

## Complete Guide To Backhanded Compliments (List & Examples)

### Description



Master Of The Backhanded Insult (Logan Roy's ex wife in Succession the TV Show)

### What Is A Backhanded Compliment? Defined

Backhanded compliments also known as backhanded insults are **a combination of an insult and a compliment**. Is a backhanded compliment an insult? Yes. Backhanded compliments are by definition insults since the comment includes a negative aspect.

### What Are Other Names For Backhanded Compliments?

Backhanded compliments are also known by the following names:

- backhanded insults
- negging (under certain conditions)
- left handed insults
- left handed compliments
- passive aggressive compliments
- passive aggressive backhanded compliments
- sophisticated insults
- indirect insults
- polite insults

### What Is The Psychology Of Someone Who Gives Backhanded Compliments? Why Do They Do It?

Someone who uses backhanded compliments could be using them as a dating strategy, because they are feeling competitive, or because they have negative feelings like insecurity or jealousy.

Backhanded compliments, similar to negging, can be **used as a dating strategy**. The general idea is that one person insults the other in order to lower the person's perceived social value. This supposedly allows the other person a better dating chance. Backhanded compliments are used in order to supply plausible deniability for what they are trying to do. There isn't much science on whether this strategy works or doesn't.

People can use backhanded compliments in order to **satisfy their competitive desires for dominance**. Personality types that are high in trait [disagreeableness have an inner desire to achieve dominance](#) and to compete with others. One way to do this is to insult others so they can feel superior. As we mentioned above, it is often not socially acceptable to just blatantly insult people, so these individuals disguise their insults by wrapping them in with compliments. People particularly low on the agreeableness spectrum can often have anti social personality disorders.

Another personality type that uses backhanded compliments is called [neuroticism](#). People who are high in neuroticism experience greater levels of negative emotions like jealousy and guilt and insecurity. These people can **channel these negative feelings towards** others by using backhanded compliments

## How Do You Respond To A Backhanded Compliment? What Should You Say?

There is a three step process for responding to a backhanded compliment.

1. First, if the person hasn't said anything mean to you in the past, **give the person a strong look of disapproval** and then let the comment go. Often people misspeak or have bad days. Why create an enemy?
2. If they have insulted you recently, move on to the second step. The second step is to ask them for clarification. Your goal is to **get them to openly commit to the insult**. Try saying "do you mean to say that I am X (the insult, for example lazy)?" Then ask for evidence of that claim. Often people won't have good evidence for what they have said. If they do have good evidence, consider working on improving that area of your life. If they don't, **tell them they need to work on making better arguments and that there doesn't seem to be much support for that accusation**.

If they try to claim **it is a joke**, say that you don't appreciate that kind of talk and ask, "are you having a bad day?" This flips the script and focuses the conversation on their emotions, making them seem weak and emotional for attacking you.

3. If they keep insulting you, the **third step is to fight back** with your own backhanded compliment. Often people don't want to be mean to others and so they get bulldozed by bullies. This will keep happening to you if you don't establish a consequence. Keep escalating your attack until they learn that it is too costly to insult you. See our examples below for ways to come up with backhanded insults.

## How To Come Up With A Backhanded Compliment?

There is a formula for backhanded compliments. We have discovered at least 5 and will continue adding to this list as we find more formulas.

1. compliment + minimization -> "Great job graduating last week even though basically everyone does it."
2. compliment + disqualification -> "Great job working out today, just kidding!"
3. compliment + constructive criticism -> "I really like how you painted your house, but maybe next time try not to choose such a boring color."
4. compliment + comparison -> "You did a good job with that project, it was almost as good as your brother."
5. compliment + question -> "You did so well on that report, who helped you?"
6. oddly hyper specific compliment + nothing else -> "I really like the end of your shoe laces."

## How Do You Do A Backhanded Compliment To Offend Someone In A Smart Way?

The best way to offend someone in a smart way is to make the backhanded compliment really indirect. The more genuine you seem with the compliment part of the insult, the longer it will take the person to figure out that the second part of the sentence was an insult.

The easiest ones to sound smart with would be the compliment + comparison backhanded compliments. See above or below for more examples.

## Here Is A List Of Backhanded Compliment Examples:

### Backhanded Compliments For Guys Examples

So brave of you to wear that in public.

You are pretty funny for a short guy.

If I was boring I'd be fascinated by this conversation.

### Backhanded Compliments For Girls Examples

You look really good for your age.

You've filled out really nicely.

Nice haircut, it really makes your face look more slim.

Nice dress, I've only seen it a few times today.

You look great, I'd never have the courage to wear that.

If I was 10 years younger I might be interested in what you have to say.

### **Best Sophisticated Insults Examples**

You really don't care what people think, do you?

Congrats on graduating, I didn't think you'd make it.

I'm surprised you did so well on that report, who helped you?

### **Best Backhanded Compliments Of Reddit Examples**

I love how you just wear anything.

You aren't as dumb as you look.

I didn't expect you to get the job, congratulations!

Congrats on winning, maybe next time you'll compete with people who are actually good.

### **Backhanded Compliments About Looks Examples**

I'm so proud you quit drinking, too bad you already had those lines on your face.

You could really take a queue from the internet about working out.

You look better than normal in this light.

You look really comfy.

You're way less ugly than you used to be.

### **Brutal Backhanded Compliments Examples**

Well I'm not dating you for your looks.

The good think about you is I never have to worry about you overthinking it.

That report was terrible but the subject was really over your head.

I don't care what (person) says about you, you are alright.

### **Passive-Aggressive Backhanded Compliment Examples**

Good job finishing the project but you really think that's the best you can do?

I really like that dress, you just keep copying everyone around you!

Interesting solution, it didn't take you very long to come up with it, did it?

**Category**

1. Manipulation

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