

Real World Graduation: Question 73: Basketball and NASCAR

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Question 73

Two men, one white and one black, are being interviewed on TV. The two men are successful engineers being honored for their inventions and contributions to technology. The interviewer, who (as usual) understands nothing of the technology and inventions made by the two men, decides to spend most of the interview on subjects not related to the two engineers' expertise, focusing instead on two sports: basketball and NASCAR racing.

It turns out that the white engineer hates both basketball and NASCAR racing; he hates basketball because it finds it monotonous, and also hates car racing because he thinks there are too many phony rich people involved in the sport.

The black engineer also hates both basketball and NASCAR racing; he hates basketball because he thinks there are too many phony rich people involved in the sport, and he finds NASCAR racing to be monotonous.

Suppose the interviewer asks both about basketball and NASCAR racing. What responses should the two engineers give? This is a family-oriented show.

- a) Everyone knows that engineers are nerds who should not waste our time giving opinions on anything. Both should simply lie, and say "I don't know anything about either one" and hope that the interviewer finally asks a relevant question.
- b) The black engineer should give his honest opinion on basketball, since it won't offend either whites or blacks. But he should not give an opinion on NASCAR racing because whites might find it offensive. The white engineer should give his honest opinion on NASCAR racing, because that won't offend anyone, but should not give his opinion of basketball so as not to offend black people. In other words, they can comment on the sport they dislike so long as it is played primarily by people of their own race, but should each refrain from commenting on the sport they dislike if it is played mostly by people of the opposite race.
- c) The black engineer can say anything he wants about basketball, and can mention that he doesn't like NASCAR racing so long as he compliments a famous white race car driver (preferably a deceased one) for being a good role model. The white engineer can say what he wants about NASCAR racing, and can mention that he doesn't like basketball, so long as he compliments a famous black basketball player (preferably a deceased one) for being a good role model.
- d) The question is illogical because it is inconceivable that a black person could dislike basketball, or that a white person could dislike NASCAR racing.
- e) Any of (a), (b), or (c) is acceptable.

Answer to Question 73

This is a trick question. All of the given choices are wrong. The correct answer is that they should say what they want about the two sports because no one in their right mind gives a crap anyway. In this case, the opinions are benign, and reflect the personal preferences of the engineers. On the other hand, if the engineers actually do hold negative opinions based on some unwarranted bias, then they have a problem and it would be better to keep silent and be suspected a fool than to speak up and remove all doubt.

If you selected answer (a), it shows that you have preconceived notions about engineers; so you should not be offended if engineers (and members of any other occupation) have preconceived notions about you based on your profession. Note: pocket protectors are good.

If you selected answer (b), then you have assumed that the audience is a bunch of morons that would actually be offended by an opinion on sports. If the audience would be offended by an opinion about whether basketball or racing is boring (or that sports figures are paid too much) then they deserve to be offended because they are the type who will likely find offense in something anyway. There is no way to avoid it if the audience actually is that ignorant. The engineers can't do anything about that level of ignorance on the part of the audience, nor should they cater to it.

If you selected answer (c), then you are a panderer (with a potential for a career in politics). You have assumed that a statement about sports equates to a statement about the predominant race of those who play the sport. Therefore, you are so stupid that you believe that not appreciating the sport is the same as being prejudiced against the race of people who play that sport. But on the other hand, it's OK to paper over a negative opinion on the sport/race with a suitably nauseating and insincere compliment.

If you chose answer (d), then you have demonstrated an aptitude for false stereotypes and potential for a career at any of the Marxist mainstream media outlets, where efficient projection of false stereotypes will put you on the fast track to success.