

To Know When to Say 'It's none Of Your Business'

- **McCormack**

Introduction:

Mark Hume McCormack was the founder and CEO of the sports management conglomerate International Management Group, which represents such celebrities as Tiger Woods, Andre Agassi and Venus and Serena Williams. His 1984 book *What They Don't Teach You at Harvard Business School* was a best-seller. In the essay, the author discusses about the importance of being strict, stiff and frank, especially in business. As a general rule, we should be ready to say "It's none of your business" to any person if at all he/she tries to invade our privacy.

Incorrigible Snoop:

At the beginning, the author talks about an incorrigible snoop who worked in his company. This snoop had a thirst to know what other people are doing. He wasn't sneaky. He was charmingly open when he pried and he used some tactics too. No one in the organization had the guts or courage to say "It's none of your business" to this snoop when he tried to peep into other's personal matter. The author says, many awkward (difficult to handle) moments in business occur because people can't say, "It's none of your business". Most people are curious in nature. Even the highly curious people know what's appropriate to ask and what's not. The snoop at the author's office was actually innocent. However if he started questioning people on confidential areas, they would have suspected him.

Two areas where we should maintain our secrecy:

McCormack states that for two topics we should be ready to say "It's none of your business". It is about someone else's money and personal life. These are the two important areas where we have to maintain secrecy. The author is surprised to see how aggressively people pry into these areas and how much they reveal on these subjects.

First important area: Money

If we take the case of money, certain types of money discussions are taboo (restricted). Times have changed. But still we know that another person's salary is none of our business. The author describes the story of a foolish agent who got into trouble. The agent had a client who was a writer. He was fixed to write the text of an illustrated book for a publisher. One day the writer phoned the agent to know about the pay of the illustrator. The foolish agent called the publisher who shouted back at her. The author feels that this entire embarrassing event would have been avoided if the agent had told the client, 'You have accepted the fee. What the illustrator gets is none of your business'.

Second important area: Personal life

McCormack suggests that our personal life is another area where we should maintain secrecy. Yet a lot of people try to snoop over one's personal life. In a working environment where people work for more than eight hours a day, it is obvious to develop a friendly relationship with others. We may share few personal details with them. Sometimes our close associates whom we believe might pull our legs one day with our personal information's.

He gives an example of the CEO accompanied by two of his senior staff. As one of the staff was quite ignorant of the discussed topic, the CEO snapped briskly and suddenly at him in front of the author by saying "May be you would know more if you didn't spend your evening on the phone with your girlfriend in Chicago. The author was shocked by this event. The staff trusted him as a friend and revealed his personal details, but the CEO abused that trust and he used that information to criticize him in front of the author. This really weakened the Boss-Subordinate relationship.

Conclusion

It is always good to maintain secrecy in certain areas to avoid such circumstances. Through these incidents the author emphasizes the need to say "It's none of your business"