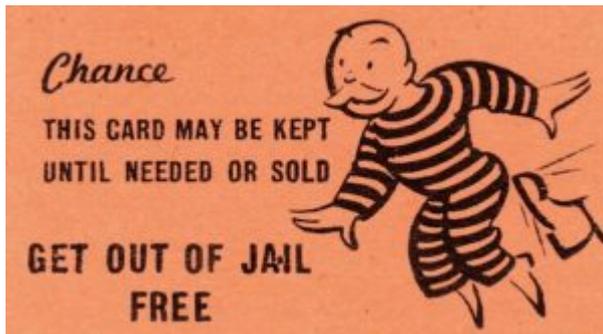


Aw, I was just kidding



When I was young, I was picked on in school.

Not all the time. Perhaps because, despite being scrawny and nerdy, I liked playing sports and was decent at them. You don't get picked on as much if you're decent at sports.

But, being scrawny and nerdy, I still got picked on. For being scrawny or nerdy or liking to draw or liking to read.

Standard stuff: name-calling, pushing, pranking. The usual response to a protest of the treatment was some version of, "Can't you take a joke?"

Occasionally it would cross a line and someone would get in trouble. The usual response by the culprit was some version of, "Aw, I was only kidding."

These days, America is being picked on. For being who they are, or having their own point of view or believing in something different.

The most current response from the Insulter in Chief is, "They don't get sarcasm?"

As a master of sarcasm, perhaps one of the elite of sarcasm (ask anyone who knows me...I may be the best, believe me), I get sarcasm. I know sarcasm. Mr. Trump, *you* don't get sarcasm.

Sarcasm can be harsh or cold or even mean. It lends itself to exaggeration and, done right, it can be quite funny. But it is not outright lying.

Lying should require an apology, but we know Mr. Trump doesn't make those. Instead, he uses cheap outs like, "I was being sarcastic" or "It was a joke". That doesn't make the victim of the "joke" feel any better. It doesn't make the perpetrator feel any regret. And the cycle continues.

You don't get a free pass for terrible comments and actions by simply pretending you were kidding.

I've heard Mr. Trump described many negative ways, much of them I find ridiculous and disagree with. The one that fits with absolute certainty, though, is "bully".

After so many times protesting the same behavior, you might think I should just give it a rest. You might say he's not going to change. You might believe his supporters won't care.

The day we stop calling out wrongs in the world, the day we stop trying to encourage respect and decency, the day we stop wanting the world to be a better place – that's the day humanity is truly lost.

And I'm not kidding at all.