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Part 1. Which of these have you heard, or said yourself? Which one sets alarm bells ringing first, and why?

<i>"I've done my own research."</i>	<i>"My cousin's a nurse, and she says..."</i>
<i>"I watched a documentary about it, so I know a bit."</i>	<i>"Here's the one trick doctors don't want you to know."</i>
<i>"I'm no expert, but trust me..."</i>	<i>"Everyone knows that..."</i>

Part 2. Which of these sound like you? Choose two and own up to the story behind them.

- I've shared something online without reading past the headline.
- I've given confident advice on something I only half understood.
- I've nodded along in a conversation with no idea what anyone meant.
- I've changed my diet or exercise routine because of one video.
- I've quoted a statistic I couldn't actually back up.
- I've looked up my symptoms online and convinced myself of the worst.

Part 3. Imagine you've been sleeping badly for a month. Rank these sources of advice from 1 (trust most) to 8 (trust least).

Your doctor		A friend who's really into health and fitness	
A doctor with a million followers online		A search engine	
An AI chatbot		An online forum of people with the same problem	
A news headline about a new study		Your mum or dad	

Part 4. Read the two views. Which is closer to your own? What would it take to change your mind?

Viewpoint A <i>Gatekeeping has had its day. Ordinary people sharing what worked for them have helped millions, and experts have got things badly wrong before. Questioning authority isn't ignorance; it's healthy.</i>	Viewpoint B <i>Questioning experts is fine, but most of us aren't equipped to judge the evidence. When anyone with a ring light can sound authoritative, real expertise gets drowned out, and people make decisions they live to regret.</i>
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Part 5. Armchair experts rarely hedge. Say each claim the way a careful, honest expert would. Then say what you actually think.

<i>"Running ruins your knees."</i>	<i>"Everyone needs eight glasses of water a day."</i>
<i>"Working from home makes people lazy."</i>	<i>"AI will replace most office jobs within ten years."</i>
<i>"Cold showers are the answer to everything."</i>	<i>"Breakfast is the most important meal of the day."</i>

Part 6. Discuss the questions.

- What topic do you secretly think you're a bit of an expert on? Would the people who know you agree?
- How can you tell when someone really knows their stuff, and when they're just good at sounding confident?
- Why do bold, confident voices so often drown out careful ones?
- Has anyone ever given you advice that was well-meant but completely wrong?
- Do you tend to fact-check what you hear, or do you go with your gut?

Part 7. Before you ask, predict how the other person will answer. Then ask, and see how well you read them.

- What's the last thing they looked up because of something they saw online?
- Would they rather take advice from a confident friend or a cautious expert?
- Have they ever fallen for something online that turned out to be fake?
- Which topic would they call themselves an armchair expert on?
- Do they think AI chatbots are more or less reliable than human experts?

Part 8. What would you do? Choose an option or come up with a better one. Be honest about what you'd actually do.

At a family dinner, your uncle confidently repeats a health myth you know is nonsense. Everyone else is nodding along.

1. *Let it go. You have to pick your battles.*
2. *Ask him, casually, where he heard it.*
3. *Set the record straight there and then.*
4. *Say nothing now and send him an article later.*

A colleague has discovered a fitness influencer and keeps telling everyone to cut out a whole food group.

1. *Smile politely and steer the conversation elsewhere.*
2. *Ask, with genuine curiosity, what the evidence is.*
3. *Share your own experience and leave it at that.*
4. *Say nothing. It's their body and their business.*

A friend is about to put their savings into an investment a stranger recommended online. It sounds too good to be true.

1. *Tell them straight: it has all the hallmarks of a scam.*
2. *Ask questions and let them reach their own conclusion.*
3. *Send them some reliable information and leave it there.*
4. *Stay out of it. It's their money.*

Part 9. Tell the story of a time you took advice you shouldn't have, or ignored advice you really should have taken.

Think about:

- Who gave you the advice, and why you believed them, or didn't
- What happened next
- When you realised
- What you'd do differently now

Part 10. Do you agree, disagree or partly agree? Explain why.

- Everyone's entitled to an opinion, but not every opinion deserves equal airtime.
- Experts get things wrong too, so we shouldn't automatically defer to them.
- "Do your own research" usually means "find videos that agree with you".
- Social media has made people more curious, not less informed.
- If you can't explain something simply, you don't understand it well enough.
- A little knowledge is a dangerous thing.

Reflection

Complete the sentences in your own words.

1. A topic I talk about with more confidence than I probably should is...
2. Someone whose advice I always trust is..., because...
3. The next time I see a bold claim online, I'll...