

# People Love Your Sarcasm, Really

September 01, 2015

## *The Wall Street Journal:*

When Richard Laermer walked into an eyeglass store in Paris, he was surprised to find fewer than 10 frames for sale, each displayed on top of its own large pedestal. He looked for another room or some sign of a second floor. But that was it.

A clerk stopped dusting. “Hmmm?” he asked.

Mr. Laermer says he couldn’t resist his reply: “Don’t mind me,” he told the clerk. “I’m sure I’ll find something in the 30 seconds it will take to look over your inventory.”

Mr. Laermer was shown the door.

Does sarcasm have a place in polite conversation?

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Sarcasm has many uses, depending on the degree of sharpness. The most common is to allow someone to show a negative emotion but soften the blow with humor. “You can express anger but do it in a socially acceptable way,” says Roger Kreuz, a professor of psychology at the University of Memphis.

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“To express and understand sarcasm, you have to recognize that there is a distinction between the surface level meaning and what the intended meaning is,” says Adam Galinsky, a professor of business at Columbia Business School. “And this level of abstraction is one of the foundations of creativity.”

Read the whole story: [The Wall Street Journal](#)