



Super-Advisor Syndrome

To what extent have you developed the Super-Advisor Syndrome?

1. I rarely have a minute to myself.
2. I find it difficult, if not impossible to say no to a worthy cause or anyone who asks for help.
3. I believe I'm supposed to make everything right, for everybody.
4. I believe, "If you didn't want a solution, you wouldn't be telling me about your problems."
5. I heroically drag myself to a sales meeting with the flu and a 103 degree temperature rather than delegate the job to my assistant.
6. I receive a constant string of phone calls all weekend long from people asking for my advice.
7. I always choose to do it myself rather than ask for help or say no.
8. I feel compelled to find ways to make this year better than any other year, regardless of the market.
9. I do so much for others, I often wonder why no one does the same for me?

ADVISORS
WHO ARE ALL
THINGS TO ALL
PEOPLE ARE
ON THE FAST
TRACK TO
EMOTIONAL
BURN-OUT.

If you answered yes to more than three of these questions, you need to get some help — and get it now!

Those of us with the super-achiever syndrome think we are invincible. We also may think one of our primary objectives is to share our wisdom, warmth, spirit, and talents with everyone who needs it and we believe everyone needs it.

Underneath that self-reliant exterior is an insecure person begging to be praised and to be found worthy. We only feel valuable when we are giving advice and solving other people's problems. As far as our own problems are concerned, we haven't a clue.

- Super-advisors overload themselves with a staggering number of tasks and roles to perform. They want to be all things to all people, finding it hard to refuse any requests for help.

- As super-advisors pile up more and more activities in their lives, they have less time to do things to their satisfaction and have almost no time for themselves.

- Surprisingly, low self-esteem underlies this overwhelming need to be needed.

- Typically there are several impossible, super-advisor roles going on simultaneously, not just one (super-advisor, super-parent, super-volunteer, super-

friend, super-spouse).

- The cure for the super-human syndrome is reciprocity. Invite some balance back into your life by allowing others to take care of themselves and to contribute to your life, enhancing their value and your resources.

- Stop trying to solve other people's problems and start helping them to become self-reliant.

The Captain America Syndrome

The underlying compulsion for super-advisors is to be all things to all people. A typical male super-advisor will strive to maximize his performance, while simultaneously maintaining a high

profile in his office and in the community. He will attempt to develop strong relationships with his spouse and children. He's in a leadership position in the Chamber of Commerce, and he is probably coaching his son's Little League team. He's in charge of fundraising for the United Way. And he is supervising a neighborhood clean-up and home fix-up project.

He feels responsible for the well being of his family, staff and friends. Thus, he frequently invites his divorced brother over to dinner, his widowed secretary out to lunch, his neighbor's "teenager" over to the house for a motivational talk. He rarely has a relaxing lunch by himself or a jog alone around the park because he reasons that he can use that time to meet a potential client.

Wonder Woman She is not only a top producer; she may be working on her MBA at night school. She finds time to clean her home, mother her children and teach a Sunday-school class. When not at home in the evenings, she can be found at the soccer game or attending a PTA meeting. She seems to find time to unburden all of her friends with personal problems. The only time she has for herself is in the shower, which may explain why she takes three or four a day. Oh yes, she has a personal collection of spouses, but none of them was able to go the distance.

Super-advisors are outer-directed, sensitive, and responsive to the needs and requests of others, but have long since lost touch with their own inner needs and messages. Instead of prioritizing their concerns and interests and

limiting their involvements, they rarely say no to any request made of them — which means they rarely have a moment to spare on their individual needs and interests. Everyone always asks where they get the energy to do so many things so well.

On the outside, Schweitzer, Mead, Keller, and Edison appear to exhibit the super-human syndrome as well. They involved themselves in a number of diverse activities and led very busy lives. But they learned how to balance their energy by scheduling time each day to rest and enjoy time alone, absorbed in an activity of their own choosing rather than constantly pouring their energy out to one recipient after another. This outlet provided them with a vital source of private, personal satisfaction, and creativity, both of which are sources of mental and emotional energy. Moreover, they knew how to balance a set number of tasks and activities rather than spread themselves too thin by constantly piling one new endeavor on top of another.

Finally, Schweitzer, Mead, Keller and Edison had a gift of inspiring and encouraging others to be a vital part of their team. They served as mentors and coaches to an energetic team of young protégés whom they taught self-reliance. Each benefited from the energy and accomplishments of a committed and inspired team.

The Super Syndrome

The bait: is to be everyone's hero!

The payoff: is to feel needed, vital and admired.

The trap: is having all your energy drained by an endless procession of people and their causes, which will

ultimately result in a world-class case of emotional burn-out.

Solving the Super Syndrome

Problem It is damaging to encourage others to become dependent on you, rather than to allow them to develop themselves and become self-reliant. Solving everyone's problems may make you feel good, but it actually creates a type of psychological nurturing, which keeps others from accepting personal responsibility for their problems and going through the process that will allow them the opportunity to increase their emotional strength and eventually become self-reliant.

Why not use reciprocity to increase their emotional strength and self-worth? Reciprocity refers to balance, an equal give and take between two people. That's a difficult lesson to learn, knowing why and how to invite a mutual exchange of time and services from others and promoting interdependence instead of dependence. It involves taking off the hero's cape and becoming a balanced person.

Super people are big hitters, but their distractions actually force them to perform far below their potential. Perhaps the biggest problem for super people is they are seldom able to correct their problems without help. The good news is when they finally learn to begin focusing on themselves, they experience quantum leaps in production.

Take the time to write or review your life plan. Make sure your life is on track to get you where you want to go, so that when you get there you will not have to ask, "Is this all there is?" 

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