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Have you ever had a conversation with someone who always talks about themselves? Or avoided someone in the hallway at work so you don't have to hear their life story, over and over again? Or listen to someone whose vocabulary is inundated with the words “I, I've, I'd, me, or my”? It's pretty painful, isn't it? Well, don't be like that person.

One time when I had to spend a day with a self-centered associate, I thought I could counter-balance the situation by inviting another self-centered person to join us for the day. Boy was I wrong. Those two were climbing over each other's backs to impress me with chit-chat about themselves. They couldn't care less about each other so I was the focal point for both of them. I was inundated all day long with a double dose of “I...I...I...I” and couldn't wait for

The 30-second rule: Try it!

the day to end.

If you've ever been told you are one who likes to talk about themselves too much, take that as a hint that you are annoying. Or, if no one says anything to you, perhaps they're avoiding or ignoring you, and that could very well be your hint. But the good news is this: you can actually do something about it to help yourself. Here's what you can do:

Instead of being self-centered during personal interactions with others, show interest in the other person. Within 30 seconds, find a way to focus on them instead of yourself. A great way to do this is to try and make the other person look good. John Maxwell called this practice “The 30-Second Rule.”

This can be challenging, especially during unplanned or unexpected encounters with people you know. But you can become effective with this

approach by thinking about personal meetings in advance or by looking for, listening for, or remembering something good about the person you're talking to. You could thank them for something they've done for you or for someone else. You could talk to them about one of their recent accomplishments. You could praise them for a personal quality they exhibit. Or you could simply compliment their appearance. It isn't complicated but it does take some time, effort, and discipline on your part. Try it!

The reward for practicing it is huge because it really makes a positive impact on people. When making a positive impact on others, you become more interesting to them. And when you become more interesting to them, they don't try to duck away from you in hallways.

~ The End ~