



There is no fine line between reasonable self-promotion and shameless self-promotion.

There is a freakin' chasm.

I'd like to introduce you to my body of work

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"Egotism is the anesthetic that dulls the pain of stupidity." —Frank Leahy

So, I have this day job as a neuroradiologist. Have I told you about it? It's kept me going for a few years. I think I help people, which makes my mother happy. (I'm pretty certain she has a reasonable understanding of what I do and that I am, indeed, a *real doctor*.) It also keeps my family happy and gets me out of the house. And it also gives me some great opportunities to teach, travel, and speak. And oh yeah, write this column! Can't forget the opportunity I get to scream and rant like a crazy person into a sock, and have a few people besides my editor read it.

But it's the speaking part that brings me to this issue's diatribe.

Every so often, I get to deliver a lecture or two at some meeting. I work hard to prepare my talks and I hope that someone takes a worthwhile point or two away from them. I give credit to those who contribute to my talk. I try to not bore people to death. This means I occasionally introduce a little humor into my talks (hard to imagine, I know) and hope the jokes don't fall flat. I like to make people laugh, and I enjoy it if people come by later to tell me they learned something.

What I never do — and I mean **NEVER DO** — is practice the dubious art of self-aggrandizement. Shameless self-promotion. You'll never catch me standing at the podium, laser pointer in hand, telling everyone how great I am, how much I know, how great my suit looks in this lighting, or how they'll **NEVER** do **THIS** as well as **I** do.

Believe me, I have heard those talks. And therein lies this rant.

Make no mistake: There is no fine line between reasonable self-promotion and shameless self-promotion. There is a freakin' chasm. Reasonable self-promotion: I'm giving this talk, so you can rest assured I know a little something about the topic. Here are some facts and opinions; I'll let you know when the opinions come up.

Shameless self-promotion? Here we go.

If you keep telling me about all the papers you've written on the topic, and you haven't won the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, you're losing me. After you refer to your own research for the fourth time, I'm looking at the newsfeeds on my phone. Flash the third screen-shot of the title page of your latest article, you're starting to irritate me. Refer to yourself as "an acknowledged authority," and you're inviting me to leave. Rant about how everyone else gets it wrong and you've been right all along, and I'm throwing my tote bag, tchotchkes and all, at the stage and heading for the door.

I've heard a few Nobel Prize winners; they were amazingly humble people. I've also heard more than a few truly "acknowledged authorities," and they were equally amazingly self-deprecatory. But I have also heard more than my share of first-timers walk all over a master of the topic who happened to be right in their own audience, without ever once acknowledging the possibility that **THEY THEMSELVES COULD BE WRONG**.

Keep doing that good work. Mahalo.

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