

Who Is Kidding?

By Vera Blaine

A group of friends was leaving the meeting hall. As they parted and went in different directions, a man with a big smile told an older woman, "Behave yourself." She laughed saying, "I don't know how." They were just kidding, good natured humor, as she was definitely not the type who would misbehave. From her appearance and demeanor she was a friendly and law-abiding citizen.

Now take another scene. This time it could be someone like Lady GaGa. If a person jokingly said to her "Behave yourself" and she replied "I don't know how" there might be a hint of truth in her reply. It would all depend on the characters involved and whoever overheard the conversation. These short sayings in this case could be interpreted in different ways. It is obvious that the person saying "Behave yourself" was kidding and in turn Lady GaGa added to the humor.

These short sayings shown in the foregoing examples are a part of the English language not easily translated and are known as idioms. Most of them are words and phrases that express kidding and a good humored feeling. Some are used to tease and joke. There are at least 25,000 idioms in the English language.

In my search for the use of the words "You've got to be kidding" I found this conversation. Bill said to his mother, "I think I swallowed my gold tooth." Her reply, "You've got to be kidding."