

Consider the position from which you're complaining

I was on a flight from San Diego to Dallas. I'm a million-miler with American Airlines so I usually request, and get, an aisle seat, but on this flight, I was sitting in the middle seat between two "architecturally enhanced" individuals.

Inwardly, I started to complain.

Then I remembered a thought I had read in Karl Albrecht's book, *Social Intelligence* — "Think about the level you're complaining from."

This insightful and penetrating statement prompted me to reconsider my grumbling and adjust my attitude. My thought process included:

- I'm traveling from San Diego to Dallas in less than three hours. A century ago, it would have taken a month or more by horseback. But I'm complaining.
- I paid \$320 for the round-trip ticket. But I'm complaining.
- I'm inside one of mankind's greatest inventions — the airplane. I'm traveling 562 miles an hour at 32,000 ft. altitude. But I'm complaining.
- I just returned from a 7-day cruise. But I'm complaining.
- I have a nice house to return to and I'm gainfully employed. But I'm complaining.

It didn't take me long to jettison my bad attitude and embrace thoughts of gratitude and wonder.

Is it ever okay to complain or should we try to eradicate it from the earth?

My perspective is: We all have challenges and problems, and sometimes it helps to verbalize them. In fact, it can be cathartic. And that's okay. But continuing to coddle complaints ad nauseam is unnecessary and is detrimental to you and your relationships. Undeterred, constant complaining will make you a grouch, and people will avoid you.

My advice to habitual complainers: "If you can't be positive, at least be quiet."

Summary

What? - We often complain too quickly and too much.

So what? - Excess complaining will sour our dispositions and repel people.

Now what? - Learn how to properly share your frustrations and then let them go.

Leaders - Do not tolerate a complaining culture. Give people the opportunity to vent legitimate frustrations, and properly respond to them, but make it clear that a systemic complaining environment will not be condoned.