

Seven Spiders Before You Die”

By
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They say, “breakfast is the most important meal of the day.” A message often thrown at me by my beloved, as I rush out the door for another hard day’s toil. She believes that starting the day with only a cup of tea and a pipe-full of tobacco to fuel my labours is not very healthy. She could be right of course; but why does she have to justify by adding on the reference to, “they say?”

When people start a sentence with, “they say,” I wonder who they are? Where do these quotes come from, and how do they start? Some of these sayings are misunderstood while others are used to gain authority yet more are complete nonsense and often used without giving the used quote any thought.

Here’s an example of what I mean. They say, “It’s better to give, than it is to receive.” It is full of false sentiment and used most often at Christmas, when despite trying to hide your disappointment at receiving yet another pair of socks, the truth is written all over your face. “It’s better to give than to receive,” does not help when you’ve trudged through every shop in town and seriously ruptured your plastic while making an effort to please everybody. Some of the sayings go back many years like the often misunderstood, they say; “you should never cast a clout until May is out.” This simply means keep your woolies on until you see the May flower in blossom on a hawthorn bush. It doesn’t advise you to keep your warm cardy on until June.

Another quote, that makes me smile is, “everybody has one good book inside them.” This is absolute twaddle. Take a look at some of the people on the telly, especially the ones taking part in reality shows. Some of these would not have enough original material inside them to fill in the captions in a box of Christmas crackers.

“Leave wasps alone and they won’t hurt you.” Who started that one off? Probably the queen wasp as she laughed all the way back to her nest? They say, “you should change your mattress every 6 months.” This could only have been started by a mattress manufacturer who’d realised that most people only change their mattresses if and when they remarry.

Do the people who repeat these sayings believe them? Do they hope that it will sway your actions and make you toe the line or do they think that you will be impressed by their wisdom?

I think the chairman of the temperance society could take credit for this one. They say, “you should drink at least 8 pints of water a day.” A medium size fish doesn’t pass that much water through its body in a day.

If you moan that the current project you are working on is taking longer than expected, they say, “Rome wasn’t built in a day.” I can believe that, it must’ve taken at least a day and a half when you look at the size of some of those buildings. But what point are they trying to make, giving me worthless information does not make me feel any better.

Some of the sayings that are going around at the moment are recent inventions. “You are never more than 20 feet from a rat.” I bet like me, when you first heard it you also tried to disprove the theory by placing yourself

where a rodent couldn't possibly be that close. How about when you are standing in the middle of a football field? No sorry, there could be a big rat under your feet burrowing through some old abandoned mole workings. He's hell bent on getting to the pies on the other side of the pitch.

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One of my favourites that I heard recently was, they say, "everybody will eat 7 spiders before they die." Apparently, people sometimes sleep with their mouths open, and about once every 10 years, a spider accidentally walks into the person's gapping orifice and is swallowed. What I want to know is, who the hell has been counting, and how do they know that this actually happens? There is probably a website devoted to the subject somewhere on the net. I expect that modern technology and the ease of communications will increase the number of nonsense sayings and the speed at which they enter our world.

They say, "there are cameras flying about up there that can look down and tell what newspaper you are reading." If that was true, nothing would ever go missing again, and how can they see through my roof?

I don't know which crazy club you need to be a member of to get one of these sayings started, but if you are ever down the pub with your mates and the conversation goes dead, try the one that I'm launching. They say, "that we will have our dreams interrupted by adverts by 2020." Don't worry, you will not be challenged as long as you remember to start the sentence with "They say," you can get away with anything.