

Advice & More

Co-workers' endless chatter drives impatient listener crazy

Dear Abby: My problem is, I have lost the art of listening. When someone takes too long to get to the point, or includes irrelevant details, I completely lose patience. I work in a medical office with the same small group of women every day, and I like my job. However, I find myself trying to keep "extra busy" to avoid the boring, mundane chatter about things I don't care about.

Am I becoming an anti-social snob, or is there a way to participate in a conversation while resisting the temptation to roll my eyes and hurry someone along with my hands? I am not particularly chatty, and I don't divulge many details of my personal life — so is it wrong to no longer care about the details of everyone else's? — Verbally Overloaded

Dear Verbally Overloaded: We usually get what we give in life. If you would like to receive empathy from those around you (should the need arise), then my advice is to be prepared to show some. Because you don't have time to listen to long stories, it's acceptable in an office setting to say that you are busy and have a limited amount of time to chat. In other words, if you're "verbally overloaded" — verbalize.

Dear Abby: My husband and I had our first child, a



Jeanne Phillips

Syndicated advice columnist

beautiful baby girl, nine months ago. We chose a name for our daughter while I was pregnant, but my in-laws refuse to use her first name. They insist on calling her a diminutive of her middle name. Now the whole family is doing it.

At first they claimed that some distant cousin (whom we have never met) had the same name. Now they say, "We don't like her first name, so we're going to call her ()."

How can we convince them to call her by her given name? — New Mom in Austin

Dear New Mom: Your in-laws' behavior is rude and disrespectful. Tell them that unless they're prepared for their grandchild to call them "UNCLE Charles and AUNT Martha," they should get used to calling your daughter by the name you chose for her. If they refuse, limit their time with her until she's old enough to understand who she is so they won't confuse her.

Dear Abby: I'm "Troubled in North Carolina," whose letter you published on Feb.

23. Thank you for printing it. You will be happy to know that after the length of time you suggested, I did contact "Bethany." You nailed it. She did, in fact, go back to her ex-boyfriend. I'm OK with it, but what is disappointing is, she broke up with me by e-mail. I guess she didn't have the courage to face me.

After I wrote to you, I decided I wouldn't sit around and wait like a "sad puppy." I've been on a few dates and have met a lot of great women, but haven't settled yet. That's the thing: I'm not going to "settle."

There are so many times when "we men" can't open up and share how we feel. Thank you for being someone that "we" can talk to (even if it isn't really a conversation.) — No Longer Troubled in Jacksonville, N.C.

Dear No Longer Troubled: You're welcome. I'm pleased I could be a sounding board for you. I'm also pleased you jumped right back into the dating pool. Although Bethany may have had many admirable qualities, the fact that she took the easy way out and ended the relationship by e-mail rather than facing you is a clue to her character. You deserve better, and you shouldn't settle for less.

— Write to Dear Abby at P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Community Life Bulletin Board



Cub Scouts cross over Posted by Glenn P. Brogan



At the annual Blue and Gold Banquet for Cub Scout Pack 227 at Wesley United Methodist Church on St. Simons Island, these boys were presented with the Arrow of Light Award. This award is the highest rank a Cub Scout can earn. The Arrow of Light is one of only two Cub Scout awards that can be worn on a Boy Scout uniform.

To earn this rank, these fifth grade boys were required to earn their Webelos badge and more than eight activity badges, including Citizen, Readyman and Fitness. While working on these activity badges

over the last two years, the boys took part in campouts at NASA in Cape Canaveral, Fla., the Jacksonville Zoo and the Boy Scouts of America local camp, Camp Tolochee.

They also participated in several citizenship projects including collecting and bagging food for Second Harvest, working the water station at the Veteran's Day 5K race and writing numerous letters to U.S. troops serving in Iraq.

Many of these boys have been members of their Cub Scout pack since they were first graders. They will now "cross over" to join Boy

Scout Troop 248 and Scout Master Adam Johnson. For the past five years, their leaders have been Robert Driggers, pack leader for Cub Scout Pack 227, and Howard Walker, former pack leader for Pack 227.

Pictured from left, in front, are **Austin Willis, Ronnie Altman, Taylor Stevenson, Blake Tolman, Frederick Stroud** and **Sam Brogan**. In back, from left, are **Adam Johnson**, Scout Master for Boy Scout Troop 248, **Ryan Comer, Trey Waldron, Will McArthur** and **Glenn Brogan**, Webelos II Den Leader for Cub Scout Pack 227.



STAR program graduates 20 students Posted by Leslie Lamkin



Twenty students recently graduated from the STAR Foundation's eight-week employment training program, which prepares those with limited income to obtain long-term, meaningful employment. Six students with perfect attendance were awarded computers that had been donated to STAR.

The STAR Foundation trains students in computer literacy, life skills for professional and personal growth, and job

readiness — at no cost to participants.

STAR is currently accepting applications for the spring quarter, which begins April 7. Interested individuals need to register by March 28. The office is located at 1907 Gloucester St., Brunswick.

Pictured from left, front row, are Brunswick Housing Authority Director of Operations **Ruthie Knox**, **Angel Smith**, Brunswick Police Chief **Edna Johnson**,

Balinda Fleming, Anita Klatt, Jetta Buggs, Candice Haymans, Kim Wright, Courtney Hall, Roslyn Henderson and **Jacquelyn Bryant**; and in back, from left, **April Quimby, Nita Kittles, Meka Moran, Alan Harper, Karen Forry, Michelle Sifuentes, Amy Pate, Brendette Robinson, Brian Plummer**, STAR Executive Director **Ellen Murphy**, and STAR Board Vice Chairman **Wally Orrel**.

Get noise checked immediately

Dr. Gott: My husband has an unusual condition that none of his physicians have been able to diagnose or treat successfully.

He is 57 and has had two heart attacks, but he is now healthy and has low blood pressure. He is on Zetia, Benicar, Lipitor, aspirin and Effexor.

His problem is that when he lies on his left side, he hears a pulsating blood-flow noise in his right ear. It has the same timing as his heartbeat. If he turns his head to the right or lies on his right side, the noise stops. Occasionally, it happens while he is standing or sitting upright. It is not debilitating but is very irritating to him. If he presses on the carotid artery, the sound stops but resumes once he releases the pressure. He cannot remember whether this started before or after his heart attacks.

His hearing has been checked and is normal.

We would both appreciate any suggestions you may have. He claims he will even sleep with a bar of soap under his



Peter Gott

Syndicated medical columnist

neck if it will help.

Dear Reader: A noise in the neck that stops when pressure is applied to the carotid artery suggests that there may be a blockage in that artery, which can be very dangerous. If left untreated, the blockage will get larger and may severely reduce or stop blood flow through the artery. A piece may break off and be carried to the brain, where it could lead to stroke.

Have your husband ask his physician to order a carotid ultrasound. It is safe and easy. This will reveal whether a blockage is present.

If, as I suspect, your husband has a blockage, treatment will depend on the severity. He will most likely need to start anticoagulant therapy, such as warfarin (Coumadin). He may also benefit from a procedure called

angioplasty, which uses a balloon-like device to break up the blockage and restore blood flow.

Your husband's cardiologist is the best source for more information about causes and treatment options. I suggest you start with him or her, and bring along a copy of my response to your letter. Let me know how this turns out.

Dr. Gott: I have been bothered by eczema on my eyelid and eyebrow. It was so bad I thought I would harm my eyelid from the scratching. Then I read about the banana peel for psoriasis. I gave it a try, since I eat a banana every day. It's amazing. The flaking, itching, peeling and dryness have disappeared. Thank you!

Reader: Using banana peels to stop the itching of eczema is a new one on me. It is useful in treating some forms of psoriasis. I'm publishing your favorable experience in hopes it will benefit other readers.

— Write to Dr. Gott c/o United Media, 200 Madison Ave., 4th Fl., New York, NY 10016.

Tell someone about harrassment

Dr. Wallace: You gave excellent advice to the girl who was being sexually harassed by one of her male teachers. The best thing to do is to tell her parents immediately and then to notify the school authorities.

While I was in high school (I'm now in college), I had an overly affectionate teacher who constantly made lewd remarks to me. This teacher had arranged for me to work for credit as his aide because I was an excellent student. I had a desk next to his and he was always dropping papers on the floor and asking me to lean over to pick them up. He surprised me on my birthday by giving me a kiss on the lips and then invited me to his house because he had a special gift for me. I refused his offer. He was always telling me off-color jokes.

I asked to be transferred from being his aide, but this was not allowed because I had no good reason (I didn't want to reveal the truth).

Finally, my PE teacher asked me why I always came to class with tears in my eyes and I blurted out the whole story. The vice-principal called me in soon after and had a talk with me. It was revealed that another



Robert Wallace

Syndicated advice columnist

Between 12 & 20

er aide had the same problem.

I was transferred out of the class immediately and the following year the teacher did a wonderful thing for all future female students — he took an early retirement.

Please continue telling students who are being sexually harassed by a teacher to make the situation known to the school authorities who will set things right again. — Nameless, St. Paul, Minn.

Nameless: The teacher is lucky to have escaped with early retirement. He should have been fired. Sexual harassment is an abominable and cowardly act any time, but doubly so when a teacher is involved. Most teachers are dedicated and honorable professionals, but occasionally a rotten apple shows up.

Dr. Wallace: I'm 12 and need your advice. I've known my best friend, Marty, for five years. I've known Lisa and Amy for two years. They, too,

are very good friends. The problem is that they despise Marty, but I really don't know the reason they feel this way.

Yesterday, Marty was at my house when Lisa and Amy decided to come over. When they saw Marty, they both left. This morning Amy called and said that if I didn't stop having Marty for a friend, they would stop being my friends.

I don't know what I should do. Should I sacrifice one friend to keep two? — Jenny, Merrillville, Ind.

Jenny: I think you know that dumping Marty to keep Lisa and Amy as friends would leave you with a miserable feeling. The best way to handle the matter is to ask the two girls straight out why they dislike Marty. Maybe you could say enough good things about Marty to change their minds about her. It's worth a try.

In any case, let them know that Marty will remain your best friend no matter what they decide. If Lisa and Amy decide to stop being friends with you because of this, it's their loss.

— Write to Dr. Wallace c/o Copley News Service, P.O. Box 120190, San Diego, CA 92112 or e-mail rwallace@galesburg.net



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