



Social Q's: How to Survive the Quirks, Quandaries, and Quagmires of Today

By Philip Galanes

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A modern comedy of manners that shows what passes for good behavior today, from the *New York Times* “Social Q’s” columnist Philip Galanes.

A cornerstone of *The New York Times*’s Styles section, Philip Galanes confronts today’s most awkward and pressing questions with laugh-out-loud dish and practical wisdom. Not only about the new ways to thank a friend for throwing you a bridal shower, or how to deal with a noisy neighbor, but also how to navigate a new age crowded with Tweets, twits, OMGs, and WTFs, *Social Q’s* is a knockout book that will guide you swiftly through the treacherous terrain of modern etiquette—and keep you laughing for days.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Social Q's" is a hilarious set of solutions to all the problems we're lucky to have. A must-read survival guide."--Christian Landers, author of "Stuff White People Like"

"SOCIAL Q'S by Philip Galanes is the one book you need to help guide you through some of life's toughest social challenges! It's smart, funny, and incredibly practical." --Peter Walsh, "New York Times" bestselling author of "Lighten Up" and "It's All Too Much"

"Philip knows his way around an awkward situation--but enough about us!" --Kathie Lee & Hoda

"I love Philip Galanes' "New York Times" column! And the book is a must! "Social Q's" is a beacon of light in the foggy haze of today's world." --Jessica Seinfeld

"Consider SOCIAL Q's your funny, wise and indispensable guide for honing, improving and finessing YOU--your own special creation!"--George Wayne, contributing editor, "Vanity Fair"

"Zesty, zingy, zippy, zany. Everything I want to say about the funny and very talented Philip Galanes starts with the letter z. He and SOCIAL Q'S are truly zonderful."--Henry Alford, humorist and author of "How to Live: A Search for Wisdom from Old People (While They Are Still On This Earth)"

"Life in the 21st century is one rude awakening after another. But now we have Philip Galanes' SOCIAL Q'S to the rescue--very smart, very funny advice for sidestepping any etiquette A-bomb."--Kendall Farr, author of "The Pocket Stylist" and "Style Evolution"

"Philip Galanes has made a name for himself as a weekly columnist doling out important advice on social etiquette and now has collected all this wisdom in one terrific book called "Social Q's". But all this leaves me to wonder what an expert on social etiquette was thinking when he asked a busy woman in the throes of redecorating her apartment to take valuable time away from her rabbit to write a book blurb?"--Amy Sedaris

About the Author

Philip Galanes is the author of "Social Q's," the advice column published weekly in the Sunday Styles section of *The New York Times*. Philip is also an entertainment lawyer and novelist. He was born and raised in New England, and graduated from Yale College and Yale Law School. He occasionally sidelines as an interior designer, and his projects have been published in *Architectural Digest*, *Elle Décor*, *New York* magazine, and *The New York Times*. Visit him at PhilipGalanes.com.

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Introduction

Not Your Mummy's Advice Column

What should I do?

I get it all day long.

I'm pretty sure the woman who swims laps next to me at the Y is peeing in the pool. What should I do?

It started a few years back, when I began the Social Q's advice column for the Sunday Styles section of the *New York Times*.

My boyfriend has an identical twin that I'm strangely hotter for than I am for him. What should I do?

Since then, the questions come faster than a drunken starlet behind the wheel of a speeding Maserati.

My dad seems to have mixed up my cell phone number with the number of the woman he's seeing behind my mother's back. He sends *her* sexy texts that are freaking *me* out. What should I do?

At the outset, I was afraid that *Times* readers might play it safe, bringing me their old-fashioned etiquette conundrums or mild "Dear Abby" conflicts: When do I use that teeny-tiny fork? What's the right paper stock for my wedding invitation?

Who cares?

And it turns out, I needn't have worried.

My sister goes to work looking like a hooker. What should I do?

From the very beginning, readers set a thoroughly modern tone for my Social Q's column. They write in from all over—people of every age, gender, geography, and social background. And they stride happily to the very edges of our brave new world: where nonstop technology and never-ending pop culture and the once-separate realms of personal and public space have exploded all over each other, pushing us into each other's faces in ways that Grammy and Gramps could never have imagined.

Accidental sexy text messages from our father ... hello?!

These candid questions demand payback, in spades. So my job is to rush in where angels fear to tread, doling out advice that's tart but tender—and not above the occasional bitch slap. In short, I try to be the best friend you've never met.

The walking wounded must be comforted, of course, and grievous wrongdoers must be spanked. But these are complicated times—and we've all done a thing (or three) we shouldn't have—so I'm not shy about pointing out the good qualities in bald-faced liars. (Maybe they're lying to save our feelings?) And a Goody Two-Shoes reeking of sanctimony has little to look forward to from me but a Krystle Carrington chop across the cheek.

And that's how Social Q's was born, starting with the very first question and answer:

Q

My boyfriend assumed I was Jewish when we met on JDate, a website for Jewish singles. I didn't correct him at the time because I was afraid he'd dump me. Now, months later, I'm afraid he's going to dump me because I didn't tell the truth. I really like this guy. What should I do?

—*Christiana, New York City*

A

Listen up, Golda (L)eir. In case you hadn't noticed, there's a wee difference between letting an awkward moment pass and masquerading as a Jew for months. Where to next, Gay.com?

I know it can be hard, living as a single in a world full of doubles. But you didn't just fail to "correct" your beau. You lied, having calculated that he might not like the truth. And that's a surefire way to sabotage a relationship.

Clear the air as soon as possible: Just sit your guy down and apologize. Explain that you were feeling vulnerable, but don't let it sound like an excuse—or worse, an attempt to shift the blame to him for making you feel that way. Remember, you'll be one short step from "freak show" when you finally come clean, and you still have to convince him that your lie was an aberration.

He may be furious, or decide you're too manipulative to date, but there's a chance he'll be flattered by the lengths you went to win him over. And who knows? He may have a whopper to get off his chest too.

P.S. What kind of Jew is named "Christiana"?

Social Q's: The Book

Here's the thing: Deep down, we all *want* to do the right thing. But in this age of texting and tweeting, online dating and "Real Housewives of One Too Many Cities," things can get complicated—fast. And when they do, or when you can't even picture what the "right thing" might look like, that's when you've stumbled into Social Q's territory.

Lucky for you, you're not alone anymore.

I've sifted through years of columns (and thousands of questions I haven't had space to answer)—hunting for patterns and culling my sagest advice—to help you navigate the horrible range of awkward moments we all suffer through right now: at home, at work, online, and (even more frequently these days) in the crossroads. From hotsy-totsy bosses on Facebook to scorched-earth exes moving in across the hall.

In this book, chapter by chapter, we'll visit the awkward nooks and crannies of our daily lives, from the moment you wake up (and hopefully, brush your teeth) to your last act of waking consciousness (checking your Match.com mailbox, of course). I'll give you some tools and techniques for making those sticky situations less so. And in the process, I'll answer a raft of illustrative Social Q's from my intrepid readers at the *New York Times*.

But before we begin, I need to ask a favor ...

Starting Principle: Forget Everything You Know!

Well, not everything, just that little thing we learned in third grade about treating everyone the same.

Because that's crazy talk!

Our country may be founded on the proposition that "all men are created equal," but that hardly means we're all the same. Simply put: Handling a stinky boss is just plain different from handling a smelly housekeeper.

(I'm sorry, but it is.) And the faster you master the difference, the sweeter-smelling the world will be.

Navigating the Black Forest of awkward moments demands a gimlet-eyed assessment of who we are versus who the other guy is. Angelina Jolie is not the girl next door, and Reese Witherspoon never plays the sexy stripper. Self-knowledge allows them to choose their roles wisely—and figure out how much of their clothing to keep on.

The same goes for the rest of us. If you're the smartest-gal-in-the-room type, the best response to your awkward problem won't be the same as for the people pleaser down the hall. Our personalities establish the parameters of our most plausible behavior. Because the Bible was right: Leopards do not change their spots—not without laser surgery anyway.

And who is the *other guy*, by the way: a microphone-grabbing Kanye West or a poor little Taylor Swift? (Or for the old folks: a booming Barry White or a high-pitched Joni Mitchell, preciggies.) Is your opponent a teeny-tiny Olsen twin, while we tower over her like LeBron James? Or is she the dragon lady CEO, playing against our milquetoast from the mailroom?

Responding to life's thorniest problems is not a one-size-fits-all proposition. It requires a keen awareness of who we are in relation to other people. Call it contextual IQ. And the more we hone it, the more likely we are to skate over life's thinnest ice without plunging into freezing water and ruining our makeup.

So armed, *Social Q's* will guide us toward our best behavior, helping us navigate the trickiest obstacle courses we can stumble into, and increasing the likelihood of making it through the day in one piece.

Sound good?

Okay, let's get started. And please don't forget to turn off your cell phone, pager, and other portable mobile devices.

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Terry Tyrrell:

Your reading 6th sense will not betray a person, why because this Social Q's: How to Survive the Quirks, Quandaries, and Quagmires of Today book written by well-known writer we are excited for well how to make book that can be understand by anyone who else read the book. Written in good manner for you, leaking every ideas and creating skill only for eliminate your hunger then you still skepticism Social Q's: How to Survive the Quirks, Quandaries, and Quagmires of Today as good book not just by the cover but also from the content. This is one book that can break don't evaluate book by its cover, so do you still needing a different sixth sense to pick that!?! Oh come on your looking at sixth sense already alerted you so why you have to listening to one more sixth sense.

John Ashcraft:

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Donald Chen:

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