

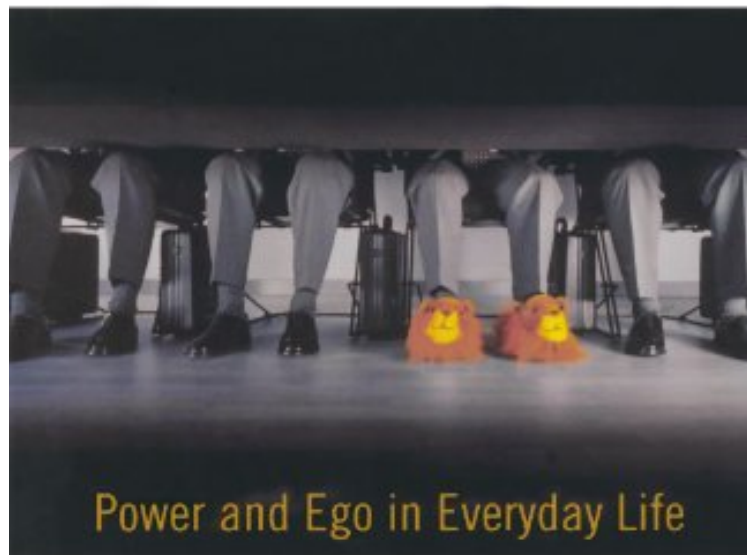
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The Pursuit of Attention: Power and Ego in Everyday Life

Charles Derber

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Charles Derber : The Pursuit of Attention: Power and Ego in Everyday Life before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Pursuit of Attention: Power and Ego in Everyday Life:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Buy it now By rainman This book is seriously awesome. It's the perfect mix of a textbook and social critique and despite my lack of formal training in psychology/sociology, Charles makes this all very easy to understand. It is equal parts informative and entertaining. I'm amazed at its relevance today

(it was originally published in 1978 and revised in 2002, methinks) and I can only dream of a new edition now that the Internet has hit our culture full-force. Charles Derber has become one of my heroes and I cannot wait to read the rest of his books. I highly recommend this one to anyone interested in our modern culture of individualism and the impact that has on interpersonal communication and social dynamics. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Nagging questions By language lover What I liked best about this book is that it gives a name to conversational patterns that I have noticed for a long time. But the question that plagues me is, what can I, as an individual, do about it? I try habitually to be the best listener I can be, but I can't make others become good listeners. And while I can hope that some day Derber's suggestions for broad policy change come about, the odds are strongly against it. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A provocative and fascinating book in this self-absorbed, look-at-me ... By Lindsie in Atlanta A provocative and fascinating book in this self-absorbed, look-at-me country we live in. The work is scholarly but accessible. I found myself thinking about the ideas in the book long after I finished reading it.

"Enough about me," goes the old saying, "what about you? What do you think about me?" Hence the pursuit of attention is alive and well. Even the Oxford English Dictionary reveals a modern coinage to reflect the chase in our technological age: "ego-surfing"--searching the Internet for occurrences of your own name. What is the cause of this obsessive need for others' recognition? This useful and popular volume, now in a second edition that features major new introductory and concluding essays, entertainingly ponders this question. Derber argues that there is a general lack of social support in today's America, one which causes people to vie hungrily for attention, and he shows how individuals will often employ numerous techniques to turn the course of a conversation towards themselves. Illustrating this "conversational narcissism" with sample dialogues that will seem disturbingly familiar to all readers, this book analyzes the pursuit of attention in conversation--as well as in politics and celebrity culture--and demonstrates the ultimate importance of gender, class, and racial differences in competing for attention. Derber shows how changes in the economy and culture--such as the advent of the Internet--have intensified the rampant individualism and egotism of today. And finally, in a new afterword, he focuses on solutions: how to restructure the economy and culture to humanize ourselves and increase the capacity for community, empathy, and attention-giving.

"A refreshingly balanced, strongly grounded exploration of the routines Americans exploit in competing for attention...."--American Journal of Sociology (on the previous edition) About the Author Charles Derber, author of Corporation Nation and The Wilding of America, is Professor of Sociology at Boston College.