Thomas Gordon's Twelve Roadblocks to Listening

The first 5 categories can take away the client’s autonomy:

1. Ordering, directing or commanding:
   "Stop complaining and do something about it!"
   "You HAVE to do this. It was ordered by the court!"

2. Warning or threatening:
   "You’d better get your act together if you’re gonna make it on probation”
   "Another hot UA and you’re going back to jail!"

3. Moralizing, preaching, giving “shoulds” and “oughts”.
   "You should learn how to plan ahead"
   "I can’t believe you think that’s okay!"

4. Advising, offering solutions or suggestions.
   "It’s pretty clear that you need to...."
   "What I would do it...."

5. Teaching, lecturing, giving logical arguments.
   "You’d better remember, you only have 2 weeks to get that community service done."  
   "You are not going to stay sober without going to AA!"

The next responses point out inadequacies and faults:

   "You're in still in bed at 11:00 in the morning!??"
   "You just can’t keep a job.” "You're wrong."

7. Name calling, stereotyping, labeling.
   "That’s typical for addicts.”
   "Why don’t you act your age!"

8. Interpreting, Analyzing, Diagnosing.
   "You are avoiding this!” “It’s not about being a felon, it’s because you’re not responsible” "Do you know what your real problem is...?"
These messages try to make the person feel better or deny there’s a problem:

9. Praising, agreeing, giving positive evaluations.

"That’s exactly what I would do!"
“You’re a good guy.”

10. Reassuring, sympathizing, consoling.

“You’ll figure this out – no problem!” “Don’t worry.
Things are gonna turn out just fine”

This response tries to solve the problem for the person.

11. Questioning, interrogating, cross-examining.

"Why are you gonna do it that way?” “Do you
still hang out with the same people?”

This response tends to divert the person or avoid the subject all together.

12. Withdrawing, distracting, humoring, changing the subject.

"Seems like you got up on the wrong side of the bed today."
"I see the Vikings won last night. Are you a fan?"

A Closer Look at # 4: “Giving Advice”

Advising, offering solutions and suggestions.

"What I would do is..."
"Why don't you ...
"Have you tried..."

What makes giving advice a roadblock?

Under what circumstance is it okay to give advice when using MI?

In which stage(s) of change would you give advice with permission?