

LIGHTENing Bolts

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STANDARD WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Welcome to LIGHTENing Bolts, a bi-monthly, semi-annual, irregular email newsletter to help you lighten up through the power of humor. Each edition includes articles and resources that will enhance your humor potential without sacrificing the integrity of your life or work. I hope you enjoy this edition and that you will never lose your sense of humor.

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Note: Even though we love this technological tool, if you have received this newsletter through some error, please click unsubscribe at the bottom of this newsletter.

HUMOR AT WORK – ARE YOU GOOD ENOUGH TO USE HUMOR?

About fifteen years ago, I attended the annual conference for a professional association. The director of the local state organization came to the podium to welcome the 1500 attendees and to introduce the keynote speaker. She began with an alarming announcement that the President and First Lady had been killed in a car accident. Gasps were heard throughout the hotel ballroom. As she continued to tell the news, it became clear that she was not reporting a true incident but telling a joke. This awkward attempt at humor culminated with a punch line that was not funny and was politically loaded (at least to half the audience). In less than two minutes, this speaker committed the equivalent of humor hari kari and ruined the opening of the conference.

Humor is a wonderful tool that can be a great asset in many situations. However, used in a vacuum without the integrity of competence and sensitivity, it can be a weapon that will damage everything in its path. The speaker in the example above had not yet established her professional or personal integrity before attempting a questionable bit of humor. Even if she had the love and respect of everyone in the audience, I'm not sure that particular joke would have been appropriate. However, without knowing who she was and what she stood for, it had no chance of working.

When I speak, I am often asked, "Don't I have to be serious to get respect?" I suggest that instead of being serious, we should attempt to be good. It is our values and skills that earn respect – not our seriousness. By being good at our roles in work or life and by using the proper values to guide our decision making, we convey a level of integrity that commands respect from

others. Once that is achieved, humor becomes the icing on the cake and makes all we do more effective.

The humor works because it is a connector. It draws us closer to one another through a common foible, a clever juxtaposition or a creative insight. Through the intellectual experience, the change in perspective and the shared laughter, we connect with one another in mind, body and spirit. If however, the spirit is not there, there is a disconnect with the humor and the humor becomes a shield or a barrier to the power of the connection.

I recently heard a healthcare speaker who communicated a deep sense of respect and compassion for his audience and the work they did. During his presentation, he told a funny story about how he talked to his daughters about “the birds and the bees”. At several points in the story, he made comments that might have been offensive. However, he had established himself as both knowledgeable and full of heart. The audience respected his skills, understood his values and knew that he had the same respect for them. Once that was established, his humor was an asset rather than a liability and he used it to further connect with his audience.

Are you good enough to use humor? Consider whether those you know would interpret your use of humor as a tool or a weapon.

HUMOR RESOURCES

Here are some classic resources to develop your skills and values:

“The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People” by Stephen Covey. Simon and Schuster.

“The Road Less Traveled” by M. Scott Peck. Touchstone Books.

“Taking Responsibility” by Nathaniel Branden. Simon and Schuster.

“On Becoming a Leader” by Warren Bennis. Addison Wesley.

Here are some newer resources to develop your skills and values:

“The Death of Common Sense” by Philip Howard. Warner Books.

“Good to Great” by Jim Collins. Harper Business.

“Becoming a Person of Influence” by John Maxwell and Jim Dornan. Thomas Nelson Publishers.

“Discover Your Genius” by Michael Gelb. Quill.

HUMOR IN REAL LIFE

It's News

An article in the August 2003 edition of *Inc. Magazine* reported the results of a survey by The Creative Group in Menlo Park, California. The survey asked executives to describe the most unusual or creative tactic they'd ever seen a job candidate use. Here are a few of the responses:

One candidate sent his resume written on a softball.

One candidate sent in a T-shirt with the names of everyone in the company on it – and her own.

An applicant rented a billboard that could be seen from the office of his prospective employer and used it to list his qualifications.

One applicant brought in doughnuts every day until she was hired.

If you're not bringing fun and creativity to your job, you may get a chance to bring them to your future job sooner than you think!

It Really Happened

As the passengers were getting settled into their seats on a recent flight I took, the flight attendant made the following announcement:

“We have found a lost cell phone. If it's yours, please use the phone in the seatback in front of you to call me on it and I will gladly return it to you.”

Everyone laughed and the owner went forward to claim his lost phone.

[Click here for links to other resources \(Links page\)](#)

JUST HUMOR

A few ideas that never caught on:

1. The solar powered flashlight

2. A book series on how to read
3. The grandé paté latté
4. A dictionary index
5. The helicopter ejection seat
6. The Spam Café
7. A motorcycle ashtray
8. The Yugo LX

Question to ponder: Where do seedless watermelons come from?

PRODUCTS AND SHAMELESS PROMOTIONS

We are proud to announce the release of one new service and two new products:

Genuinely Speaking Presentation Skills Coaching

This one-on-one presentation skills coaching system is designed to use your gifts, skills and a touch of humor to improve the effectiveness of your presentations and to make your messages more memorable. Visit our website at www.FUNsulting.com and click on “Specialized Services” for more information.

The FUNdamentals of Humor (Live Video)

In this live presentation, Ron shows how humor can reduce stress, improve creativity and most importantly balance the seriousness of life and work by giving you a new perspective. Through this fun, funny and educational presentation, see how humor can help you become more effective.

Humor Me (Book)

Sixteen of America’s funniest humorists discuss their views on the power of humor. Ron’s chapter deals with humor and loss.

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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 from the National Speakers Association, and is one of less than 450 individuals worldwide who have received this designation. He is a humor expert and has provided entertaining and informative programs to over 50,000 people in more than 500 associations, government

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