

Taking Something Literally

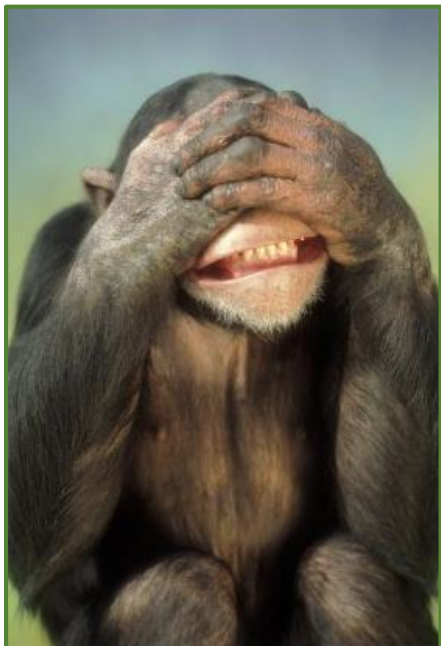
A dictionary definition of the word *literal* is: “according to the letter; primitive, real, not figurative or metaphorical, as the literal meaning of a phrase.”

I’m reminded of a story about Mark Twain, American author and humorist whose real name was Samuel Langhorne Clemens. While working as a cub reporter for a newspaper, he was told by his editor never to state as fact anything that he could not personally verify.

Because he was the type of person – known for his wit and satire in prose and speech – Twain decided to take those instructions literally. So he wrote about a social event in this manner:

“A woman, giving the name of Mrs. James Jones, who is reported to be one of the society leaders of the city, is said to have given what purported to be a party yesterday to a number of alleged ladies. The hostess claims to be the wife of a reputed attorney.”

My guess is that article was the talk of the town when the newspaper was published and the society pages opened.



On the subject of taking instructions literally, the late Zig Ziglar, author and motivational speaker, enjoyed telling this story:

“I was getting my regular eye examination from my friend and ophthalmologist, Dr. Nathan Lipton, who has quite a unique sense of humor. As we moved through the various stages of the examination, he told me to cover my left eye, which I did. A few seconds later, he said, ‘Now cover your right eye,’ and I proceeded to cover my right eye without removing my left hand from my left eye. Needless to say, that’s not what Dr. Lipton had in mind, but we both broke out laughing.”

We chuckle at both of these stories. The truth is, many times when someone tells us something, they expect us to use a little common sense in listening to and hearing what they say.

The work we are called to do in Life Care and Century Park is one of great responsibility. But have a little fun as you go through life; find the joy in what you do.

As opportunity presents itself, take some things to be literally true and act accordingly – the chuckle you get out of it will brighten your day and help someone else feel happier, too.

A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones (Proverbs 17:22 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter