

stupid and mean



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When I was a child in the playground of my village elementary school in the Loir-et-Cher, I remember the harassment of which the daughter of neighboring farmers Elisabeth was a victim. She was different, taller than the others and a few years behind, already mature enough to have small breasts and hair under her armpits. This was enough to make her the scapegoat of the children who believed in the survival of the fittest.

I remember how uncomfortable I felt. It was not easy to stand up on my own at the age of ten, it is not easier today. Before the internet, I'll let you imagine the number of children who had to suffer from the gratuitous meanness of others. As a child, it is common to be influenced and to act without thinking in a stupid and nasty way.

Today on social media it is obvious. When someone says something you don't agree with, you come and lecture them with contempt. Whether it's in real life or in our online ones, on a social network or in a particular group's messaging system, insulting others, putting them in their place by talking in condescending ways, taunting them by taking on the community that's present, even though the person has expressed an opinion without insulting anyone, it's violent, stupid and mean.

Have you noticed how we talk to each other? Do you often make fun of others and complain about being addressed in condescending ways? If you don't want to be insulted, start by not insulting others. Because if you do so, it's an insured boomrang effect; playing the game of being the stupidest, there are plenty of champions. I was educated with the advice to act towards others as I expect them to treat me, to do to them only what I'll allow them to do to me. Even though this comes from the bible, it could inspire you, since it's basic logic.

They will tell you this is the game: if you don't say anything, it doesn't happen! But if you expose your thoughts, don't be surprised if someone else who thinks they are smarter comes and corrects you. Our unabashed egos are engaged in virtual duels. As long as it's just a respectful debate of ideas, everything is fine. After all, we're no rocket scientists, and everyone is likely to make a mistake, admit it and learn from it. But why this need to humiliate others? What's the point? It's as simple as this: I crush (others) to feel superior (to them). I do it in front of an audience to feed my poorly regulated ego.

It's a common form of behavior of individualistic society, governed by the survival of the fittest, where one estimates oneself most often only by comparing oneself to the other, to others. 'People are stupid': okay, but 'people' are not condemned to remain so. People are me, you, us. The esteem of a person who acts like this is badly regulated; if he didn't take himself for an idiot, he would be more indulgent with the others. Don't get me wrong; having a good self-esteem doesn't mean that you're a big shot either.

You may think I'm 'fragile', but I'm just careful about toxic behavior. I say this because I used to play that game—I'm not proud of it. Since I've figured it out, I try to avoid it as much as I can and doing it again. And it's not because others allow themselves to do it that I want to do as they do. There are ways to be less suggestible than a child, aren't there? When someone disrespects me, I don't overplay my hand because it wouldn't lead to anything good. On the other hand, when I come across a champion of stupidity, I let him have the last word; and from now on I could answer with this text. That's also why I'm putting it here.

Before drawing your gun, ask yourself where the impulse is coming from, what fault it answers, if the other person wanted to hurt you or if he was just being clumsy. From you to me, we are only human, imperfect, susceptible to mistakes therefore perfectible. But here we are. And the funny thing is that we do this while pretending to fight against forms of domination. What if we tried to be nice, at least not to be gratuitously mean, to see the effect it has?



"Whom do you call bad? Those who always want to put others to shame."

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE