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The POWER of Laughter

How to be Happier, Healthier and Have More Fun

By John Williams © 2005

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This book is intended to amuse and entertain mature people. Nothing has been included with the intention to shock, upset or offend and there is no overt sexual content. Some jokes may include situations and/or words from common experience that some people might not approve of.

Remember, it is all fiction and only for amusement.

I believe that most readers will enjoy the stories and jokes in their context. It would be more unfair if adults' reading was restricted except by their choice.

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Introduction

This book will not make you the next big star on the professional comedy circuit.

This book will help you add some sparks to your social and business encounters with:

- Jokes for you to use along with a few you'll probably avoid in future
- a guide about how and where to use them and
- advice about when and where NOT to use them!

I can't remember seeing anything about that last bit in all of the joke-related material that I've read, or at least skimmed over, in the last several years.

I've put together some great jokes and stunts along with the best tips and short-cuts from my own experience and research. I hope that you'll find the guide part as interesting as the jokes because jokes are like bullets – power-packed but with a potential to harm. So it's critical to aim them as accurately as possible to hit the target dead-center and use the right one for each occasion.

While anyone can tell a joke and maybe get a good reaction, some of us spend years learning the best ways to do it. The advantages you'll have after reading this ebook include:

- ✓ You learned some great jokes and stunts. Okay, they aren't all new - some are so old that most readers will not have had close contact with them! All of the jokes have been auditioned - they earned their appearance in this book by getting genuine laughter from my friends, colleagues and audiences.
- ✓ You get some little-known twists and additions that I (along with some of my professional colleagues) have thought up to improve the effectiveness of many of the jokes.

- √ Adding humor to your life and your outlook will probably improve your general well-being. The restorative power of humor is now widely documented in serious medical journals. Sorry, you can't (so far) get this book on a Government subsidized prescription.
- √ You'll have all you need to make a lot of people smile every day for years except for experience. That experience is the only way to get the polish which makes your jokes shine but this is the most enjoyable kind of training you ever take on!

You'll even know how to compile some jokes of your own and the best ways to 'twist' jokes that you already know or collect in the future to make them more effective whenever and wherever you use them.

If you are in a situation where you think that you might find that you can get a better effect by changing or ignoring some of the tips I've collected here, go for it. These are guidelines based on experience but there's never just one way to get to a destination.

I'd be grateful to hear your experiences through my Magic site <http://www.ezymagic.com/>

We NEED Humor

In our day to day reality, we rarely have to face the sort of dramatic situations that I mention in 'High Power Humor' but, from the moment we open our daily newspaper or tune in the radio or television to a news broadcast, we are inundated with bad news. It's right in our faces in 3D – that's death, disaster and destruction!

Whatever business we're in, there's probably more competition, stress and increased demands to improve productivity, lower costs and do it all faster than ever before.

More families are falling apart or under heavy pressure from social, health and financial problems now than in past years.

Humor will not fix everything for us but you might be surprised at the difference a little, appropriate humor can make.

This book concentrates on smoothing social interaction and improving our social skills but humor has power far more significant than you may realize.

Many people cannot help but let themselves be seriously affected by these day-to-day pressures on us.

That's why, according to the psychologists and all the other –ists that research this area, comedy programs and live performances are among the most popular in every country where comedy is allowed.

And you'll find, if you haven't already noticed, that anyone who can bring some light-hearted fun to a group, whether it's social or business, is on the fast track to popularity.

You CAN Tell a Joke Well

You may believe you are naturally funny and get an overwhelming response to any joke that you punch out.

But, many otherwise happy people feel that they can't tell a joke well or, at least, may never get the response that they see their more extroverted friends get.

I'm the best example that I can offer to change that view. I've got the appearance of an accountant that's overdosed on vinegar but I've been getting laughs from friends, colleagues and audiences for years. And I help a wide variety of people in my workshops to do the same.

Even if you were aiming to be a professional comedian – and that's **not** the focus of this book - there's no statutory requirement that you must fit a particular - no 'comedian' stereotype – your appearance, age, religion, race or gender will not be the deciding factors in the level of success that you achieve. Just think of the wide variety of people that are currently putting bread, and probably caviar (if they like fish), on their table by performing comedy.

Okay, your age might be a problem if you're too young to get into the venues where you want to work, or you're not fit enough for the rigors of travel, performing and handling the business side of your work – it isn't all fun!

But even that doesn't apply if your focus is to just use some jokes on social and appropriate business occasions.

The single most important factor in successfully making humor part of your social profile is to use humor that fits Y*O*U - carefully select the best and most appropriate material for the occasion, the audience and your own personality.

Yes, we all have one - a personality - and it's much easier and more effective to choose and use only the jokes which fit us rather than try to change ourselves like a chameleon to put over each joke that we want to use.

I don't know what humor is and that question is really not worth pursuing - unless, perhaps, you can get a large pile of Government grant money for the project. P.G. Wodehouse, author of the classic Jeeves stories said, "I cannot define **humour** (he was British), but I think I know it when I see it."

Rather than analyze it to death, just concentrate on finding some jokes you think are funny and appropriate, run through them in your mind and then **use them**. Like riding a motorbike or doing a magic trick, telling jokes needs practice in real life situations.

Speak at Normal Pace.

Sometimes inexperienced speakers will adopt odd mannerisms when they tell a joke. More common and just as off-putting is the tendency to speed through the joke – either because they want to get to the punch-line, or just get the joke over and get away from being the center of everybody's attention.

When you realize that:

- The punch-line, however great, will not be very effective unless you give your friends enough detail and time to appreciate the whole story and
- Your friends and colleagues really want to hear your story and you'll all enjoy the experience most if you speak at about your normal pace.

... that's when you'll start to get the best response to your jokes.

Laugh at Nerves

If you feel like your throat is tightening up or you get a few butterflies (or even buffaloes) roaming the pit of your stomach when you try to tell a joke, that same feeling is probably limiting you speaking up for yourself in other circumstances.

- Asking someone to go out with you
- Talking to the cop that wants to write you a speeding ticket
- Asking the Bank Manager for a Loan
- Asking the Boss for a day off.

So, let's try and help you in this situation and you'll probably find those other occasions a bit less daunting too.

When I started learning to do Magic tricks, I went through almost terminal bouts of the butterflies. I got over them before I did my first public show. I never got any sympathy –

which is okay. Sympathy is what people offer when they can't or won't give any practical help!

Here are the best tips I can offer you:

Learn your material thoroughly. You stop most of the buffaloes in their tracks if you have your words and actions, if any, laid out. Then you can just concentrate on making sure that you and your friends enjoy your story.

Take some deep breaths. Many people don't use half their lung capacity and force their bodies to get along with less oxygen than they should. I had this problem when I started twisting balloons. That changed, after some months of regular exercise.

Realize that you're with friends and not much happens if the joke bombs. They're not going to shoot you and you'll soon get a chance to show them you can do better.

Jokes and Stories

In most social and business situations, you'll just use short jokes. That's easier for you anyway. Sometimes, you'll find a story that's a bit longer but you're sure it will go well for you. Don't throw it away but use it only after you've had time to prepare it.

Silly Seasoning

I knew one fellow who was always spraying some(not very good) jokes around. One evening, as he and his wife were getting ready to go to a friend's house, his wife said, "George, if the party is dull, then promise me that you'll just let it stay that way!"

Few professional comedians enjoy being asked to, "Tell us a joke" at inconvenient times. They have families, friends – lives! The comedy that they do is their work and they have as much right to leave their work 'at the office' as anyone else.

Some amateur comedians, however, are always pumping out the jokes instead of just using the power of humor to add sparkling highlights to their social and business encounters.

You will ensure the best response to your jokes if you use them sparingly, like a powerful flavoring rather throwing them over everything and everyone like a six-year-old child going crazy with the sauce bottle.

Leave Them Laughing

After you saw a great movie or live performance, you might have said, "I could have watched that all night!" That's a nice compliment but, if the story or performance had really kept going for another hour, it might have started to bore you. You would definitely not need another couple of hours of the same thing any time soon.

When you tell one or two jokes to your friends or colleagues, leave them (hopefully) wanting more. You're not only encouraging them to look forward to stories that you have for them in the future, but you create a better impression by letting someone else have their turn.

Risqué Jokes

Will audiences laugh at jokes with strong sexual content?

There's just 2 questions for you about sexual oriented material:

1. Am I sure that the whole group will accept this type of material without offense?

People's views about these sort of jokes range from "totally unacceptable" to "have you got any more?!" I'll leave you to decide what fits with you and your friends.

You'll probably realize that it's become very dangerous to use any of this material in a work environment – you might get sued or even fired!

A tactic to avoid completely is to apologize that the story you're about to tell 'might offend some of you' and then launch into the smut joke.

Your friends that are uncomfortable about the content will probably keep quiet in order to maintain the general friendly atmosphere. But the basic question is, "they're your friends – why would you want to make any of them feel uncomfortable?"

If one person is genuinely offended by a joke that you tell, then I believe that the joke has failed. The effect will not stop with that person because some people in the group will be more strongly attracted to them than you and are also likely to feel some discomfort at the effect your story had on their close friend.

I'm not saying that you should never use that sort of material. That's entirely your choice and all I'm doing is to make sure that you know the potential consequences.

I know that we can't please everybody – that sometime we might inadvertently offend someone because their views are at the extreme end of some topic – the end farthest from our own. We do have a right to speak out about our views, tell any joke that we feel is genuinely funny – otherwise it will fast become a dull, grey existence for us all.

There's one other important factor to consider when you find that great story, even if your friends are likely to not only love it but to have stronger ones of their own.

Can you 'sell' this sort of material? You need to be very good or, sometimes, just very brave to make them work.

Insults and Put-downs

What about jokes and stories which disparage individuals or groups?

There are a few professionals that still use an abrasive style, insult particular groups, members of their audiences or even their entire audience! They have focused their whole presentation, polished their material and possibly even suffered a few beatings before they've found their feet and audiences that appreciate their views and their venom.

I doubt that you've got the time or skill for that road and, if you do try it with friends and colleagues, you may well find yourself running out of both before you perfect your approach.

There was a lot of this sort of humor about until fairly recently. In some places, you were expected to accept supposedly good-natured disparagement of your race, religion, sexual preference or whatever as part of daily co-existence in your working life.

People often only laughed at those jokes because they wanted to fit in with the group and that was the way to do it. Some people still do for that same reason.

But the effect is likely to be more negative than positive. The world has changed – there's organizations monitoring it and even laws against it in many areas. But there's still lots of people that use this sort of joke with varying effect.

My view is that you need to be very sure that there is no unintended hurt caused by anything that you say – even a joke about, say, a couple often squabbling might offend and even hurt if you direct it at a particular couple without knowing, until later, that they are having problems.

Your quip about someone being very short might be no more than a quick line to you while they may feel very differently. In this fast-paced, high-pressure environment that's common in our workplaces these days, a little humor can be a wonderful tonic but anything that reflects on the performance of particular people or groups might not be seen by them as just a friendly joke.

Aim at Yourself

There's just one person that is 'fair game' – to be the target of your pot-shots and the butt of your banter.

That's **you**.

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