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Walk & Talk: Advice

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Hi friends. This is Courtney and I am out walking for our first official Walk and Talk. I haven't decided if I am going to share Walk and Talks from my actual walk or as soon as I get home. I've got these ideas built up thinking about some of your questions, and what you might be experiencing, not only as you navigate the simplicity space, but as you're simplifying your life. And maybe we'll try a couple of each and you can let me know what's more enjoyable. I know with this one, you have to listen to me do some heavy breathing from time to time, which I'm sure is not that enjoyable. So keep me posted.

For today's episode, I want to talk about how we give advice and support each other, and how we ask for advice and support within the group, within our families, within our friend groups, at work, wherever. Because if we're in this to change the way we change, then we have to take a close look at all of these little parts of what helps us to change. So I'm always one to want to run in and fix things and tell people exactly what they should do. I often think I want that kind of advice as well, but in reality, it's not helpful. It's not helpful for any of us to get advice based on someone else's experience.

First, by the way, we are looking at advice. So sometimes when I get advice, I think, "No, that's crazy. I would never do that." Or, "No, you're crazy. I would never do that." I know that's very judgmental, but that is often the first thing that will pop in my mind. And so instead I have to stop myself from enjoying that initial reaction, and go a little deeper, and see how the advice sits with me.

And also see what I did to prompt the advice. Did I ask for it? Was I complaining about something? Was I struggling with something? Is it just because someone benefited from something and they were excited to share it? I understand that feeling. That's why I have a blog. When I'm excited to share something that I've learned, I put it there instead of calling all my friends and family, and then they can choose to accept it or not, and my feelings aren't hurt if they don't accept it.

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Because as @GlowMaven on Instagram says, "What would it feel like to let go of wanting things for other people?" In other words, you can't want something more than someone else wants it for themselves, nor can you expect an outcome even when they ask you for advice and you give it. I know a lot of us have been in that situation, probably all of us, where someone straight out asks you for advice. You give it to them and they don't do anything with it, and now you're mad, or let down, or frustrated.

But instead, if there was a way for you to put that out there, and just release it, and know that you have already done your part and the rest isn't up to you aside from some support, if that's requested, then you can leave it there. It's pretty freeing if you think about it and will probably save you a lot of frustration moving forward.

Circling back to the original idea here about how to ask for advice and how to give advice, when you're asking, be clear, be clear about what you want. Say things like, "I'm dealing with this thing and I really just need to vent right now." Or sometimes you have to be even clearer and say, "I know you're going to want to try to fix this, but all I want you to do is listen. It would help me so much. Would you be open to that or would you be okay with that?" And then you're having that conversation and you're asking for that person to agree that they're not going to rush in with everything they read on the internet to fix all of your problems, right?

Or even everything that works best for them might not be a good fit for you. And in the moment you're in right there, you don't need that. You're not open to it. You're going to be resentful of it. So be clear before you decide to share, unload, vent, whatever you want to call it, say, "I really want to be clear about this. I'm so grateful for your help, but the only help I need right now is for somebody to listen. I just need to vent. That's not do any problem solving today." And as it turns out, just speaking your truth and then sleeping on it, you might wake up the next day and everything is resolved for you. Or you've got some ideas of your own to resolve things and you don't need the extra input.

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When you are giving advice and sharing what you think might work well for someone, make sure they clearly asked for that, make sure they want to brainstorm solutions. And because they might not be thinking about this whole change, how you change thing, they might not have said, "I just need to vent." So be proactive and say, "Before I give you any feedback, is that what you want right now? Or do you just want a hug. Or do you just want me to listen? Or do you just want me to cry with you or laugh with you? How can I best help you right now?"

We have to give each other permission to trust ourselves, to know what's best for us. And sometimes that's hard, especially when you're with someone who is very wise, and smart, and has all the answers, and always rushes in to fix things, we stop hearing our voices. So we have to work on this from both sides and we can do it in a compassionate way, in a non-confrontational way, so that everyone walks away really getting what they need in that moment.

And that might change within a minute, an hour, a day, a month. And they might turn around and say, "You know what? I really need your help on this. Can you give me some very specific advice about how to do A, B, C?" So it's easy to visualize that and I think in our personal lives, but when we get into the community, and we're doing these quick exchanges back and forth, even though there's some genuine connection happening, we have to be mindful of that too.

And we can just stop and say, "What kind of advice are you looking for? Do you want some tips? Do you want a step by step? I need to be better at this because I really want to help in any way that I can, but sometimes I forget that my way isn't what you need at that moment. And so just acknowledging, just seeing and hearing you out is exactly what you need instead of going on and on with 10 bullet points of how you can fix things."

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So I'm not going to be perfect at that. Neither are you. But let's be thoughtful about it. If somebody gives you the feedback, "Thanks for the advice. But all I'm looking for right now is someone to say, 'Oh my gosh, I totally understand.'" Take that in, not as criticism, but just as someone speaking their truth, saying what they need, and then honor that. Because this whole process, while we are definitely in it to simplify our lives, the core of what we're doing is coming back to ourselves, learning how to express what we want and need in our lives. And learning how to trust ourselves again. We can do it. We can do it as long as we're supporting each other in a kind way and in a clear way.

All right, that's it for the first episode of Walk and Talk. Let's see how it sounds and you guys give me feedback. Then next time maybe we'll try something immediately after a walk. I'll be taking topic suggestions too. Love you.