



Dear Chief

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COLUMNIST

DEAR CHIEF: I have so much to offer people but have been told by others that people avoid me because I talk too much about myself. I don’t understand this because I really don’t brag. I simply use myself as a good example of someone who’s successful and effective. Why can’t people see the value of my real-world experience?

I...I’VE...I’D...ME...MY...I



DEAR I...I’VE...I’D...ME...MY...I: Most people aren’t interested in someone who always talks about themselves or constantly references themselves in every conversation they have. If you’re doing this, then it may very well be the reason why others are put off by you. It’s okay to do it a little bit but when overdone, it’s a sign of being self-centered and most people don’t really like being around self-centered people.

One time when I had to spend a day with a self-centered associate, I thought I could counter-balance the situation by

The 30-second rule: Try it!

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...” and couldn’t wait for the day to end.

When most people interact with others, it is natural for them to search for ways to make themselves look good. Instead of such an egotistical approach, try reversing this practice. Within 30 seconds, find a way to focus on the other person. In fact, the best 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 you in hallways.

Once people enjoy interacting with you, they’ll be much more receptive to any potential value you can bring to them by way of your real-world experience.



For an opportunity to have your question, issue or concern addressed in the Dear Chief column, go to www.DearChiefAdvice.com and submit your comments or email them to Jeff@DearChiefAdvice.com.