

### **I3 Conversation Behaviors To AVOID**

*Which ones ring true for you? Could your conversation style prevent you from making a real connection with someone? And how do you **feel** when you talk to these types?*

**Note:** Some of these categories overlap in certain ways, but each has a particular nuance that is distinguishing.

1. **The One-Upper:** He always tops your story, even if your story is a tale of woe. His celebrity sighting was more exciting than yours; his case of the flu was worse than yours. He isn't listening attentively: he's busy recalling something better, worse or more dramatic in comparison to what you're saying. It's like a contest. You **feel** minimized.
2. **The Self-Promoter:** She brags about her accomplishments or name-drops. She's The Best. She needs to elevate herself from others. It often comes as a #HumbleBrag: "I got so seasick when I was on my friend's yacht near St. Bart's last week, it was awful!" You **feel** annoyed, lesser-than, and maybe competitive with her.
3. **The Blahs:** He's perfectly nice/pleasant. Comments are bland, generic, safe. He's polite, listens to you, but reveals almost nothing personal or intriguing about himself. Not unique, easily forgettable. You **feel** bored.
4. **The Debbie Downer:** She's a complainer. Has a negative lens. Doesn't project a happy or energetic vibe. She may even think her cynicism reflects discerning taste or high standards. Body language may include crossed arms or slumping posture. You **feel** deflated around her.
5. **The Mirror:** Whatever you say, he has a similar story to mirror back at you ("Wow, same thing happened to me!"). He's just waiting his turn politely until you stop speaking so he can reflect on his own relatable experience. This can tend to halt conversation or make it feel choppy. The exchange seems superficial and you don't **feel** "heard".
6. **The One-Way Street:** It's all about her: her stories, her opinions, her agenda. She takes the spotlight and monopolizes conversation. You can barely get in a word, unless it's to react affirmatively to what she's saying. She might be arrogant or self-absorbed, or perhaps she's a charismatic story teller. But you **feel** invisible, unimportant.
7. **The Arguer:** He disagrees constantly with you. He challenges what you say, even if it's just an opinion. He has to prove his point and "win" the discussion. You **feel** frustrated, agitated or exhausted talking to him.
8. **The Expert:** She knows more than you do. In fact, she knows everything. She silences you with her confidence in her opinions and she is (or believes she is) always right. You **feel** frustrated, uneducated, naïve or even a little dumb.
9. **The Adviser:** He offers unsolicited and emphatic advice to your problems, even when you don't want solutions. He thinks he knows you and what's best for you. He might expect you to thank him for his knowledge, even if you disagree with the advice. Maybe you just wanted empathy, compassion. You may **feel** tense, confused or conflicted.
10. **The Interrupter:** She interrupts impatiently before you can finish your sentence. She might try to finish your sentence for you (she's sure she already knows what you're going to say). You **feel** annoyed, frustrated, not "heard".
11. **The Comedian:** He's funny with his jokes, sarcasm, quick wit, self-deprecation. At first it's fun! But soon you crave a deeper connection. His humor is a shield you can't penetrate, which is frustrating. You're the audience who's kept at a distance. And like crashing after a sugar high, you may **feel** tired, empty or unsatisfied afterwards.
12. **The Chatterbox:** She prattles on about everything & nothing. She might seem nervous, jittery. Her stories are too long and contain irrelevant details. She's unaware her comments aren't engaging. You **feel** bored, antsy.
13. **The Distractor:** He has distracting body language or verbal tics, e.g., fidgeting (touching hair, gazing elsewhere, clothes tugging), overusing a word/phrase (um, like, you know, just to say it), or other repetitive behaviors such as throat clearing. It's hard to respect what he's really saying. You **feel** disconcerted, inattentive.