



WHAT'S FUNNY THERE?

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One of my daughters would often tell me stories when she comes home or while we hang up the laundry to dry every evening. She specially likes talking about the funny incidents that happen in their classroom. One time, she was telling me about the antics of a classmate who seemed to be their classroom's funny guy that I ended up teasing her, perhaps she liked this classmate. To which she vehemently replied OF COURSE NOT! We have not stopped the story-telling moments each and everyday. I must say that my daughter is a level-headed, responsible, serious girl. But I am really glad that every day she spends in school is peppered endlessly with amusement and humor from her classmates and great teachers.

I remember one time when my eldest son told me about an incident in their classroom when he was still in high school. Their teacher had been having a particularly bad day. It was totally ruined when one of my son's classmates made a funny rejoinder to something the pissed teacher had said. The unfortunate boy was sent out to stand outside the classroom for the remainder of the class period. Although the teacher's decision to give such a punishment was unquestionably his way of enforcing discipline (the school is a Catholic one for boys), I sometimes wonder whether the teacher would have found everything funny, too, had he not been steaming mad at the time.

As teachers to both young and adult students, we must never forget that humor is sometimes essential in making learning more enjoyable. The students we handle struggle to remember the lessons we impart to them, but they will definitely remember more those moments when we shared a laugh or two with them. Oceans might divide the countries we hail from, but it helps if we share with them, at least once in a while, what we consider as funny so they can understand our culture in the process. Let us allow our students to share the rationalizations to what constitutes humor for them so we can find common ground between us. If we continue to draw a decisively large dividing line, how else can we hope that what we teach them is well-understood?

I admit, several times during my online teaching career, I have been pissed at some students for trying to be funny. Only now do I realize that perhaps, those students were simply trying to draw me into their world so I can also draw them into mine. Humor, after all, is meant both to amuse and explain. Perhaps I was just too blind to see how.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What is humor to you?
2. What kinds of humor are not amusing to you? Why are they not humorous?
3. Share one particular humorous moment in your life. What makes that incident special?
4. Will you take the effort to explain to someone what makes something funny or will you just keep quiet about it? Why or why not?
5. Do you consider some things universally humorous? Name such things. What makes them so?