

One of my Facebook friends is a man I've met two or three times in a professional group. I don't know him very well, but he seems like a rather smart and nice person. Unfortunately, he comments on at least 80 percent of my updates and posts.

Most of his comments are pretty relevant and sometimes funny, but I feel that the amount of feedback I'm getting is disproportionate to our actual relationship. I'm like the girl at a party who's exchanging pleasantries with a guy, but then the conversation just goes on and on, making me seem unavailable to anyone else.

This man seems like a pretty decent person. I value his online presence so I don't want to just "unfriend" him or change my privacy settings. What do I do?

It's always difficult when you have to put limits on a relationship. Whether you're the girl at the party trying to exit a never-ending conversation or the person on Facebook receiving more comments than you think are warranted, cutting someone else off is awkward. It can leave hurt feelings and resentment if not done carefully.

If you have patience, first try some benign options. Give it time. Perhaps he's new to Facebook and will reduce his commenting as the novelty wears off. Or you could take a break for a week or two yourself. When you start up again, you may discover that he's found other places to spend his time, and, therefore, he comments less often.

Approaching him directly is the next step. Before doing that, accept that he may feel some embarrassment as it's likely it wasn't his intent to overload your page. That said, it's OK to go ahead and communicate with him directly. Do it gently and privately. Because you've met him professionally, you can call him or write him. "Jim, I value our professional friendship, and I'm glad we're connected on Facebook. While I appreciate all your comments, I was wondering if you'd mind dialing your commenting back some so other people have a chance to comment as well? Thanks."