

How Being Sarcastic Will Hurt Your Family

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Do you want your family to trust you? One of the best ways for building trust is to say what you mean and mean what you say. Words are powerful, for good and bad. But perhaps no words are more damaging and trust-destroying than sharp, cutting words dripping with the ooze of sarcasm. What does sarcasm mean for families? Nothing but trouble.

If you're a master of sarcasm, you probably already know it. If you're not sure what you're saying is sarcastic, here's a simple definition: "The use of words that mean the opposite of what you really want to say especially in order to insult someone, to show irritation, or to be funny." Maybe you don't think sarcasm is all that bad or harmful. After all, you might think, I'm just being funny. But sarcasm can be worse than direct, blunt meanness. Why? Because sarcasm is basically meanness that's cloaked in an insincere compliment. Here are 5 ways being sarcastic will hurt your family.

1. Your family takes your "joking" words to heart.

Even if you're just kidding, sarcasm is dangerous. You may mean for your comments to be light-hearted, but your spouse and kids will take those words to heart, even if they know you're "just kidding."

2. You're planting a seed of doubt that maybe your sarcasm is really what you believe to be true.

This is even worse than when your family assumes your sarcasm is only a joke. In this case, they stop assuming you're joking and start believing that your sarcasm is how you really feel about them. Using sarcasm to point out your child's or spouse's physique issues, for example, will reinforce a negative image of themselves, made more believable because they're convinced that's what you think.

3. Your family might assume you mean something negative when you're trying to be sincere.

Then there are times when constant sarcasm gets in the way of a sincere comment. When your family hears you always being sarcastic, your sincere words are doubted or easily dismissed as more sarcasm.

4. Your sarcasm is a conversation killer that shows you're not taking others seriously.

Sarcasm is a foolish way to crush real conversation. Often, sarcasm masks insecurities and causes families to avoid talking about uncomfortable things. If you want to shut down critical thinking, just start throwing a bunch of sarcastic comments out and see if you can get anyone to continue talking seriously with you.

5. Your sarcasm is often masking a bigger issue – a symptom of a bigger thing.

“Sarcastic comments really may be a surface problem that you're struggling with.” Sarcastic comments really may be a surface problem that you're struggling with. Anger and discontent behind sarcasm in adults also stress kids out as they see your stress. Maybe there's something else that needs some counseling or attention.

If you find yourself being sarcastic too often:

- ✧ It's always a good start to admit you've hurt someone and regret it.
- ✧ Give your family permission to point out to you when you're saying something sarcastic and hurtful.
- ✧ Restate what you really mean. When you catch yourself, stop, rethink it, and be straightforward.
- ✧ Say what you mean. Mean what you say.