

Humor Me

By Ronald P. Culberson

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“And the Hair Wins...By a Nose”

I was driving down Interstate 81, minding my own business, when suddenly I was attacked by a fierce case of nose itch. I'm sure you've had this experience. The constant flow of air through your nose moves the pointy ends of the hairs back and forth causing an irritation that is, in my experience, incurable.

On that particular day, I did what any resourceful, level-headed male would do – I started yanking out hairs. One by one, or sometimes by the bunch, I unsuccessfully pulled out hundreds of hairs. Coincidentally, I discovered that the roots of the hairs apparently extend into the lower portions of the eyelids and once removed the body's hit-in-the-nose-tear-production process is initiated.

Now, unable to see because of the rising water level in my eyes, I pulled off the highway. I peered into the visor mirror but the two-watt light bulb was not enough for my 47 year-old eyes to see the culprit hair. I had to do something to stop this insidious itching. I rummaged through the glove box (which by the way contains 17 paperclips, breath mints from the Nixon administration and a crusty jar of Vaseline, but not one glove) and found my trusty multi-purpose tool.

For those of you unfamiliar with multipurpose tools, mine contains 57 different MacGyver-type “attachments” that will save your life in any number of emergency situations. I unfolded the Phillips screwdriver, a corkscrew and something that resembled an early medieval surgical saw before I found the closest thing I had to a pair of tweezers – the ever-popular *mock* scissors.

I carefully inserted the scissors into my nose (kids and elderly are urged NOT to try this at home) and attempted to extract several more nose hairs. I kept accidentally cutting them in half and the decapitated portions fell to the “floor” of my nose intertwining with the other resident hairs causing a new level of nostril irritation. I tried blowing out forceful bursts of air, imitating the sound of a surfacing Orca whale, hoping to propel the cut hairs onto the car mat. Unfortunately, some “other” nasal material joined the clippings giving my steering wheel a texture effect similar to the painted sponge design on our bathroom walls.

Finally, after a brief scare when the multipurpose tool would not come out of my nose, I put it away and was forced to try a combination of nasal meditation (not to be confused with Trance and Dental Meditation) and a loudly played Yanni CD to take my mind off the God forsaken, mind-numbing itch that now consumed every nerve in my body.

After my trauma on the highway, I began to contemplate why nose hair exists in the first place and the entrepreneur in me even wondered if there might be a market for a high end nose hair waxing service.

A cursory review of the pertinent online literature (Wikipedia via Googled terms “prickly nose hair”) revealed that nose hair does serve the function of filtering germs, fungus and spores from going into our noses, sinuses, and eventually our lungs. I believe I’ll take germs, fungus and spores in my lungs over nose hair itch any day.

Wikipedia further states, “In some cultures, nose hair protruding from the nostrils may be thought of as unattractive.” Hmm. That means in some cultures, it’s attractive? I don’t know about you but I’ve yet to be attracted to someone with black tentacles hanging out of their noses. Unless, of course, they’re braided around some sort of piercing hardware.

So it appears that we *do* need our nose hair. But perhaps we can trim it back now and again. And how do we eliminate the unsightly and itchy aspects of these follicles? Our only option is a high quality nickel- or gold-plated civilian issue set of nose hair clippers.

I tried one a few years ago. Turns out the clippers “cut” the hairs at an angle (for proper re-growth, I assume) causing them to morph into tiny hair darts that will actually pierce the insides of your nose. For two weeks after my trim, anytime I rubbed my nose, I had to tilt my head and apply pressure until the bleeding stopped.

Bottom line, it appears we’re stuck with hairy nostrils. And while they may keep us healthy, as I look in the mirror, I realize how ridiculous they look. And what’s this? One of them appears to have worked its way out of my ear.

Until next time, just humor me.

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Ron Culberson, MSW, CSP, CPAE is a speaker, humorist, and author of four books including Do it Well. Make it Fun. The Key to Success in Life, Death, and Almost Everything in Between. His mission is to change the workplace culture so that organizations are more productive and staff are more content. He shows people how to have more FUN while preserving the integrity of the work they do and the lives they lead. For more information, visit www.RonCulberson.com.