



THE **Art**
OF THE TEASE

A tribute to an overlooked talent.

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The way his sheepish grin slowly conquers his face, the youthful sparkle in his laughing eyes as he revels in a deliberately lame wordplay of his creation, the way he casually plays with his car keys, effortlessly, fully absorbed in loudly sharing his entertaining perspectives - all speaks of a man of format. **I'm sure that guy reminds you of someone.**

It already annoyed us back in school. There were these kids that just got away with things. Mind you, not the ones studying hard and being nice to the teacher. I'm talking about the mischievous chaps who invested all their energy in doing whatever they pleased. The popular ones that got the girls whom you and everyone else wanted to be friends with. Full of energy and always ready to pull off an act, they were crowd pleasers, and teasing was in their nature. Having spent most of my school days in the vicinity of such individuals, I can still feel my equal fascination and frustration in trying to understand their gift. Like everyone else, I consoled myself with the thought that in real life, things would be different. I believed that in the grown-up world, the quiet, solid achievers would be the cool kids. At some point, I realised that it was all a big fat lie - that those high school heroes had something going for themselves which would make them successful beyond their teenage years, and that people who got away with things would remain in our ranks. After all these years, I think I know their secret - before I elaborate, let us take a closer look at our specimen:

It seems as though mastering the art of the tease is an avenue to personal freedom in society. Unimpressed by constraints others perceive as limiting, the teaser is upfront about doing exactly what he wants and radiates an air of freedom and independence. Instead of living a life of adapting to others, he remains fully in control of his time. His charm, independence, and nonchalant nature are surreptitiously - and not so quietly - admired and envied. Women desire him, and men yearn to be like him. Endowed with excellent etiquette, teasers adapt their spiel at work. They know how far to go and when to keep quiet. Their approach is subtle, but the magic still works, all the same.

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As a student of the art of the tease, it is wise to ask yourself a few questions to begin with:

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*Do I care more
about my personal
success or creating
a better world?*
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*Am I satisfied or
dissatisfied with
the way the world
works today?*
”

“
*Do I love playing
roles or am I most
content being
openly myself?*
”

I like to think that there are two major archetypes of teasers - let us call them Jokers and Philosophers.

Jokers live and think in the present, and their principal influence strategy is to coax impulse decisions out of people in a non-intrusive fashion. In a way, they are hardball negotiators that legitimise their conduct by means of their lovable, sheepish nature. They are excellent seducers, but their approach is less effective in earning a long-term advantage in life. Jokers are extremely playful and excellent in the company of children. As virtuosos of situational comedy and spontaneous stand-up performers, they capture crowds with ease. Jokers live and love to be heard, but apart from getting their way, have little intention of using their influence.

Philosophers, on the other hand, are subtler and more driven at the same time. They are full of ideas and known for their optimism, quirkiness and infectious vision of the future. Their lives are proudly divergent, and they always look for better alternatives to mainstream solutions. Their eloquence, warmth and vivid self-expression inspire the people around them. Philosophers exert strong indirect influence on their environment through the conversations they have with people. Admired for their impressive creativity, idealism and original perspective, they live by example and desire to have an impact on the world.

The art of teasing is a balancing act. It's an interplay of dominance and accommodation, revelation and disguise, empathy and aloofness, compliment and insult, all with an air of innocence. Masters of the tease are likely to be a combination of our two archetypes. On top of that, all apprentice teasers require the following basics: First, a sharp understanding of social dynamics is essential. Using his high emotional intelligence and excellent observation skills, he captivates his audience and dominates social situations without appearing over the top, upfront or confrontational. This puts him at the centre of attention, where he is in a unique position to influence the people around him in the way he desires, subtly and effectively. Second, the teaser keeps an air of secrecy around his social agenda. He discloses little information about himself, inviting people's curiosity as to the real person within. His actions are unpredictable, making him even more interesting and socially desirable. He loves spontaneity - one of many expressions of his independence.



Why do teasers succeed?

In a world predominantly occupied with sincerity and conformity, we are taught from an early age that a solid education and the willingness to follow rules and blend in are the cornerstones of advancement in life - but those traits may only be sufficient to turn us into mediocre individuals. Meanwhile, the stuff that really matters receives

little mention. As a result, the ambitious man must draw inspiration from other places to learn the rules of living well.

The true genius of masters of the tease lies in winning over the people around him while being different from them at the same time, allowing him to proudly rebel against conformity without ever being seen as an outsider. Every one of us has the urge to be true to ourselves and be accepted just the way we are, yet we live by the norm on a daily basis. The reason we admire these masters of the tease is because they manage the tension between pursuing their individualism and being well-liked by the group extremely well – in that sense, they are the embodiment of our dreams to be absolutely free yet remain socially supported. They get away with things because they live an innocent fantasy that most human beings share. We may be frustrated that we are not like such individuals, but at the back of our minds, we still admire them.

While I believe that most people stuck in a routine existence at some point toy with the idea of pursuing their dreams and giving up on the comfortable, yet not truly fulfilling life they lead, follow-through is rare. The art of the tease offers a better alternative, allowing people to claim the independence and leeway they desire within the social context they have grown accustomed to. Modern-day masters of the art of tease have worked out a perfect strategy to achieve this and are therefore excellent role models in life. Whatever their mission, rest assured that they know how to get there. **[1]**



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