

Let's not be friends (or why I ignored your request to "Friend" on Facebook)

By Patty Caya (www.pattycaya.com)

I'd like to say it wasn't personal, but truth be told, it might have been.

There are many possible reasons, but here are a few. You'll know pretty quickly which one is the situation between us. I hope this helps clear things up and there are no hard feelings.

1. I know you and I don't want to be FB friends with you.

That's harsh, I know, but you may be someone I knew in high school or college and even back then we had very little in common or perhaps we didn't even like each other, but in some burst of cyber amnesia you thought that perhaps time heals all incompatibilities. If you sent me a friend request and we weren't ever really friends but I knew you, I gave you a fair shake before I clicked "ignore". I read through your profile and I looked through your friend list to see who else you are "friends" with and something (probably many things) sent up a red flag.

Perhaps there was the membership in the Sarah Palin group – not in an ironic "God Help Us if it's SP in 2012" group, but an actual fan page membership. You like her. Maybe you even think she's some kind of female role model. I've heard that particular sentiment from people I'm real friends with. When taken as part of a package that includes other common interests I could excuse the SP thing or learn to understand it. But then I saw what other pages you are a fan of and taken together they sealed the deal. Fox News. Really? You like Fox News enough to be a fan? Not, 'CNN-Fox News-BBC-NYTimes I'm just a news junkie and I like all perspectives' kind of membership. You just like Fox News. My in-laws watch Fox News - all the time, so basically you didn't stand a chance.

Other "fan" pages that might have led to the "ignore": Ann Coulter. Some sort of uber Christian mega-church type thing? The religious thing seems harsh, doesn't it? But we won't get along, I know this for a fact. Did you read my religious affiliation? It says, "No, thank you."

I know you felt sort of snubbed (probably not much since we were NEVER friends) but I think I'm doing you a favor. How long will it be before I say something in my Eastern elite, Massachusetts liberal/practically a socialist, NY Times reading atheist lifestyle that really offends you or really goes against your long held beliefs and makes you want to UN-friend me. Then you will be in the awkward position of wanting to be rid of me, but not wanting to break the social norm of being polite. And who's more likely to adhere to the social norm, you or me?

Now that you know more about me, I think we both know I did you a favor. You'd thank me for this some day, but we won't be in touch.

2. We worked together and never got beyond polite acquaintance.

This is hard because we are all supposed to "get along" and pretend to like everyone, especially at work. But there is a line. Have you seen The Office? There are lots of people we put up with because we work with them and then we never, ever, even at a cocktail party when we are telling those "this guy I used to work with" anecdotes ever mention or think of again. You are one of those people. This is one of those situations where honestly it's not you, it's me. We just never hit it off and someday when you read through my posts and see that I once upon a time changed my status to "Patty is...hating a co-worker" you will realize that it was you that I was talking about. It was nice (sort of) knowing you. And if we ever run into each other we will be polite and ask all the appropriate questions, but you don't need to see my class photo from 3rd grade and you don't need to know what I'm doing today or ever. Unless of course we work

together again some day and in which case this distance will allow us to carry on a perfectly cordial professional relationship.

3. We work together now and we are not friends outside of work. We are office friends or you are my boss or you might be my boss or I want to work for you some day.

This is kind of vulgar but have you ever heard that expression “don’t shit where you eat”? Enough said.

4. I don’t know you

Oh, I know I’m old fashioned, but honestly if we met at a party last night I’m not going to friend you on FB. If I were 10 years younger I guess I’d just friend everyone willy nilly, but I have better things to do with my time than filter my FB life to accommodate random strangers that I pick up like one night stands in the ‘80s. Send me a link on LinkedIn. I’ll probably accept it and if you are looking for a job and I know someone who knows someone I’d be happy to introduce you two. I think that kind of networking is great. Follow me on Twitter if you like. And if you tweet about something I’m interested in, I’ll even follow you back. But we’re either going to have to have a slightly more personal connection than “I read your name tag” and we traded business cards for us to be “friends”. It’s nothing personal because there is nothing personal about our relationship. We don’t have one.

If at some point in the future we become friends then we might become Friends. I look forward to exploring that possibility. But today, I’m going to have to hit the ignore button and when we meet again at some networking event I’ll feign all knowledge of ever having received the invitation.

5. And one last reason (courtesy of my Twitter friend [@pogue](#))

"You were my 6th-grade bully. You beat me up and threw my bike in the lake." If you have found it in your heart to want to be “friends” with me now, it’s because I’ve won the who-is-more-successful contest. Game over.

“Ignore.”