

**HOW TO INTERUPT AN INTERUPTER**

In Partial Fulfillment of

Human Relations

Sat (8:00 A.M. - 11:00 A.M.)

Submitted to:

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by

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1. **General Objective:**

Discuss how to interrupt an interrupter.

1. **Specific Objectives:**
2. Discuss how to prevent it . . .
3. Discuss how to handle interrupters.
4. **Discussion:**

What does this case of communication-interruptus have to do with you?

Chances are someone has rudely interrupted you in the last 24 hours, if not the last 24 minutes.  Interrupting is escalating. Cutting people off and talking over them has become the new norm in our demanding, impatient, instant gratification world.  The Academy Award scene is playing out everywhere – in boardrooms, meeting rooms, lunchrooms, phone calls, even on Capitol Hill. Everybody wants to get a word in edgewise.

Isn’t it frustrating to be plowed over by someone who thinks the only voice worth listening to is his own?  Beyond simple rudeness on the part of some communicators, I’d like to offer a few possibilities on why more people are cutting you off, how to prevent it, and how to handle those relentless, habitual interrupters.

**Why it’s happening**

Face it, some people are rude.  But these old school interrupters are now joined by anew breedof interrupters: The Chronically Impatient.  Buoyed by instant technology and addicted to speed, these pragmatic people are having a tough time tolerating long winded ramblers. The Chronically Impatient value time, clarity, and action and they want you to get to the point, pronto. If you dilly dally, they’ll either nudge you with a brief interjectory question or they’ll outright overpower you and butt in as if your words don’t matter.

# 4 Steps To Recovery for A

# “Chronic Interrupter”

The fall out from being a “chronic interrupter” can really cost you. In a personal setting, your family and friends may get so frustrated with you and your lack of listening skills, they may get angry or even just stop talking with you. In a professional setting, this habit of interrupting can cost you that promotion, that great yearly job review and even your job. So what is a “chronic interrupter” to do?

**STEP ONE: OBSERVE YOURSELF**:

1. First, observe that interrupting people is a habit that you have.
2. Next get a notebook to record your observations. You are beginning what I call the “Chronic Interrupter Field Research Project.” Here in this notebook,  you are going to keep a running list of who you interrupted, what they were talking  
   about and what you felt inside yourself as they droned on and on.
3. Now, pick a day and for that entire 24 hours, count how many times you actually interrupt the person in front of you, whether they are friends, co workers or family members. Feel free to interrupt your family and co workers as many times as possible. This is research after all!
4. At the end of this 24 hours, tally up the number of times you interrupted someone. You may be shocked to find out at the end of a day just how many people you actually did interrupt in one days time.
5. Now that you have your observation mode in full swing, take the next 24 hours and observe what is happening inside you and your head at the moment when you suddenly feel the urge to interrupt that person in front of you.
6. Things like, “This guy’s an absolute idiot!” and “What is she thinking? I need to set her straight right now!” or “Oh my gosh, I have a GREAT IDEA to add right HERE THIS SECOND before I forget it!” are perfectly normal and familiar responses for chronic interrupters.
7. Don’t forget to write everything that comes up for you down in your “Chronic Interrupter Field Research Program” notebook!

**STEP TWO: ASK YOURSELF…**

Next, find out what is going on inside of you while you observe the urge within yourself to interrupt them, stop, take breath, and open up an observatory opportunity to ask yourself questions inside your head while they are talking like:

1. Am I bored with what they are saying and want to spice up the conversation a bit?
2. Am I just SO much smarter than they are that I just need to set them straight on the facts or another perspective on the subject?
3. Am I feeling anxious that they know more than I do and want to get my own two cents in so they won’t think I’m stupid?
4. Do I think they’re stupid and need to be straightened out a little?
5. Do I just want to have the satisfaction of having the last word?
6. Anything else?

**STEP THREE: OBSERVE THEM**

Now go ahead and interrupt them. While they are talking, observe very closely what happens to them when you interrupt and shut them down. Pay close attention to the following aspects of their body language at the moment you interrupt and as you take over the “conversation:”

1. Notice the area around their eyes. Do they suddenly draw their eyebrows closer together into a frown? Do they suddenly blink fast a couple of times? Did they roll their eyes?
2. Notice their hands. Do their hands close down into a fist or do their hands suddenly look a bit more stiff, like they are heading into  a fist?
3. Notice their mouth: Does it get a little more pinched looking as you start talking over them?
4. Notice their head: Do you observe a slight shake or tilt of their head to the side as you derail their thinking and insist that they switch to focusing on you and your idea?
5. Do they have the courage to interrupt you back and tell you to stop talking until they are finished?

The person interrupted may be too polite to speak up and tell you to shut up but all of these physical body movements outlined above, however slight, are body language indicators to you that the person interrupted is registering frustration or even anger at you for the interruption.

This “Chronic Interrupter Field Research Project”  is designed to improve your communication skills and help you feel what it is like from another person’s perspective. Most people when they are interrupted, get very annoyed and give very clear physical signs at how frustrated they are at not being allowed to finish their thought.

**STEP FOUR: LET THEM FINISH:**

After you have completed the observations outlined above and have successfully observed the “interrupted conversation” both from your perspective and from theirs, pick the next person you are talking with and LET THEM FINISH TALKING, no matter how frustrating and difficult it is for you.

1. Do what you must in order to keep your mouth shut while the other person is talking.  Pinch yourself, sit on your hands, kick yourself, imagine your lips are zipped or glued shut  so you absolutely, positively will NOT INTERRUPT THEM!
2. Let them finish no matter what thought or urge to interrupt them comes up from inside you.
3. Again observe and be mindful of how it feels inside you NOT to interrupt. The first time you try to stop yourself from this habit of chronic interrupting could be quite difficult and challenging for you. Don’t get discouraged. On average, research suggests that it takes thirty days to change a habit. You may need a few times and as many as thirty days to practice before you get it down.
4. Is there any new information you observe now that comes up? If so, write it down.
5. **Positive Reaction:**

Little by little, as we listen more and interrupt less, we will observe that there is more breathing space in our conversations with people. There is more give and take and more excitement in the exchange from both sides.

We may also begin to notice that as we interrupt less and people feel at ease knowing we will let them get their thoughts out fully, people will talk with us more about other aspects of their personal and professional life. This kind of respectful exchange on a deep personal and professional level builds trust in a relationship. In some cases, friends, family and co workers will even begin to seek you out and we may hear that they deeply value you for the quality of your listening.

Abraham Lincoln once said, “There are those who listen and those who wait to talk.” There is another old wisdom saying that I really like: “God gave us two ears, two eyes and one mouth. And they should be used in that proportion!”

Do you notice how often in everyday communication it feels like the person in front of you  is not really listening? Very often it seems like they are either waiting to talk or so impatient to give their opinions, they interrupt you mid sentence. And isn’t being interrupted while you are speaking really annoying?

1. **Negative Reaction:**

I must admit, as a “chronic interrupter” myself, I can truly understand the excitement of being with someone, in either a personal or professional setting, and urgently wanting to share my thoughts or expand on something they just said.

However it truly is disrespectful to interrupt a person while they are speaking. It is not only disrespectful, you might actually miss something important and valuable that they were going to say in the point they were just trying to make.

So this week, try to use more of your eyes and your ears and less of your mouth. Who knows? If you really listen and don’t interrupt, you might learn something!

1. **Check-up Test**

TRUE OR FALSE.

Direction: Write T if the statement is true and F if it is false. Write your answer on the blank.

\_\_\_\_\_1. Spanking an interrupter will make your session go on smoothly.

\_\_\_\_\_2. It is indeed professional to observe some kind of approaches to handle interrupter.

\_\_\_\_\_3. There are really times that due to eagerness we can not help but interrupt a speaker.

\_\_\_\_\_4. Do we consider interrupters to be rude?

\_\_\_\_\_5. Ignoring an interrupter will make them stop and quite.

Answer Key:

1. F 2. T 3. T 4. T 5. F