

## **5 Ways to Handle Know-It-Alls**

**By Arnold Sanow – [www.arnoldsanow.com](http://www.arnoldsanow.com)**

Their name says it all. They believe they have all the right answers and know what's best for everyone. The problem is deep down, they know that they really don't know it all; their behavior is a cover-up for their feelings of inadequacy. They pretend to know everything; being right makes them feel validated, which temporarily eases their feelings of insecurity.

Know-It-Alls don't listen to opinions of others and offer information or advice whether it's asked for or not. Their smug, superior attitude implies that others are stupid, weak and inferior; they speak with a tone of authority, even when addressing issues outside their expertise. Know-It-Alls relish saying, "I told you so!" if you fail to follow their advice. They can't be right without making you wrong, so they persist at the know-it-all game in order to gain a feeling of power, albeit a false power.

Some Know-It-Alls are perfectionists by nature and have plenty of talent to offer; yet they can flaunt their intelligence and competence, turning people off in the process. They're sometimes so self-absorbed that they need a reality check. Depending on your role or relationship to them, you might open their eyes regarding how their behavior is getting in the way of their success or positive connections.

Based on the book, "Get Along with Anyone, Anytime, Anywhere ... 8 keys to creating enduring connections with customers, co-workers – even kids" by Arnold Sanow and Sandy Strauss, here are 5 tips for handling Know-It-Alls

- 1. Give Credit to them when they're right, but resist the temptation to rub it in when they're wrong.**
- 2. Don't discount, discredit, or disagree. Validate their ideas first and then introduce your own: "Justin, that's certainly a possibility. Here's what I thought"**
- 3. If they deliver information with a surly tone, tell them that while their advice is instructive, their tone is a turn-off.**

4. **If you should be a recipient of their favorite line, “I told you so!” respond that such a statement isn’t productive, focusing on the consequences of such a comment.**
5. **If you have concerns about the validity of what they say, ask probing questions as well as verifying their information to keep them on their toes. Ask “what if” questions to put their logic to the test. Have them play out their worst case scenarios as a way of checking the legitimacy of their suggestions.**

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