Recommending

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In this talk I argue that recommending is a distinctive sort of speech act. Speech acts are often individuated via the norms that govern them, so in the first section I sketch an account of recommending on which it is governed by the norm 'One must: recommend that S ϕ's only if one has some reason to believe that ϕ-ing would be in S's best interests'. But, as I show in the second section, this account doesn't fit with the way in which we assess recommendations. If I recommend that you don't take an umbrella because I have some reason to believe that it won't rain, but it turns out that it does rain, you will find fault with my recommendation. In the third section I propose an alternative account on which recommending is governed by the norm 'One must: recommend that S ϕ's only if one knows that ϕ-ing would be in S's best interests'. I defend this account from the objection that this norm is too stringent by invoking the distinction between violating a norm and blamelessly violating a norm. Finally, I show that my account of recommending provides a way of understanding disagreement about deontic modals that is neutral between invariantist, contextualist and relativist views about the semantics of deontic modality.