiences of giving advice.

Importantly, the relative strength of these effects is likely to vary across advice-giving scenarios. For example, a senior manager may ask a technical specialist for advice about implementing new software. In this instance, serving in an advisory role would likely lead the technical specialist to experience the consequences of power, but not necessarily of being selected, since his or her designation made this a foregone conclusion. However, in most situations, it is less clear which psychological correlates will apply. Thus, future work uncovering which of these effects will dominate under what circumstances could yield important new insights into the advisor experience.

Future Directions for Theory and Method

Despite the abundance of research on advice, significant opportunities remain to generate both theory and evidence regarding the unique aspects of the advisor role. First, future work should address advisors' knowledge of seekers' decisions and outcomes after receiving advice (or lack thereof). Advisors may either know or not know (1) the ultimate decision of the seeker and/or (2) whether the decision had a positive or negative result. This lack of transparency has important implications for the psychology of advising. For example, if advising leads advisors to feel responsible for seekers' decision consequences, advisors will have an interest in learning what those consequences are. Separately, advisors' sense of responsibility for a seeker is affected by the positivity of the seeker's outcomes, suggesting such knowledge can retrospectively affect an advisor-seeker relationship (Nordbye, 2007). In addition, although knowledge of seeker decisions will matter to many advisors for a variety of reasons (see Table 3.1), it is unclear what advisors will believe about seeker decisions in the absence of concrete knowledge. Advisors' assumptions about a recipient's decision consequences may depend on individual differences in optimism or overconfidence, on the contextual factors of the specific advice situation, or both. Such assumptions can have a material impact on an advisor's future relationship with a recipient. When an individual performs a favor for someone and the outcome is known, the helper's subsequent relational commitment to the recipient depends on the helper's assessment of the outcome's favorability (Flynn & Brockner, 2003). Likewise, the assumed favorability of a seeker's decision is likely to drive an advisor's commitment to the seeker. Assumptions about whether a recipient followed an (p. 56) advisor's recommendation are also likely to affect the advisor-recipient relationship, because individuals tend to react negatively when they perceive their help as being rejected (Blunden et al., 2017; Rosen et al., 1987). Further, within many advice contexts, advice use and outcomes are ambiguous. For example, seekers may follow a portion of the advice they are given, or recipient outcomes may fall in the middle of the expected favorability range. Additional research on the consequences of advice outcome observability (or lack thereof) is needed to fully understand the complexity of the advisor experience.

Second, further research should examine advisors' reactions to advisees' advice-seeking processes, of which they typically have little knowledge. For example, advisors are generally unaware of seekers' underlying motivations for requesting advice (Harvey et al., 1997). Knowledge of such motives could impact advisors' impressions of a seeker as well as their willingness to give advice, especially if such motives are instrumental (Gao & Mattila, 2014). Similarly, individuals may seek advice from multiple individuals (Sniezek & Buckley, 1995; Yaniv, 1997; Yaniv & Milyavsky, 2007), with or without each advisor's knowledge. Little is currently known about advisors' reactions to such seeker process decisions. For instance, whereas knowledge of multiple advisors may reduce a given advisor's felt responsibility, it also may result in competition and increased interest in the use of his or her advice (Bhattacharya & Mukherjee, 2013).

Future work could also deepen the collective understanding of the advisor perspective by investigating the provision of unsolicited advice. We have outlined some of the psychological correlates of this potentiality, but scant research has directly investigated the consequences of such an action from the advisor perspective. As work from the seeker perspective suggests unsolicited advice could generate a backlash (Deelstra et al., 2003; Goldsmith, 2000; Grant & Gino, 2010), understanding the motivations and consequences of such actions could uncover important gaps in advisors' self-knowledge. When advisors decide to provide advice without being asked, they make three choices: (1) what advice to provide, (2) whom to provide this advice to, and (3) when to offer it. Whereas a large body of research has investigated whom seekers choose to ask for advice and when they choose to do so, research to date has not explored advisors' parallel decisions regarding whom and when to advise.

Beyond addressing these unique features of the advisor role, future work should exploit a more diverse array of methodologies to investigate the psychology of advising. Most work focused on the advisor perspective has relied on the Judge Advisor System from psychology, in which investigators assign participants to judge and advisor roles and consider the extent to which the judge (i.e., the seeker) follows the advisor's advice (for a review, see Bonaccio & Dalal, 2006). However, other methods have shown promise in uncovering insights about the advisor perspective. First, survey-based work has made strides in illuminating advisors' goals and thought patterns. For example, Guntzviller and MacGeorge (2013) surveyed advice givers' goals prior to a real-life advice interaction, and then connected these goals with seekers' evaluations of the advice. Chentsova-Dutton and Vaughn (2012) discovered cultural nuances of advice-giving approaches by pairing retrospective accounts of advice giving with survey measures. Other informative methods have made use of existing data. For example, conversation (p. 57) analysis, in which the dialogue of an advice exchange is qualitatively analyzed for structure and content (Clayman & Gill, 2012; Limberg & Locher, 2012; MacGeorge, Feng, & Guntzviller, 2016), has been employed to uncover the ways in which advisors express their advice (Heritage, 2012; Heritage & Lindström, 2012; Riccioni, Bongelli & Zuczkowski, 2014; Waring, 2007) and manage resistance (Hepburn & Potter, 2011; Park, 2014). Researchers have also utilized sociometric sampling and network analysis to investigate advising relationships, yielding insights into who seeks and gives advice to whom (Agneessens & Wittek, 2012; Creswick & Westbrook, 2010; Keith, Demirkan, & Goul, 2010). Further, ethnographic research on advice has shed light on the relational norms that govern advice exchanges (Goldsmith & Fitch, 1997). In addition to these less traditional methodologies, field-based methods could also offer a valuable approach for considering the impact of relationships on the psychology of advising. Initial work in this vein has found that relationships can affect the type of advice that advisors provide, as well as how that advice is received (Hollenbeck et al., 1995; Hu, 2011; Kray & Gonzalez, 1999; Schwartz, Luce, & Ariely, 2011). As relationships develop and change across time, future methods geared to extend such work by evaluating the role of time could also provide valuable contributions to theory and practice.

Implications for Advisors

Reviewing what is known about the psychology of advising suggests several practical insights for advisors. First, advisors should be aware of, and attempt to resist, the psychological processes that result from taking on an advisor role that are likely to drive a wedge between their and seekers' mindsets. For example, being asked for advice enhances one's sense of power, which can result in abstract thinking, reduced perspective taking, and a greater propensity for risk taking (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006; Keltner et al., 2003; Schaerer et al., 2016). Advisors aware of the potential for such an unconstructive reaction could thwart it by putting effort into interpreting the situation from the seeker's viewpoint.

In addition, advisors can take steps to satisfy their individual motivations for providing advice. Advisors make the decision to provide advice for a variety of reasons (see Table 3.1), and the nature of their recommendations will hinge upon which reasons motivate them. Advisors who are able to reflect on and identify their motives will be able to leverage strategies most likely to achieve their outcome of interest, whether it be advice utilization, advice visibility, or the favorability of the recipient's ultimate fate.

Perhaps the clearest implications of past research for advisors pertain to those with motives related to advice use. Advisors motivated by a desire to enhance their psychological well-being, a desire to influence, and a desire to elevate their status will be most concerned about whether their advice is taken. As most prior advisor-focused research has centered on the advisor characteristics that guide seekers' advice-utilization (p. 58) decisions, much is known regarding the advisor attributes likely to increase the application of their advice (for a review, see Chapter 4). Advisor age, life experience, education, and accomplishment are all associated with recipient utilization (Feng & MacGeorge, 2006), as are expertise, trustworthiness, and accessibility (Goldsmith & Fitch, 1997; Harvey & Fischer, 1997; Hofmann, Lei, & Grant, 2009; Jungermann & Fischer, 2005). The way in which advice is communicated can also affect advice use. Recipients are more likely to take advice that is expressed with confidence (Price & Stone, 2004; Sniezek & Buckley, 1995; Sniezek & Van Swol, 2001; Van Swol, 2009, 2011; Yaniv, 1997); abstract language, which is associated with power and status (Reyt, Wiesenfeld, & Trope, 2016); and emotional support (Feng, 2009, 2014; Goldsmith, 1992, 1999, 2000).

Although advisors will not be able to change many of the traits that affect seekers' decisions about using their advice (e.g., their age), they will be able to influence seekers' perceptions of some characteristics. For example, advisors could elevate seekers' perceptions of their expertise by making their credentials and experience visible (Feng & MacGeorge, 2006; Harvey et al., 1997). Whether presented through a business card, an email signature, or an introduction, evidence of one's expertise will increase a seeker's propensity to follow one's advice. Advisors can also increase others' utilization of their advice through its communication. First, advisors can express their advice with confidence, which can be displayed both verbally and nonverbally (Dumitrescu, Gidengil, & Stolle, 2015; Kimble & Seidel, 1991). As seekers are more likely to take advice when advisors express it with a higher level of construal (Reyt, Wiesenfeld, & Trope, 2016), advisors may also increase the use of their advice by discussing their recommendations at a higher level of abstraction. In addition, advisors can increase the likelihood that their advice will be followed by communicating it to the recipient in a nonthreatening, emotionally supportive way. For example, advisors can validate seekers' concerns prior to offering advice or offer a positive outlook on the recipient's scenario (Feng, 2009, 2014; Goldsmith, 1999, 2000).

As advisors motivated by altruism and status will primarily be concerned with seekers' decision consequences, such advisors should adopt strategies to improve the quality of their advice. One such strategy is for advisors to reframe advice giving as a learning opportunity for themselves. Viewing the activity as beneficial to the self can improve advisors' intrinsic motivation to provide advice, resulting in greater effort and advice quality (Gino & Grant, 2015). In addition, a significant body of research from the seeker perspective has yielded a variety of methods for improving advice accuracy, such as considering multiple perspectives and relying on those with expertise (Bonaccio & Dalal, 2006). Advisors concerned with recommendation effectiveness can follow these same strategies, and could even consider reaching out to their own advisors to improve the quality of the advice they offer.

When advisors are motivated by social and status concerns, actions that enhance the visibility or memorability of their advice will help them to achieve their aim. Such advisors could enhance the visibility of their advice giving by, for example, conducting advice-related meetings in view of others. Advisors could also seek to strengthen the memorability of their advice by providing seekers with a record of it, such as an email, (p. 59) or by following up with seekers, which would remind recipients of the exchange. In addition, individuals could heighten both of these dimensions by creating a public record of their recommendations, such as an advice blog.

As advisors have multiple motives for providing advice, we have provided numerous recommendations for them to satisfy their goals. We expect that each individual's mix of these motivations, and the unique context of each advice situation, will further guide the approach that advisors take to attaining what they desire.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have sought to develop a more comprehensive perspective of the psychology of advising by integrating work on advice interactions, potential motivations for advising, and the psychological and behavioral consequences of serving in an advisor role. As scant research has directly investigated the advisor side of the advice-exchange process, we have taken a broad approach in uniting this work, which spans various methodologies, theoretical foundations, and points of view. We hope this consideration will spur future work that illuminates the advisor half of the advice-exchange process and sheds additional light on optimal strategies for advisors and seekers alike.

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Hayley Blunden

Hayley Blunden (MBA, Columbia Business School) is a doctoral student in Organizational Behavior at Harvard Business School. Her research focuses on workplace communication challenges, such as advice, feedback, and virtual interactions.

Francesca Gino

Francesca Gino (PhD, Economics and Management, Sant'anna School of Advanced Studies) is the Tandon Family Professor of Business Administration in the Negotiation, Organizations, & Markets Unit at Harvard Business School.