

What to Do When the Usual Advice Isn't Working

Have you ever noticed how often advice gets repeated online? No matter what problem someone is dealing with, you'll usually come across the same suggestions fairly quickly, including things like getting more sleep, exercising more, drinking more water, thinking positively, taking a break, reducing stress, and practising mindfulness.

The thing is that none of those suggestions are necessarily bad because a lot of them can genuinely help, and that's probably why they get repeated so often in the first place. The problem comes when you've already tried some of those things and you're still struggling because, after a while, it can start to feel as though you're missing something everyone else seems to understand.

In reality, that's often not what's happening at all. People are different, problems are different, and what works brilliantly for one person doesn't always work for somebody else. With that in mind, keep reading to find out what to do when the usual advice isn't working.

Stop Assuming You've Failed

One of the first things people do when advice doesn't work is assume they've somehow done it wrong. Perhaps they tried meditation and couldn't switch their thoughts off, or maybe they started exercising but didn't notice the big improvement everyone seemed to promise, or perhaps they followed all the recommendations they could find and still didn't feel particularly different afterwards.

It's easy to look at those experiences and conclude that you've failed, but when you think about it, that's a strange way of looking at the situation. After all, if one option doesn't help, that doesn't automatically mean you've done anything wrong; it might simply mean that particular option wasn't the right fit for your situation, personality, or circumstances.

Question Generic Advice

The internet is full of advice designed to apply to as many people as possible, and that's understandable because broad advice reaches broad audiences. Of course, the downside is that broad advice can sometimes become so general that it loses some, or all, of its usefulness.

For example, being told to reduce stress sounds sensible enough, but how exactly are you supposed to do that if the thing causing stress is something you can't immediately change? Being told to think positively can sound helpful in theory, but it's not always particularly practical when you're dealing with something difficult.

That's why it's worth asking whether the advice you're reading is actually specific enough to help with your particular situation. Sometimes the issue isn't that advice doesn't work; it's that the advice is too general to be useful.

Look Beyond the Obvious Solutions

When people are struggling with something, they tend to focus on the most commonly discussed solutions first because those are the options they're most likely to come across. The problem is that there are often many more possibilities available than people realise.

For example, someone dealing with stress might benefit from talking therapies, coaching, lifestyle changes, support groups, relaxation techniques, or other options they hadn't previously considered, and the same is true for confidence issues, fears, habits, anxiety, and many other challenges. Keeping an open mind can be

helpful because sometimes the thing that makes a difference isn't the first solution you try; it could be the fourth or fifth.

Pay Attention to Patterns

One thing that often gets overlooked is the importance of understanding what's actually happening. People can become so focused on finding a solution that they skip over understanding the problem itself. For example, are there certain situations that make things worse? Are there particular triggers involved? Does the problem appear at specific times, around specific people, or under specific circumstances?

The more you understand about the pattern, the easier it becomes to identify options that might genuinely help. Otherwise, you're often just relying on guesswork.

Consider Getting Professional Support

There comes a point where searching for advice online can only take you so far. That isn't necessarily because online information is useless, but because general advice can never completely account for your individual circumstances.

Sometimes it helps to speak with a suitably qualified professional who works with people facing similar challenges because they might spot things you've overlooked or suggest options you hadn't considered. If more familiar strategies haven't helped, professional support can also give you the chance to discuss what you've already tried and what might be worth considering next.

In the end, the important thing isn't necessarily which type of support you choose. It's recognising that asking for help is an option if you feel stuck.

Give New Approaches Time

At the same time, it's worth remembering that not every solution produces instant results. That can be tricky because we live in a world where people often expect quick answers, quick fixes, and immediate improvements, but a lot of meaningful change takes longer than that.

The trouble is that people sometimes abandon something before they've given it a fair chance because they don't see big results straight away. That doesn't mean you should continue with something indefinitely if it clearly isn't helping, but it can mean allowing enough time to properly work out whether it's making any difference.

Keep Looking for What Works for You

Perhaps the most important thing to remember is that you don't need to force yourself into somebody else's solution because what helps one person feel calmer, happier, more confident, or more motivated might do very little for someone else, and that's perfectly normal. The goal isn't to find the advice that works for everyone because that advice probably doesn't exist; the goal is to find what works for you.

That might involve a bit of trial and error, and it might take longer than you'd like, but that doesn't mean you're doing anything wrong. It just means you're still learning what works best for your particular situation, and sometimes that's a process rather than a single breakthrough moment.