



The Interrupter

Interrupting someone is a bad habit we can all fall into, often, without realizing it. Yes, it's rude, frustrating and can lead to areas of unproductive behaviors and relationships. Do you know someone that constantly interrupts while you are talking? I don't know about you, but I've found myself doing this at home and at work more frequently. My daughter was talking to me about her planned day for tomorrow and I kept asking her questions about what she was going to do. Her response to me, in a monotone voice was, "Daddy can you please let me finish?" That was my moment of realization. I realized I had been

interrupting her as she did to me in the past. This unconscious habit was not helpful to anyone and others were picking up my habit, even my 6 year old daughter.

I won't dive into all the various types of interruptions (Ex: The person agreeing to what is being said, the extrovert with a passion about the subject, the "I thought you were finished talking" person, and the list could go on) and how to handle them. Instead, this is a general tip for anyone that needs to become more self-aware in conversations.

Here are some things I've found that helped me:

Intro your part of the conversation

- Make it known that you have lots of information to deliver and will let them know when you have finished so you are not interrupted.

Be confident when speaking

- Sounding confident can deter someone from interrupting. As an introvert, it's tempting to limit my words in social situations and meetings; however, speaking up in a confident manner serves multiple purposes. Furthermore, it's important that all voices be heard.

Don't take it personally when being interrupted

- We all have passions when it comes to certain things. Interrupting can be a person's way of showing their importance of information to bring to the conversation. *Note: They also may not listen to anything you are saying if they have something set in their mind they want to say when passions are high.*

Return to the subject you were discussing when you were interrupted

- If the subject has already changed, return to the conversation with your ideas, questions or important information. Therefore, return to the subject if you still have information to relay.

Don't show your frustration when interrupted

- Your body language or tone of voice can show everyone you are not in control.

Apologize for interrupting

- Apologizing is a sign of strength and indicates that you are aware and learning from your mistakes.

If someone interrupts, make it known and ask to speak to them privately

- For the constant interrupter, you may need to politely make it known of their interruption(s) and/or ask to speak with them privately after a meeting. Saying something in a professional tone like, "I appreciate your input and questions but please let me finish and we can discuss after all information has been given." This will let them know their input is important and it makes them aware of their

interruption. Who knows, they may have a lot to say in a short meeting or there may be an underlying issue that you are not aware.

The above notes have been helpful for me and I encourage you to try this as well. In order to communicate effectively, simply being aware of your interruptions can bring you to a higher level of communication with others. Remember, conversations are fluid in nature so please be respectful to one another.

-Drew