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At one of my previous jobs, we passed around a special trophy. The trophy had to be earned in an unusual way. It sported a marble base, a tall plastic column, and, adorning the top of the infamous award, the trophy featured a gold plastic backend of a donkey.

The donkey's — ahem — bottom award was awarded to a staff member who made a major blunder at work. Think about replying all to a sensitive email, publicly saying something stupid or accidentally calling the fire department for a nonexistent emergency.

One staff member was notorious for earning and keeping the donkey's bottom award. He had a bad case of foot-in-mouth disease, or as Prince Philip used to call it, dontopedalogy.

Do you have a friend or family member who has, as Dictionary.com describes it, "the habit of making inappropriate, insensitive, or imprudent statements?" If you can't think of someone in your life who often sticks her foot in her mouth, maybe you are the culprit.

Prince Philip, former Duke of Edinburgh and husband of Queen Elizabeth, passed away in 2021. However, he left his mark on language by coining the word "dontopedalogy," as he suffered from this unfortunate, habitual foible.

In a speech to the General Dental Council in 1960, Prince Philip introduced dontopedalogy by describing it as "the science of opening your mouth and putting your foot in it, a science which I

have practiced for a good many years.”

The Duke of Edinburgh was a disaster when it came to diplomacy and off-the-cuff comments. Although I won’t share the examples of Prince Philip insulting entire countries in an often offensive way, I’ll share some of the more humorous, innocent slip-ups. I’ll note here that many of his comments were racist and/or bigoted, although I’m doing my best to assume that he simply wasn’t the sharpest crayon in the box.

While meeting with the London Assembly’s tourism chief at the opening of City Hall in 2002, Prince Philip noted, “The problem with London is the tourists. They cause the congestion. They block the streets.” Read the room, pal.

Going back to 1969, as the queen was overspending her allowance from the government, Prince Philip noted, “We go into the red next year... I shall have to give up polo.” Open mouth, insert foot.

Yes, Prince Philip had a chronic case of dontopedalogy. If you suspect you are suffering from the same condition, consult your doctor or therapist.

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