

LIGHTENing Bolts

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HUMOR AT WORK – DOES HUMOR HELP US “HOPE” SO OUR FIRE DOESN’T “BURN” OUT?

On May 29, 2003, Bob Hope turned 100. Born as Leslie Townes Hope in Eltham, England, Bob Hope once said, “My folks were English. We were too poor to be British”.

George Burns, born Nathan Birnbaum in New York City, was 100 years old when he died. He once said, “You know you’re getting older when you stoop over to tie your shoe and think, ‘What else can I do while I’m down here?’”

As I get older, I realize that getting older is not just about getting wiser. It’s also about coping with the practical jokes your body plays on you. At age 30, I realized I was losing my hair. I had never really looked at the back of my head and when I did, I realized this new found bald spot was quite large! I asked my wife, “Why didn’t you tell me about that?” She said, “I thought you knew!”

When I turned 40, I realized for the first time, all of the restaurants in the country had started printing their menus in smaller print. Now, I am not at all embarrassed to ask the people at the table next to us to hold their menus higher so we can read them.

Also, my muscles and joints have started to yell at me from time to time. I recently went to the Orthopedist for what I was sure was a torn rotator cuff in my shoulder. The diagnosis was an inflamed joint. That’s ridiculous. For the pain I was feeling, I wanted a broken bone, a torn ligament or a missing limb – something that is a clear problem that can be fixed. An inflamed joint just makes me think it will never be fixed and it will keep coming back.

As we maneuver along the physical and emotional road of life, we encounter obstacles, challenges and turns in the road we did not anticipate. The people that seem to travel the road with the least scars are those who have the best perspective. George Burns made fun of getting older and by keeping the problems at arm’s length, I would propose that he did not experience as much stress.

Agatha Christie was once quoted as saying, “An archeologist is the best husband any woman can have: the older she gets the more interested he is in her.” An attitude of lightheartedness for all the aches, pains, blurred menus and growing bald spots will serve us well as we age gracefully while resisting every step of the way!

HUMOR RESOURCES

One way to increase your own humor potential is to see how funny people view the world. Here are some books you might enjoy by or about famous comedians:

“Bob Hope: My Life in Jokes” by Bob Hope with Linda Hope.

“Great Comedians Talk About Comedy” by Larry Wilde

“How to Be Funny” by Steve Allen

“Cosbyology” by Bill Cosby

HUMOR IN REAL LIFE

My twelve year-old daughter competed in the Virginia state gymnastics competitions. At one of her regional meets, the gymnasts marched in while the music from the Olympics played. Shortly after that, the judges were introduced to the music from the movie “Jaws”!

In May, Paul Harvey reported that a man was late for his flight. So, while running to the gate, he called in a bomb threat to his particular airplane. The plane was evacuated and searched. The man was subsequently found and arrested. Paul Harvey said, “Now he is really late!”

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JUST HUMOR

In honor of Bob Hope and George Burns, here are some of their “lines”:

Bob Hope:

I don’t generally feel anything until noon; then it’s time for my nap.

If you watch a game it’s fun. If you play at it, it’s recreation. If you work at it, it’s golf.

Middle age is when you still believe you’ll feel better in the morning.

I went to play golf and tried to shoot my age. I shot my weight instead.

George Burns:

Retirement at sixty-five is ridiculous. When I was sixty-five, I still had pimples.

I can remember when the air was clean and sex was dirty.

If you live to the age of 100 you've got it made because very few people die past the age of 100.

I can't understand why I flunked American history. When I was a kid there was so little of it.

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HUMOR IN THE NEWS

An article in the June 12, 2003 edition of USA Today entitled "Some CEO's Get Respect on Comedy Stage" discusses the prevalence of CEO's who are doing stand-up comedy as a hobby. According to the article, 75% of CEO's are extroverts so their performances come from a natural gift.

The article warns that having good "stage presence" is certainly not enough to be a successful CEO. But, the author writes that according to Ron Shaw, former comic and CEO of Pilot Pen Corporation of America, "his experience as a comedian helped his career. It taught him to read any audience, and he can wing an entertaining speech with five seconds' notice."

As an example of their comedy, one CEO "comic", David Moore quipped, "Are we supposed to believe that Martha Stewart made \$229,000 on a stock trade and never sent a thank you note?"

[To read this entire article click here](http://www.usatoday.com/money/companies/management/2003-06-11-ceocomics_x.htm) (http://www.usatoday.com/money/companies/management/2003-06-11-ceocomics_x.htm)

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Ronald P. Culberson, MSW, CSP, Director of Everything! at FUNsulting, etc., works with organizations that want their people to lighten up by using humor as a way to manage stress and become more effective. He is a Certified Speaking Professional (CSP), the highest earned award

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