

42nd Storyworth: What Is Your Favorite Joke?

This will be VERY short, like the best jokes ;-). I think those who know me well would agree that I love to laugh. But I don't really have "canned jokes" like some stand-up comic. Instead, I find humor in much of life, especially when I consider the ridiculousness which is so much of life. To me the key to a sense of humor is the ability to pick up on those moments of absurdity, which enable me to laugh so often, and heartily.

I like to believe (maybe convince myself, which might prove I am delusionally self-absorbed ;-)) that most of humor is funny to the most people because it points out the way occurrences common to most of us can be viewed in different ways from that as initially expected, and that the ability to connect those dots is both a sign of intelligence and, if we can find them funny, a sign of our being adaptable human beings. After all, you cannot mock that of which you are unaware.

So I think it fundamentally requires an ability to perceive the unfamiliar, but to free associate it to what IS familiar, and reflect that back, often with sarcasm and other insights. I do not believe that ability is necessarily natural to most people, especially as I think most of us think literally and linearly, while comedians must view their material by finding the absurd in the mundane, and expressing it in a way which makes it both familiar and funny, perhaps BECAUSE the audience was not capable of seeing that before it was thus presented.

And I DO believe my ability to view things in such a contrarian way is a necessary trait for such a sense of humor – and the ability to reflect it back by paraphrase or similar image requires both an intelligence and a sense of humor and awareness of the absurdity it presents. In addition, it must be a practiced art, so must occur frequently and on a wide array of subjects to truly be a "talent", if I may make so bold an assertion.

I CAN state pretty emphatically that if it were to be a canned joke, it might be likely to start with "Two Jews walked into a bar ...", but ONLY because so many jokes told by so many comedians, who are themselves disproportionately Jewish and use that as cultural basis for their comedy, start their jokes precisely that way. But then I would flop right on my face, probably because I do NOT share a cultural affinity nor experience.

So in summary, I would have to say that my favorite joke has to be myself – and I feel strongly that my humor is only acceptable by others BECAUSE I actively attempt to make myself the butt of such humor, largely instead of victimizing others. Whether anyone else would agree with that assessment is debatable, but I think it is a pretty common thread with those comics who have the greatest longevity with their levity ;-)

Joe Holzer 10/4/2021