

Family Council

Editors Note: The Family Council consists of a judge, a psychiatrist, three clergymen, a newspaper editor, a woman editor, and two writers. Each article is a summary of an actual case history. The Council reports on problems that have been dealt with by responsible agencies and counselors. (Copyright 1962—General Features Corp.)

Jane C. - He mistakes politeness for interest. He bores people.

Richard C. - I know my accounts are unique and my friends enjoy them.

Jane C. - Since my husband's retirement three years ago, we've made several cross-country auto trips, and have taken two cruises, one to Bermuda, and one to South America. Naturally we've collected souvenirs, snapshots, color-slides, and mementoes.

But what makes him think that everyone who steps foot over our threshold wants to hear the whole story? He buttonholes our guests and makes them stand while he tells how he haggled with a street-vendor, or got a banana-farmer to pose.

When he gets wound up, he'll get so carried away with his report on San Francisco or Hollywood, he can't see he's boring others. Many of our friends have been there themselves, but can't get a word in.

Richard C. - Spoken like a true wet blanket! I can tell what's interesting to others. It happens that I was a florist and on our trips I made it a point to visit gardens and collect pictures and specimens of violets. So I really have quite a tale to tell, because I gathered representation of violets in every form - dried, crystallized, carved, painted, embroidered, woven, and so on. My collection is unique. It should fascinate anyone who appreciates nature and native skills.

I'm sure anyone who's bored can manage to wriggle out from under. But I can't see how any intelligent person can fail to enjoy reports about places he's never been to. I just lap up the words of friends who've been to Japan and India.

The Council - In general, Jane's remonstrance is a wise one for two reasons. First, it's not so easy to wriggle out from under when it's your host who's punctuating his endless tales with thumps on your shoulder. They're portable thumps and he may follow you! And secondly, a raconteur must see his listener clearly and be sensitive to nuances of his expression so as to know when that strained smile is a distress signal and not a gasp. Richard's eyes may be looking through, not at, his audience. And seeing landscapes, mountains, and bazaar stalls, instead of a weary but game guest.

But, to leap to Richard's defense in our next breath, we wager most people do enjoy his accounts. If it's not because of the violets and other subject matter, it's because of his own enthusiasm. Jane errs if she assumes others listen with her ears which know the narratives backwards and forwards, including the punch lines. On a first, or even second, hearing the material can be absorbing.

Moderation should do the trick. Richard can curb his exuberance by asking himself: Do I surround myself with guests in order to sound off on The Great and Clever Me? Must I "use" my friends as a claque to bolster my ego? Or, can I share my experiences within a reasonable limit, and then sit back and be silent and listen to theirs? Even people who don't travel, but just stay home and "keep up," can have stimulating things to say, too!

He should make it a point, too, to divvy up the travelogue with Jane. She was there, too, remember? It's the monologue idea that adds to the monotony for her.

We once ventured a definition of The Perfect Host. He's the man who gives the party you are the life of. As a host, then, Richard must use his colorful talk to stir up an exchange of conversation which brings all the guests - and Jane, too - to life.

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Mrs. Evans bought two government houses from the White City area and remodelled them herself for the venture. A resident of the Rogue valley for four years, she operated a small market near Jacksonville before moving to Eagle Point. Her husband is employed by Nye and Naudes.

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