

Serious

To be serious is to meet challenges and issues as though they are important and even weighty. A serious person will listen to your points carefully, respond after consideration, and deal with your concerns as though they were matters of consequence. Are you serious? Some of the time? All the time? Almost never?

Examples

1

When I was an undergraduate in College I had an elderly neighbor who was very serious. (At least around me; surely he had another side to him.) He was a world famous student of folklore, loved to talk about folk and fairy tale motifs from around the world, and had written large volumes which were classical studies of folklore themes and motifs. To hear him talk about this fascinating branch of world literature, which springs from the longings, dreams, and hopes of the various cultures of the world, was to hear a serious man relate the facts and details of his life's work. If you tried to sidetrack him into talking about a particular snarky twist to the Trickster legend, he would relate your digression to still more complex side issues in folklore science. He would not be distracted. He was serious but not humorless, for, in trumping your queries with further elaboration of the world folklore schema, he would do so with a twinkle in his eye.

2

Like many people I have an annual physical exam. I am always concerned about the results of such an exam—aren't we all?—and as I wait in the doctor's office, to go in for the exam, I am basically serious. I may laugh with my wife or the receptionist, a friend of mine, I may joke about the endless rainy weather, but I am inescapably serious inside. I have tried to adopt a che *sera* attitude toward aging and even death, but often enough I am just whistling in my own ears, to keep the heartbeat down.