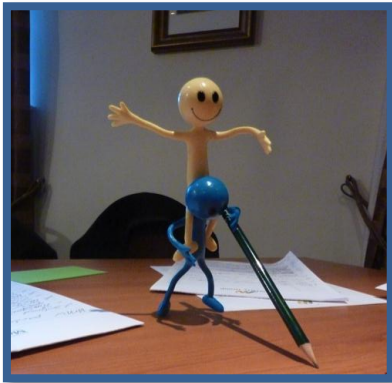


YES! AND... CREATIVE GORILLA # 76B

When we make a mistake, it is useful to draw some lessons from it...

Learn a Lesson in Communication...

"England and America are two countries separated by a common language." George Bernard Shaw, Playwright



One in the eye for communication

Have you ever had a communication perceived not as you intended?

In the original Gorilla 76 on "Lever Your Life" I made the remark:

"I could have attributed it [my lack of motivation] to the plumbers who installed our new bathroom, tradesmen who (despite being the bathroom supplier's referral) would have made "King of the Cowboys", Roy Rogers, a Native American squaw in comparison. They certainly made me miserable with their lies and bodes."

I received a few critical responses from readers who interpreted the remark as a slur on Native Americans and I assume that more people may have been offended, but chose not to write.

I have responded personally to those who wrote and I am writing this special edition for other readers to make my apologies, explain what I meant and to draw some lessons in communication from it.

First, if you did interpret it as a slur, I sincerely apologise. I intended none but did make some errors in communicating, in particular as the Gorilla is read in many different countries. To explain, I will use three questions that were sent to me by readers:

"Did you intend your readers to assume that cowboys are good and Native American squaws are not?"

No, I did not intend this. The term cowboy in Britain is used colloquially for bad tradesmen. I was seeking to illustrate that my plumbers so "out cowboyed" the King of the Cowboys they made him look like his opposite in film terms. Unfortunately, I did not recognise that it might be perceived negatively, which in hindsight was naive but not malicious.

"Did you mean that Native American squaws tend to tell lies and make bodes?"

Again I did not. I had added this last sentence on-line, after my editor had reviewed the original

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article, because I felt the need to emphasise that the plumbers had demotivated me. I was referring purely to the plumbers. However, I can see now that the juxtaposition of the phrases could lead to a different inference.

“Did I know that squaw is a pejorative term in North America?”

No I did not. In the UK, the word is old fashioned, not much used now, and traditionally, was and is not pejorative.

SO

What lessons (in fact reminders because I knew them all) can I and in turn others, draw from this episode? Mine are:

1. Whatever we intend to say when we communicate, we should realise that it might be interpreted differently by others. If we can check important communications with others, we should.
2. When we communicate cross culturally we need to be sensitive to the use of colloquialisms (cowboys) and to the possible different interpretation of words.
3. Don't add items after the editor has edited your work!

ACTION

Use the lessons as a useful reminder.

TO CLOSE

Ironically, I had a similar number of messages thanking me for the article because people had found the leverage concept useful. However, I

regret that what was meant to be an uplifting article for the New Year was the opposite for some. I have changed the remark now to:

“I could have attributed it [my lack of motivation] to the plumbers (a referral from our bathroom suppliers) who installed our new bathroom, tradesmen so bad we in Britain call them cowboys. They came in, spanners blazing and certainly made me miserable with their lies and bodes.”

*May even more success shine on you,
more people praise you and more energy fill
your heart throughout the year.*



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