

Aunt Bossy

Written by Susan Murphy

Tuesday, 05 February 2019 15:43 - Last Updated Wednesday, 06 February 2019 06:42



Petty is as Petty Does

Dear Aunt Bossy,

□□□□□□□□□□ *I have a friend who is constantly taking digs at me. They are sometimes subtle, and sometimes not. I really enjoy hanging out with her but do not understand her attitude. What should I do?*

□□□□□□□□□□ *Dolly*

Dear Dolly, (or should I say “hello?”)

First of all, this person is NOT your friend. However, that does not mean you have to drop her. We all hang out with people for different reasons, and, unless she is unbearable and as long as you still enjoy her company, no reason to give her up.

However, you do need to handle this. Here are some options.

Ask why she says what she says right after she says it. Use a soft and curious tone. When anyone said to my very savvy mother, “Is that a new dress?” with no comment preceding that question, my mother would smile and say, “Why do you ask?” That shut things down fast.

If someone is really nasty, you can always say, “Are you trying to hurt my feelings?”

If you want to demonstrate “nice,” in hopes that she will learn how to do “nice” you can say, “I know you don’t mean to be (rude/mean/nasty, you choose) but I wish you wouldn’t criticize me like that.

My favorite, which I have mentioned in earlier columns, is Cheerful and Stupid. I’ve used it in discussing a million dollar deal, and to shut down some dumb guy who is trying to make a move. I just act like I don’t get it. It usually confuses them.

Once you try one or both of these approaches, unless your “friend” is really unsophisticated, she will get the message and realize that it isn’t getting her any place.

Realize that anyone who is so desperate as to try to “put you in your place” by slipping in little knife cuts is either horribly insecure or insanely jealous, if not both.

Be nice. You can afford it.

Best,

Aunt Bossy

Beauty is as Beauty Does

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Dear Aunt Bossy,

I am, shall we say, older than 60. More and more often, people offer to help me with my luggage, compliment me on my “wisdom” and say I look good for my age. This outrages me. It is raw ageism and highly insulting.

I’ve worked my whole life and created a good career. I exercise and eat well. I know how to dress in an ageless and sophisticated way. I’m not some crone who spent her years sitting around eating and watching television. I deserve to be respected.

What would you suggest I do to cut these idiots off at the knees?

Fay

Oh, my, Fay,

You certainly never learned positive thinking or giving the other person the benefit of the doubt, even when they say something overtly awful, which none of the things you have mentioned are, did you?

You want respect? Here are some suggestions:

Stop looking for thorns and hugging them when you find them. Most, if not all, of the

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people who say these things are complimenting you, even though it may sound awkward to your highly refined ears. Say thank you.

You want respect? I bet that “old crone” who had none of your opportunities and looks twenty years older than you do (secretly proud that you look younger, aren’t you?) has done many things for which she deserves respect, too. Your making a snap judgment about her worth is much worse than people wanting to give you a compliment on all the hard work, energy and money you have put in to looking good as you proceed down the path of time.

Lighten up and stop thinking about how valuable you are and how dreadful other people are, especially the ones who are reaching out to you.

If you do that, even more people will tell you how good you look (for your age.)

Best,

Aunt Bossy

P.S. The remark I really despise is, “She must have been gorgeous when she was young.” Hate hearing that. Know it is true. We are all beautiful in some way. We just don’t have to search for it when looking at the young. It is nature. She rules.