

# Q&A

CORPORATE COACH ACADEMY

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## DEALING WITH AN EGOISTIC PERSON

**Q** I experience great discomfort whenever a particular subordinate is present at our meetings. He is loud, abrasive and behaves like he is more superior to us. Most of the time, we give in to his ways because we want to avoid confrontation during these meetings and to give him more space to speak as he is intelligent and hard-working. However, he has gone overboard and is taxing our patience too much. Why do you think he behaves this way? How can we deal with him?

**A** From your description, it appears that this person is an egoist who probably overvalues his own capabilities and thinks everyone agrees and even admires him for what he is saying and doing. It is also likely that he lives in his own fantasy world, interpreting the events around his life strictly according to what he wants to believe. Such people, though smart, can be low in their self-awareness. If you have not had any heart-to-heart sessions with him on his behaviour, he is likely to get bolder and will soon be completely out of control. It will not be easy to talk to him but as a leader, this is one challenge you need to face up to.

Nothing works better than having a personal talk to tell him what others feel about him while finding out the real reasons he is behaving this way. Although he may not admit it, there is something about his sense of insecurity you need to dig deeper into. Get him to rationalise objectively that he can gain much more with people without having to show off too much. Be tactful

and understanding when dealing with an egoistic person as he may be defensive. Slowly, you will be able to work better with him when he knows you are concerned for his well-being.

## POWERFUL QUESTIONS

- What will make him want to listen to you?
- In what ways you can be more tactful?
- What do you want to bear in mind when speaking with him?

- How can you remember to do this all the time?

## SHARPENING YOUR POLITICAL SAW

**Q** After joining this company as a senior accounts manager for two years, I have concluded that this place is not for me. The last straw was having my boss comment on my social style! They want me to tone down my laughter and not behave flamboyantly. Not only do I feel I am

being treated like a kid, but such feedback never came from my bosses of previous companies, which in actual fact garnered me praises (and not brickbats). To me, they are picky and unreasonable. What do you make out of my situation?

**A** There is no such thing as "one size fits all" in life. Ask yourself, would you behave differently when dining at a five-star hotel as opposed to eating at a stall along the streets? Adapting to changing situations is a hallmark of successful people. This is called "political acumen", not just "interpersonal skills". You, therefore, need to dig deeper to know the underlying reasons they want you to change instead of dismissing such criticism.

Let us analyse your social skills. At a micro level, it is certainly true such skills are good for building relationships with anyone. However, at a macro level, relationship building needs to be looked at in a larger context as it is not just with someone alone, but with a large group of people who are glued together by a certain culture or set of norms. This is what is called "corporate culture" - how things are done in an organisation. Every company has one, and it is different from one to the other. So you need to conform to norms that guide the behaviours of the majority. In the same vein, get to know more about the corporate values of your organisation too as it will tell you how you and everyone should behave. Your bosses are telling you probably because they want your help to promote compliance and harmony in the workplace. I am sure this is what you want too.

## POWERFUL QUESTIONS

- What kind of company is yours?
- What values define it?
- What behaviours will fit in well with this set of values?
- What will you need to change for a better fit?

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