**Clever Responses**

**Grandma: “I don’t know why you bought those cowboy boots. You’re not a cowboy. You’ve never been a cowboy.” Grandpa: “When’s the last time you played tennis?” Grandma: “Tennis? I don’t play tennis.” Grandpa: “Aha! And yet there you are wearing tennis shoes!” *(Brian Crane, in Pickles comic strip)***

**A motorist driving by a Texas ranch hit and killed a calf that was crossing the road. The driver went to the owner of the calf and explained what had happened, then asked what the animal was worth. “Oh, about $200 today,” said the rancher. “But in six years it would have been worth $900. So $900 is what I’m out.” The motorist sat down and wrote out a check for the rancher. “Here,” he said, “is the check for $900. It is postdated six years, from today.” *(Rocky Mountain News)***

**Our choir director was preparing us for a concert. He stopped suddenly and said, “I’ve got to tell you that eight years ago I was directing another choir in this anthem, and they made the same mistakes you’re making.” It wasn’t long before a voice from the back called out: “Same director!” *(Ruth Grotjohn, in Reader’s Digest)***

**Winston Churchill exemplified integrity and respect in the face of opposition. During his last year in office, he attended an official ceremony. Several rows behind him two gentlemen began whispering. “That’s Winston Churchill. They say he is getting senile. They say he should step aside and leave the running of the nation to more dynamic and capable men.” When the ceremony was over, Churchill turned to the men and said, “Gentlemen, they also say he is deaf!” *(Barbara Hatcher, in Reader’s Digest)***

**Our son, Rob, loved using the saw and hammer, but never seemed to clean up afterward. One day I was in the garage, stepping over the sawdust, and my hand automatically reached for the broom and dustpan. Suddenly, my brain ordered my body to stand still and appraise the situation. Instead of leaving the work area clean, I propped the broom against the workbench with the following note attached: “As ye saw, so shall ye sweep! Love, Mom.” *(Carnita Brandner, in Reader’s Digest)***

**A reader wrote to columnist Mike Royko at the Chicago Tribune: “How long have you been writing a column? A friend told me it is about 25 years, but I don't see how anybody as stupid as you could do it that long. It would be impossible, because you are as dumb as they come.” Royko replied, “Actually, it is more than 30 years. But you have spotted the secret of my longevity. Stupidity. When I write, I never think. Thinking would just slow me down. By the way, you might buy yourself a typewriter and give it a try. Your letter shows considerable promise.” *(Chicago Tribune)***

**David and his brother, Michael, were complete opposites. Michael was a successful businessman while David took seasonal jobs at dude ranches, parks and resorts. Concerned for David’s welfare, Michael tried to entice him with the good life. He would send David photos labeled “My new sound system” or “My...” The campaign ended when Michael received a poster from his brother showing a breathtaking view of Wyoming’s Grand Teton National Park. On the back was David’s message: “My back yard.” *(Nancy Vitavec, in Reader’s Digest)***

**A lady moving into a strange town called a dentist recommended by a friend. She was the name on his certificate on the wall, and remembered that a tall, handsome boy with the same name had been a member of her high school class some 40 years before. A first glimpse of the dentist revealed a partly bald head, graying hair, and a deeply-lined face, and she decided that he was much too old to have been in her class. She did ask him, though, if he had attended her school. An affirmative answer brought the question: When did you graduate?” “In 1940,” he replied. “Why, you were in my class!” she cried out. The dentist looked at her closely with a blank expression and then asked slowly: “What did you teach?” *(Los Angeles Times Syndicate)***

**My friend's husband always teases her about her lack of interest in household chores. One day he came home with a gag gift -- a refrigerator magnet that read “Martha Stewart doesn't live here.” The next day he came home to find the magnet holding up a slip of paper. The note read “Neither does Bob Vila.” *(Renee P. Futrelle, in Reader's Digest)***

**Louis B. Mayer, founder of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, once told about an experience in his childhood. He had a fight with another boy and lost. While his mother was bathing his black-eye, he told her how it was entirely the fault of the other boy that the fight had started. His mother said nothing, but when the bathing was completed, she took Louis to the back door of their home. Nearby were several hills that created a fine echo. She told him to call those hills all the bad names he could think of. He did so and the bad names all came back to him. “Now,” she said, “call out, ‘God bless you.’” He did so and back came “God bless you.” Mayer said he never forgot that lesson. What you give to others you get back from them. *(Bits & Pieces)***

**Having overlooked his electric bill, my brother received another from the utility company marked FINAL NOTICE. He immediately made out a check and mailed it in with the bill, which he changed to read FINALLY NOTICED. *(Sharon Cannon, in Reader’s Digest)***

**An American staying at an English hotel asked for the elevator. The concierge was puzzled but then understood, “You mean the lift,” he said. “No," the American replied, “I mean the elevator.” “Over here we call them lifts,” the concierge answered. “Listen here,” said the guest, “someone in American invented the elevator.” “Right you are, sir,” said the concierge politely, “but someone in England invented the language.” *(Rocky Mountain News)***

**I was having a drink at a local restaurant with my friend Justin when he spotted an attractive woman sitting at the bar. After an hour of gathering his courage, he approached her and asked, “Would you mind if I chatted with you for a while?” She responded by yelling at the top of her lungs, “No, I won't come over to your place tonight!” With everyone in the restaurant staring, Justin crept back to our table, puzzled and humiliated. A few minutes later, the woman walked over to us and apologized. “I'm sorry if I embarrassed you,” she said, “but I'm a graduate student in psychology and I'm studying human reaction to embarrassing situations.” At the top of his lungs Justin responded, “What do you mean two hundred dollars?” *(J. Smodish, in Reader's Digest)***

**The Truth is not always honest. The captain of a ship once entered in his log, “Mate was drunk today.” When the mate found it out, he pleaded with the captain to cross it out. He said it was the first time he’d ever been drunk and it wasn’t fair. But the captain said, “In this log we always write the exact truth.” The next week the mate kept the log. In it he wrote, “The captain was sober today.” *(Bits & Pieces)***

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*The flight from Sacramento to Los Angeles was a short one, but I still felt a pang of fear as I sat waiting for takeoff. On impulse, I asked a flight attendant to deliver this note to the cockpit: “Captain, please fly this thing carefully. My mother happens to think you’ve got valuable cargo on board.” A few minutes later the attendant returned, smiling, and handed back my note. On it the captain had penned: “Not to worry! My mother happens to think so too!” *(Jann Fling, in Reader’s Digest)***

**On a flight from New York City to Geneva, Switzerland, I sat next to a passenger who spent most of the time pestering and insulting the flight attendant. Nevertheless, the latter efficiently complied with every request. Suddenly my obnoxious seatmate said, “You’re the dumbest individual I’ve ever come across.” “And you are the most amiable I ever met,” the flight attendant calmly replied. “But it is just possible that we’re both wrong.” *(D.N., in Reader’s Digest)***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**A minister, rather noted for his close calculations, also operated a small farm in Vermont. One day he observed his hired man sitting idly by the plow, as his horses took a needed rest. This rather shocked the good man’s sense of economy. After all, he was paying the man 75 cents an hour. So, he said, gently but reproachfully, “John, wouldn’t it be a good plan for you to have a pair of shears and be trimming these bushes while the horses rest?” “That it would,” replied John agreeably. “And might I suggest, your reverence, that you take a peck of potatoes into the pulpit and peel ‘em during the anthem.” *(Woodmen of the World magazine)***

**A woman who lived in the suburbs was chatting over the back fence with her neighbor. “We're going to be living in a better neighborhood soon,” she remarked brightly. “So are we!” her neighbor replied. “What? Are you moving, too?” asked the first woman. “No,” was the reply. “We're staying here.” *(A. T. Quigg, in Catholic Digest)***

**I was the operator of our office's telex when we received several messages in French from Nigeria. I had learned a little of the language as a child and managed to send crudely phrased replies. One day a telex arrived from the Nigerian company in perfect English, and I asked them why they had never used English before. The response was: “Because you kept answering in French.” *(Janet Lacasse, in Reader's Digest)***

**One of Paganini’s favorite stunts was to play a whole piece on a single string of the violin, invariably arousing a frenzy of applause. The coachman who took him home after one of these exhibitions, charged him an exorbitant fare. “You are making so much money,” he explained, “there is no reason why I should not ask higher pay for my services.” “All right,” replied Paganini, “I will pay your price but only on condition that you give me a ride in a carriage with a single wheel.” *(Nicholas Slonimsky, in HiFi-Stereo)***

**The fire department in our small town was holding a pancake breakfast to raise money for equipment. Uncle Ebert, a longtime volunteer, asked a local businessman to buy a ticket. “I don’t eat pancakes!” the man told him brusquely. “And we don’t start fires,” Uncle Ebert shot back. The businessman bought two tickets. *(Ray Tegner, in Reader’s Digest)***

**A man was speeding down the highway, feeling secure in a group of cars all traveling at the same speed. However, as they passed a speed trap, he got nailed with an infrared speed detector and was pulled over. The officer handed him the citation, received his signature and was about to walk away when the man asked, “Officer, I know I was speeding, but I don’t think it’s fair. There were plenty of other cars around me who were going just as fast, so why did I get the ticket?” “Ever go fishing?” the policeman asked the man. “Um, yeah . . .,” the man replied. The officer grinned and added, “did you ever catch all the fish?” *(Rocky Mountain News)***

**A husband and wife were fighting, then stopped talking to each other, communicating only through notes. As they got ready for bed, the husband put a note next to his wife’s pillow that read, “Wake me up at six o’clock.” The next morning he jumped out of bed and, much to his alarm, saw it was already eight o’clock. His wife was gone, but next to his pillow was a note which read, “Wake up, it’s 6:00.” *(Tom R. Kovach, in The Saturday Evening Post)***

**As a painter and decorator, I pride myself on meticulous work. So I was horrified when, arriving at a job late one day, I found that my young partner had been hanging sheets of expensive wallpaper upside down. But since he had already done half the room, and time was short, we decided to continue the same way. Rather to my surprise, the owner of the house seemed delighted with the finished job. A few weeks later, however, when I received her check, every single word and figure was written upside down. *(E. Brown, in Reader’s Digest)***

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