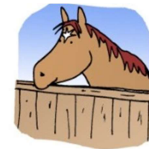


C13. A Word of advice

If I were you...



As she was driving down a remote country lane, Alice noticed that her car was behaving strangely. The engine made a terrible rattling noise and smoke was starting to come out from under the bonnet. Alice stopped the car to see if she could work out what the problem was. As she was lifting up the car bonnet, a deep voice from behind her said,

'If I were you, I'd change the spark plugs.'

Alice looked around her, but couldn't see anyone in sight. There was a large brown horse with a white star on its forehead. It was looking over the fence at her.

'I'm imagining it,' she thought to herself and took another look at the engine. But once again, as soon as she turned her back on the horse, the deep voice said,

'It's the spark plugs, I'm telling you.'

Again, she turned to find no one in sight apart from the brown horse. By this stage, Alice was feeling quite unnerved, so she got into the car again. She drove the car slowly to the next village where eventually she found a mechanic. Feeling slightly foolish, she explained about the problem with the car and told the mechanic what the horse had said about the spark plugs.

'And you say there was nobody around except a horse, when you heard this?' asked the mechanic.

'Not a soul!' replied Alice, 'Just a big horse.'

'Was it a brown horse with a white star in the middle of its forehead?'

'Yes, that's right. It was.'

'Oh, I **wouldn't take** any notice of him, **if I were you**. That's old Brownie. He doesn't know anything about engines. He always says it's the spark plugs.'

Grammar: *If I were you...*

To give advice you can use the second conditional form: ***If I were you...* + verb clause with *would***.

*You look tired. **If I were you, I'd go to bed early.***

*Our neighbours are trying to put in a new bathroom. **If I were them, I'd get professional help.***

*I can't think which course to choose. **If you were me, what would you do?***

Note that it is not usual to say *If I was you...* for this usage. It's a semi-fixed expression which uses the subjunctive form of *to be* (*were*) for all persons.

Match the problems with the advice.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. I'm looking a bit scruffy at the moment. | A. If I were him, I'd get a new car. |
| 2. The Harrison's son is still living at home, even though he's over thirty. | B. If I were you, I wouldn't take any notice of him. |
| 3. Jack's had engine problems almost every week this year. | C. If I were them, I'd cancel it. |
| 4. I'm very upset about the things my boss said to me. | D. If I were you, I'd get a haircut. |

5. Leo and Kay are having a barbeque this weekend, even though it's going to rain. **E.** If I were them, I'd tell him to move out.

Choose a phrase to complete these sentences.

6. You need to improve your vocabulary. If I were you, **A.** I'd spend some time sorting them out.
7. Your computer is too slow. If I were you, **B.** I'd give it a bath.
8. Your dog smells terrible. If I were you, **C.** I'd apply for a different one.
9. You can never find anything in your files. If I were you, **D.** I'd buy a new one.
10. You've got great qualifications and you hate your job. If I were you, **E.** I'd try to read more in English.

Vocabulary exercises

Choose a word to make the opposite of these expressions.

unnerved

foolish

deep

remote

1. She has a very **high-pitched** voice. She has a very _____ voice.
2. The man had a **wise** expression on his face. The man had a _____ expression on his face.
3. The house is in a **central** location. The house is in a _____ location.
4. I was feeling **calm**. I was feeling _____.

Match the words to the definitions.

5. spark plug **A.** part of the face above the eyes
6. bonnet **B.** a barrier usually made of posts and wire or wood
7. fence **C.** a rapid knocking sound
8. forehead **D.** a device in a car for firing the explosive gas in an engine
9. rattle **E.** the metal cover for the engine at the front of the car

Choose the correct preposition to complete these sentences.

- 10.** I went to the reception desk but there wasn't not a soul **around / along / among**.
- 11.** There's nothing in my bag apart **for / from / by** books.
- 12.** Don't worry about what Kevin says. Don't take any notice **to / at / of** him!
- 13.** I waited for an hour and **of / by / to** this stage I was starting to get impatient.
- 14.** The photocopier's broken down and I can't work **out / up / over** what the problem is.
- 15.** We looked for someone to ask for help but there was nobody **for / in / by** sight.