

Sarcasm often isn't very funny

The basic experience of sharing laughter is a point where mutual humanity is discovered at neither party's expense."

When humor is at another's expense, we call it sarcasm. Have you been told that you're sarcastic? When you are told, "I don't like your sarcastic remarks," is your reply, "Whatsamatta, can't you take a joke?"

Do you defend your sarcasm under the guise it is humor, and if the other person doesn't like it you disown responsibility and thereby get yourself off the hook?

After all, it's not your fault your wife, or husband or child doesn't have a sense of humor, is it now?

Sarcasm hurts! It is humor that may not start out with a malevolent intent, but nevertheless, the outcome is hurtful. For

some, sarcasm is prized as great witticism. Thus, the oft-repeated prized story about animosity between the legendary Winston Churchill and Lady Astor. Lady Astor is scolding Churchill for his drinking and inebriated stupor and berates him accordingly. Churchill is alleged to have replied, "Well, Lady Astor, you are correct. I am inebriated. However, you madam, are ugly and in the morning my problem will go away." Obviously, Churchill hurled a dart at Lady Astor, a direct hit.

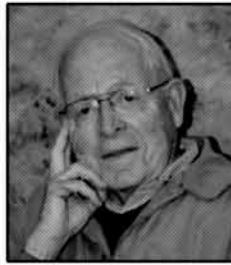
"How do you like my new dress?" inquires the wife of the husband. The perennial joker responds, "Gee, I think it is beautiful. But it would look better on someone 40 pounds lighter."

Sometimes sarcasm is used to disguise (though not very well) an issue one doesn't want to approach directly. The message isn't really that disguised. In fact, it is usually rather obvious. It's just coming through the back door.

How should one deal with a sarcastic person? Answer DIRECTLY! It would be very appropriate to say, "Humor that throws darts isn't funny. I don't appreciate being talked to that way. I won't accept or tolerate sarcasm. It needs to halt right now. Its continuance is hurting our relationship and puts it at risk. I want your assurance sarcasm will stop. Please feed back and tell me what you heard me say."

Don't tolerate insult under the guise of protection of the relationship or friendship. Learn to assert your hurt. Learn to stand strong and hold your position. When the afflictor responds, "Can't you take a joke?," you might want to counter by, "I don't consider humor at the expense of another person a joke. To me it comes across as lack of wisdom and maturity."

There are other appropriate rejoinders as well. In time, you can learn to make strong statements whereby the offense giver will soon understand you are angry and won't tolerate the put-down. Clear-cut responses with firmness usually will deter the offender from repeats as they will sense the relationship is in jeopardy. Sarcastic persons seldom want to push the issue to its ultimate demise.



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**Handy Hints
for Hassled
Households**