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By Walter "SKEETER" Seavey, Education Director

That is my Gag

You are using this gag. You considered it "YOUR GAG." Then all of a sudden, one day, one of the clowns in your group or the group next to your is using "YOUR GAG." This gag could be a walk-around, skit, magic trick. It really doesn't matter. This gag may have been one you created or it may have been one of the old classics no body else is using or even a published gag that you perfected. That doesn't matter, it's still "YOUR GAG."

On the other hand, you see this "CLOWN" trying to perform a gag. You know you can really make this gag go over big. The clown doing the gag may not have been funny or may only use it "Once in a Blue Moon." You want to add it to your arsenal. Afterall, there is no patent on a gag.

What is the proper way to handle this problem? The best way is to be up front about it. Don't ever use a gag that is being done by someone else without getting permission. If you would like to use the gag, go up to the clown and ask permission to use it. The clown may give you permission or not. If that clown gives you permssion, well and good, but if that clown says NO, we should heed that clown's wishes. Find another gag that will work for you. Of you are given permission to do a gag, try not to do it when you are working with the clown that gave it to you.

Now let's talk about what you should do when a fellow Joey asks to use one of your gags. If you are like me, you have some gags that are sacred. You also have some other gags that are not as important to you. Most clowns will rarely part with gags they consider sacred. If asked to use one of the other gags, that should be another story. When asked to give uprights on a gag, remember, to do so may help this clown achieve goals, help rejuvenate interest, or maybe help the clown to take a further step in clowning. I personally only have a few gags I consider "SACRED" gags. A lot of the gags I do are "UP FOR GRABS," if a clown asks for them. Most of the time, when you allow your gag to be copied, it gives you a great sense of accomplishment. Remember that plagiarism is the best form of flattery. There are still some sacred gags that you do not want copied. If asked to part with one of these gags, offer an alternative, if possible. It would probably surprise you which of my gags I consider sacred.

If another clown takes your gag without permission, especially if it is a new clown, go up to the clown and explain that one should not take another clown's gag without permission. Let the clown know if they have permission to use the gag in the future. Do not be ugly, butuse it as a learning tool. Don't assume they should know better. Most clowns that use a gag without permission do so without thinking.

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