

LIGHTENing Bolts
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WELCOME TO LIGHTENing Bolts

Welcome to LIGHTENing Bolts, a somewhat regular email newsletter to help you lighten up by using humor to minimize your stress and maximize your effectiveness.

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Click here for our archive of previous newsletters http://www.funsulting.com/newsletter_archives.html

HUMOR ME ñ RONÍS BOOK AND HUMOR COLUMN

The reviews are rolling in for my new book ìIs Your Glass LAUGH Full?î

ìYou wrote a book? Why would you do that?î - My skeptical friend.

ìI just had to come over and tell you how much I loved your book. While Iím here, I need to ask that you trim the bush hanging over our fence.î - My neighbor.

ìThe stories in your book are funny. Iím going to send you a few of my own for your next book.î - An audience memberÖÖor two!

Weíd love to hear your reaction. Get your copy today! To order your copy, visit our website at www.FUNsulting.com

Ronís monthly column ìHumor Meî can be found in the Reston, Herndon and Leesburg Observer Newspapers.

To see the most recent issue of Ronís Column, click here: http://observernews.com/stories/current/news/081304/humor_081304.shtml

HUMOR AT WORK ñ CAN YOU SEE THE DIFFERENCE?

One of my favorite benefits of humor is the way it forces us to see things from a different perspective. Consider the mechanics of a joke. You are led down a path by the setup and then the punch-line takes you in a totally different direction. It's that change that makes us laugh and gives us a new insight.

There are several different kinds of insights we gain. Below are some lines from famous funny people. See how they take the ordinary and shine a new light on it.

REALITY

Comedy writer Bob Orben said the following:

“Illegal aliens have always been a problem in the United States. Ask any [American] Indian.”

“Don't worry about your health. It will go away.”

In both cases, the humor came from our switching perspectives to see a new reality. The first has us look at “immigration” from the American Indian perspective. I once heard that the more accurate account of history was that an American Indian woke up one morning and discovered Columbus! This has great value because it forces us to see things from someone else's perspective thus changing our view of reality.

In the second example, we would expect to hear, “you'll be fine” but instead are told that healthfulness is futile anyway. This allows us to see a different view of reality which can be helpful in getting us out of the “box” we live in.

Both examples create a juxtaposition that allows us to get out of our typical way of thinking and see our world or our lives in a new way.

CREATIVITY

Research has linked the creative and humor portions of our brains. Several studies showed that humor leads to creativity. One of the most creative uses of humor is seen in the comedic style of Stephen Wright. His one liners take normal everyday concepts and show us a creative, and playful, way of seeing them. Here are some examples:

“I spilled Spot Remover on my dog... Now he's gone.”

“I went to a general store. They wouldn't let me buy anything specifically.”

Many of us hear his jokes and immediately see the humor in the different perspective. Interestingly, by exposing ourselves to this kind of humor, we are also more likely to be creative. Since the creative process involves seeing new things or new points of view, humor is a logical jump starter to creativity.

SIMPLICITY

Jerry Seinfeld's sitcom was known for being a show about nothing. Yet when you analyze the content, you'll see that the cast took the simplest concepts and exaggerated them until they were then big concepts. In essence they used humor to make mountains out of molehills. Here are two quotes from Jerry Seinfeld:

“Sometimes the road less traveled is less traveled for a reason.

“I am so busy doing nothing... that the idea of doing anything - which as you know, always leads to something - cuts into the nothing and then forces me to have to drop everything.”

The great thing about these quotes is that it does encourage us to simplify. By exaggerating the issue, we can see how caught up we get in things that may not be that important.

OTHER OPTIONS

The last examples of humor have to do with the way it creates other options. By allowing us to see things differently, we see other possibilities. That can be helpful when problem solving or dealing with challenging issues.

In my favorite Far Side cartoon, a man is hiding behind a tree in his front yard. The sign on his fence says, “Beware of Doug.”

As another example, here is an excerpt from Abbott and Costello's famous routine “Who's On First?”

Costello: Well then who's on first?

Abbott: Yes.

Costello: I mean the fellow's name.

Abbott: Who.

Costello: The guy on first.

Abbott: Who.

In the Far Side cartoon, we see a play on words. Instead of Dog, we see

Doug. This changes our view of the usual sign in someone's yard. In the Abbott and Costello routine, the mix-up occurs because the first baseman's name is Who. The confusion in this routine makes us realize that there are many ways to interpret what we say.

In both examples, we realize that other options exist for seeing the same situation.

Humor forces us to see a new perspective and trains our brains to look at the world differently. If you allow yourself to engage in humorous activities on a regular basis, your perspective will be broadened as well.

HUMOR IN REAL LIFE ñ IT'S RIGHT UNDER YOUR NOSE

For years, I have preached that there is humor everywhere and if we look, we'll see it. So I thought I'd try something different this month and show you how to find the humor in something very familiar ñ the newspaper. I took the September 2 edition of "USA Today" and looked for bits of FUN. Here's what I found. I hope you enjoy it.

Page 3A ñ "Two-potty systems"

Kindergarteners in Washington toured the bathrooms on their first day of school. While in the boy's bathroom, the teacher told the girls that it was the last time they were allowed in this room. The photo shows a little girl staring at a urinal. I'm sure she was thinking, "How in the world?"

Page 9A ñ "How to Soothe an Irritable Bowel"

This ad for a book on "digestive health" sure gets your attention. But as we get older, don't we all have irritable bowels? I know mine's grumpy!

Page 11a ñ "W vs. Norm: you make the call!"

Comparisons of George Bush's language mishaps are made to the malapropisms of funnyman Norm Crosby. Here are a couple of samples:

"More and more of our imports come from overseas." - George Bush

"He can't take the high horse and then claim the low road." ñ George Bush

"Like your neighbor just like you like to be liked yourself." ñ George Bush

"The talk of recession is just a rumor started by a lot of people that are out of work." ñ Norm Crosby

Page 7D ñ "Drawstring pants and T's: Pajamas keeping pace with student's busy schedules"

This article is about college students wearing PJ's to school. I'm wondering if I could get away with wearing my bedtime attire to my job?

Only if boxers fit the criteria for "business casual". OK, too much information!

Page 7D "Shoe sizes span the globe."

Apparently there is no universal shoe sizing system so people around the world are routinely getting the wrong size shoes. I think the simple solution is to measure our mouths. It seems that our feet fit perfectly in there!

JUST HUMOR " A CORNY PERSPECTIVE

Some of my favorite corny jokes:

A hot dog walks into a bar and the bartender says, "Sorry we don't serve food here."

A three-legged dog walks into a bar and says, "I'm looking for the man who shot my paw."

My grandfather used to wear two pairs of pants when he played golf just in case he got a hole in one.

Two cannibals were eating a clown and one said, "This tastes funny."

What's the difference between humor and a smelly diaper. Humor is a shift of wit.

How many Star Trek fans does it take to change a light bulb? "Dammit Jim, I'm a doctor not an electrician."

HUMOR RESOURCES " SEEING THE FUN

The following are some unique websites that will help you see the humor around you and encourage you to see things from a FUN perspective.

www.MagicEye.com (An entire site of those great 3-D images. Can you see it?)

<http://games.yahoo.com/> (More games than you could imagine!)

www.laugh.com (A website by comedians for comedy lovers. There are tons of humor resources here.)

www.HowStuffWorks.com (A site explaining how stuff works!)

www.Fun-With-Words.com (Lots of fun stuff related to our language)

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Ronald P. Culberson, MSW, CSP, Director of Everything! at FUNsulting, etc., is a speaker, humorist and author of *Is Your Glass LAUGH Full?* who 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 from the National Speakers Association, and is one of less than 7% of speakers worldwide who have received this designation. He is a humor expert and has provided entertaining and informative programs to over 70,000 people in more than 600 associations, government agencies, non-profit organizations and Fortune 500 companies. To find out more about programs, services and products visit our website at www.FUNsulting.com or call (703) 742-8812.

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