

A MOORE ON COMMUNICATION™ Series

WHY DID I SAY THAT?

COMMUNICATING  TO KEEP

YOUR  CREDIBILITY, YOUR

 COOL, AND YOUR CASH!



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The word “sarcasm” has its roots in Greek and means “to tear flesh like dogs.” In my experience, sarcasm, when used to rattle, hurt, insult, or confuse, can “shred” its victim.

Sarcasm can be another form of clandestine communication, as the words convey one message but really mean something else.

If you allow the sarcasm to rattle you, and you’re dealing with someone who enjoys rattling you, you lose. I have found that the best way to increase the odds of stopping the sarcasm is to respond only to the “literal part” of the sarcastic message. The literal part of a sarcastic message is what the words say, not the opposite meaning that is intended for you.

One of my early jobs was in the communications department of a major corporation. My supervisor “Steve” taught me how *not* to communicate. His communication style was composed of fear, intimidation, insults, and sarcasm. With me, it was usually sarcasm, and I grew tired of it.

I had written brochure copy that Steve needed to review. He marked his changes and corrections and brought the marked up copy to my office. He threw it on my desk and said, “Good job, Moore.”

The words were positive, but his voice was sneering, and he was rolling his eyes.

I replied, “Thanks, Steve,” I’ll incorporate your changes, and I’m sure they’ll make it even better.” I spoke without a trace of negativity or sarcasm in my words, voice, or nonverbal communication. I was able to do that without losing my integrity

because it was honest (on my part). Steve, despite his terrible, intimidating communication, was older, smarter, and more skillful than I. Always remember that your ability to communicate effectively starts with identifying the goal. My goal for this communication with him was to get his input, make the text better, and not let him get to me. By responding honestly to the literal part of his sarcastic message (“Good job”), I accomplished my goals.

I could have become angry, afraid, nervous, or defensive, accomplishing nothing positive. I would have taught Steve that his attempts to show his power through intimidation and “rattling” me worked. As his employee, I had to show respect and defer to his corrections; I could not communicate sarcastically to him. But I did not have to become an accomplice in my own bad treatment. Responding only to the literal part of his sarcastic messages helped me keep my integrity, my credibility, my cool . . . and my job.

DIRTY TACTIC #6: BULLDOZING

“Bulldozers” are the people who talk and talk and talk and talk, who play their “tapes” from beginning to end, even when you already know what they’re saying, and you have neither time for, nor interest in, listening. These people do not practice “my turn to talk and then your turn to talk” communication; the other person is generally irrelevant. Bulldozers talk too much,