Letting Go Of The Glory, by Richard Carlson

There is something magical that happens to the human spirit, a sense of calm that comes over you, when you cease needing all the attention directed towards yourself and instead allow others to have the glory. Our need for excessive attention is that ego-centered part of us that says, "Look at me, I'm special. My story is more interesting than yours." [...] The ego is that part of us that wants to be seen, heard, respected, considered special, often at the expense of someone else. It's the part of us that interrupts someone else's story, or impatiently waits his turn to speak so that he can bring the conversation and the attention back to himself. To varying degrees, most of us engage in this habit, much to our own detriment. When you immediately dive in and bring the conversation back toward you, you can subtly minimize the joy that person has in sharing, and in doing so, create distance between yourself and others. Everyone loses. [...] Although it's a difficult habit to break, it's not only enjoyable but actually peaceful to have the quiet confidence to be able to surrender your need for attention and instead share in the joy of someone else's glory. Rather than jumping right in and saying, " Once I did the same thing," or "Guess what I did today," bite your tongue and notice what happens. Just say, "That's wonderful," or "Please tell me more," and leave it at that. The person you are speaking to will have so much more fun and, because you are so much more "present", because you are
listening so carefully, he or she won't feel in competition with you. The result will be that the person will feel more relaxed around you, making him or her more confident as well as more interesting. You too will feel more relaxed because you won't be on the edge of your seat, waiting your turn. Obviously, there are many times when it's absolutely appropriate to exchange experience back and forth, and to share in the glory and attention rather than giving it all away. I'm referring here to the compulsive need to grab it from others. Ironically, when you surrender your need to hog the glory, the attention you used to need from other people is replaced by a quiet inner confidence that is derived from letting others have it.
--Richard Carlson, From "Don't Sweat the Small Stuff..."

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