

Opinion on pranks is divided strongly among two groups. There are those that think it is hilariously acceptable. And then there are those that have been pranked. Unlike a good knock-knock joke, a prank requires we laugh at someone. There needs to be a victim at the proverbial butt end of the ha-ha. Is there a right and wrong way to do it? Can you learn it the way you can learn how to fly a plane? Possibly.

When I was in school, computers were largely large and fragile. We would often carry hard drive disks (HDD, also pronounced 'hooddh') around to transfer files because someone forgot to invent the USB flash drives oin time for us. Hard drives were so fragile, no one could sneeze or fart loudly while carrying them.

Once, couple of friends and I were hanging out at home trying to choose between our usual topics of cars, women and computers. We were holding a memorial service for a recently dead hard drive that took along many games and movies as hostage. More friends were yet to turn up. How hilarious would it be if we threw the dead hard drive at them?

First guy that walked in froze as the hard drive went flying after I shouted 'catch'. With a metal object weighing a few kilograms flying at him, he obviously froze and it nearly landed on his foot. Completely disregarding his near decapitation, another friend looked in horror and played out a fake rage for ruining a perfect hard drive full of Sasha Grey's greatest hits. I blamed the friend that couldn't catch it. And we all turned on him like a Kardashian family feud. His face went blank as he refused to pay for it. Long story short, we did that to yet another friend who showed up next. We are surprisingly still friends.

It was hilarious. Even the victims found it funny a few months later. Only good friends play terrible pranks. And that's apparently okay because

you know each other's house and parents/spouse to complain to. Perfectly okay?

Unless you are a celebrity or a YouTuber hoping to make it big in the world of likes-for-likes. Comedy sells almost as much as sex. People want to laugh so they can escape the thought of facing Dhaka traffic. Online celebrities want to cash in on that desire. A recent Bangladeshi radio celeb played a prank call on a couple informing them that their newborn was switched at the hospital. While the presenter found it hilarious, the parents of the newborn were mortified. They had already bought the baby clothes and furniture. This was not cool.

Pranks demonstrate a balance of power. You do not prank your boss or the 'parar maastan' because that will



HOW NOT TO PRANK LIKE A CELEBRITY

hurt. People usually prank someone below them in the hierarchy of fist power. Pranksters revel in the sense of power over someone as they can make someone laugh or cry. Much like Facebook comment likes, this has no real value. Yet, the radio presenter felt right to make the mother cry. And some people laughed. Most were outraged though. What did the radio station do? Added a disclaimer to "skip video if you can't take a joke".

The real joke here is that substandard content creators are cheap and available, as originality is a tough game to master. There is a fine line between joke and harassment. The Vlogging culture is hungry for quick likes and shares. Good ideas are hard work though and most people, like our radio presenter, take the easy route.

Celebrities have a responsibility because people follow them. The kids that watch them will think this is what

garners popularity. Is this what young, impressionable kids should learn? Another recent video by a few young friends showed a boy being verbally and physically abusive with a young girl while proposing to her last month. They screamed and shouted. Their message? None.

But, there is good content out there. Stuff that is truly hilarious. Learn from the ones that actually do it well without being crass. Or just watch hilarious dog (Doug The Pug) or cat (Aarons Animals) videos and get a simpler taste of humour.

Laughter has always been an excellent medicine. But some people may need medicine for the reasons they find things funny.

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