

When I was a confused high school kid, a friend's dad sat us down and told us one of those great secrets of life. He told us to avoid three topics of discussion among friends: women, religion and politics.

We were mostly pimply kids with an unhealthy, asphyxiating fascination for cologne. We discussed women because, well, we were kids. We did not truly grasp the depth of the matter and thought 'women' were harmless till more than one friend showed a fascination for a particular member of the opposite sex.

The minefield of religion was much easier to understand in terms of avoidance. But politics was the ultimate killer,

not when we were hormone riddled kids but when we grew older. The older you get, the worse it becomes, much like a baby tarantula. It is never cute and can quickly grow up to kill you.

Yet, there is no escaping discussions on politics. Someone somewhere is bound to come up and make a statement on the state of affairs. You will either become enraged or want to become an MP. So how do you survive this minefield? Do what a politician does.

#### FAKE IT

Last week, my Uber driver started a conversation stating how his constituency simply doesn't give a hoot for the working man. He was quite mad at 'The Man' who was responsible for making the life of the working man (in obvious small caps) miserable.

"We work hard and they take all our money. We buy these beat up old cars and they get tax-free luxury off roaders".

My driver was getting quite agitated and it felt like he was ready to ram into any SUV that was black and official looking. I decided I wanted to live. I really wanted to live because my friend was treating me to dinner at Pit Grill and you do not miss out on a free steak.

I decided to fake it. More precisely I decided to fake a mental disease as exhibited by one of our esteemed politicians recently when he stepped out of the offices and responded to reporter's queries with just one word, "Noka, noka, noka, noka." Any word will work as long as you appear deranged while saying it. People will just let you go. Unless they are the police.

I poked my head out the window and started shouting at random people passing by. The driver shut up, sped up and quickly dropped me off. I somehow still retained my 5.0 rating.

#### AVOID

Politicians love to avoid facts and terrible accusations supported by facts. They simply get into their black tinted window cars and drive off. What do you do as a lowly peasant? What if your boss poses a question? Easy. You smile. Nod. Excuse yourself from the moment, walk outside, go to a travel agent, get your passport and leave the

country. At the very least, you pretend that you have stomach pains. Would you want to talk further with a person who is clearly about to need new pants? No. You want them off your sofa.

I have gotten out of many a terrible precursor to a political topic by simply going to the toilet and sneaking out the front door and running fast.

#### LIE

A bad lie is an obvious distortion of reality like each time the leader of the free world refuses to acknowledge that his trade embargoes are costing jobs in his country. A good lie is a carefully crafted misdirection that could save lives like each time the leader of the free word wears his sentient hairpiece. You use only the misdirection.

When someone is busy giving you their views on the current state of affairs, carefully point out how Russia is working at training cats to man their nuclear silos. It throws them off balance and you can quickly make an escape before they can google the truth using our restricted bandwidth.

#### THROW TANTRUMS

Get mad, do it often. When someone poses their view on politics when you would obviously concentrate on eating your overpriced cheesecake, just get mad.

"This is wrong. This is terrible. This is bad."

And then walk off mumbling and muttering how the world needs to change. Everybody loves a rousing call to action on change as long as someone else does the changing. If you appear to be leading the change, people will sit back and watch so they can make memes about you later.

And there you have it, avoid politics like a politician. Politics is a touchy subject mostly because it involves people you would not want to touch with a twenty ft radioactive pole. Or, maybe you would. In fact, that is the only way you would.

Ehsanur Raza Ronny is a confused dad, all round car guy, model car builder and cartoonist. Currently Editor of Shift (automobiles), Bytes (technology) and Next Step (career) for The Daily Star.

## How to talk about politics without losing friends, family and job



ILLUSTRATION: EHSANUR RAZA RONNY

us on /Sandalina

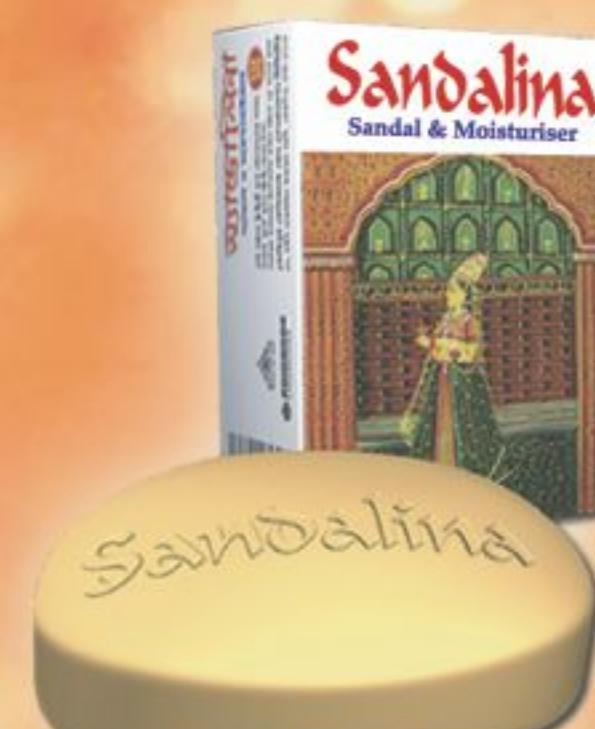


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