

Sue Thompson's BeExceptional

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IT MATTERS TO ME AND TO US

I must apologize for what bugs me.

I apologize because I know that what bugs me does not bother the majority of people I know. There is a percentage of my friends, relatives, and acquaintances who, when I mention what I'm about to share, speak up and say, "Me, TOO!" They are, however, only a smallish percentage, and so I usually stay silent about what bugs me until I have a forum such as this to explain once again why it's important to consider some things.

So, I apologize that what's bugging me lately is the misuse of "you and I." I am faced almost daily with someone who misuses this phrase, as in, "This is going to have a great impact on you and I." I bite my tongue. I have a conversation with myself. I do not correct the person by saying out loud, "That's 'you and me.'"

I want to say it out loud. I say it out loud when someone on television uses "you and I" without hesitation when the proper statement would be "you and me." I say out loud, "It's not going to have an impact on I. It's going to have an impact on YOU and on ME."

Someone will say, "That car belongs to Bob and I." No; that car belongs to Bob and it belongs to me, so the car belongs to Bob and me.

"You and I" might go to the store together, because you go and I go. You and me don't go to the store. Him and me don't go to the store, because I wouldn't say "Him is going to the store," and I wouldn't say, "Me is going to the store," but he is and I am so I'd say, "He and I are going to the store."

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When I hear this kind of convoluted, I-think-this-makes-me-sound-smart kind of mangling of language rules, I can't help it: I cringe inside. I apologize for this, but it sounds dumb. It sounds dumb even if I know you're really bright and know how to do things. It sounds dumb even if I respect you. It won't cause me to disrespect you. It won't make me dislike you or ignore you, because I know you and I know this is just one of those things that doesn't matter enough to most people to work at getting right.

It takes a little bit of thought, you see, to stop for a nanosecond and separate the two pronouns to see how they fit into a sentence. "Her and I" grates on the chalkboard of the mind like fingernails to those of us who know it's "she and I." In the same way, it takes effort to prevent making a face when we hear something like this: "It's Jill and my's favorite restaurant." Think: it's Jill's favorite restaurant. It's my favorite restaurant. Therefore, it's Jill's and my favorite restaurant.

I've heard people on television who say, after a lengthy interview in which I have concluded they are reasonably intelligent, "My wife and I's plans are to stay here." I backtrack and wonder how intelligent they might actually be. I can't help it, because "I's" isn't a word, and I have to think about who doesn't know that. "I's plans are to stay here" isn't something most people who speak reasonably good English would say. "My wife's plans are to stay here. My plans are to stay here." So that means the person should state, "My wife's and my plans are to stay here."

Again, I know I'm not in the majority of those who care about such things. I honestly know highly intelligent people who don't spell correctly or use proper grammar. It doesn't make me refuse to deal with them.

But that's me, and the truth is I have known men and women who will pass

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someone over for a promotion because the person can't express himself or herself intelligently. I know of people who deliberately dismiss others for writing in an email, "My mother fell but thank goodness, didn't brake any bones."

Here's the thing: how can you know who those people are, especially if it's your first time meeting them? What if you need something from them, like a job? What if you depend upon their assessment of your abilities and you have no idea how they go about assessing whether or not you've got what it takes? How will you know if, when you say, "Me and him were in the same economics class," the person on whom you're depending does a mental shutdown because you couldn't be bothered to figure out how to speak like someone with an education?

You don't know. I don't know. You and I don't know. So let's just say it correctly all the time and avoid any misunderstandings.*



Ladies, if you want to know the way to my heart . . . good spelling and good grammar, good punctuation, capitalize only where you are supposed to capitalize, it's done. ~ John Mayer

I never made a mistake in grammar but one in my life and as soon as I done it I seen it. ~ Carl Sandburg

Ending a sentence with a preposition is something up with which I will not put. ~ Winston Churchill

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YOUR

Click here listen to interesting people talk about their character strengths!

CHARACTER IS SHOWING

Character Studies

It's been a while since I've interviewed someone of character for my series at www>YourCharacterIsShowing.com. I've been crazy busy and have had barely a moment to consider who might be an excellent candidate to take the VIA character strengths profile and interview on how their top strengths guide them in business and in life.

So let me ask for YOUR input: is there someone you know who exemplifies the meaning of "good character"? Who do you think would benefit by taking the extensive character strengths survey and talking to me in an hour-long recorded interview about how his or her top strengths provide motivation?

People fascinate me. Character and talent fascinate me. Contact me with the names and emails of one or two people you know who might fascinate me and I'll follow up! (If you need a sense of what I'm talking about, go to www>YourCharacterIsShowing.com and listen to one of the interviews.)

About Sue

Sue Thompson is a personality expert, etiquette trainer, and an instructor in life lessons. Her work on recognizing and developing talent, identifying personalities and working effectively with the people who possess them, responding appropriately to difficult experiences, treating others with respect, and behaving like a professional have caused companies and business organizations throughout the country to value her consulting skills. She trains those entering the workforce how to present themselves with style and authority; new employees in the importance of respecting one's work and the workplace; managers in the value of understanding employees' talent and temperament; and everyone in the timeless rules of behavior that will always bespeak excellence.

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