

Humor Workshop Notes

Dr. Charles W. Jarvis

Note: Dr. Jarvis presented this 6-hour workshop on humor several times. He made notes on two different presentations of that workshop, one at Scottsdale and one at Phoenix. Both sets of notes are presented here.

While there is some overlap of material in the two sets of notes, both are included here for the additional observations they offer.

You should read these notes thoroughly before listening to the tapes. It will help you to understand to whom and to what Dr. Jarvis is refering. He talks about people he knows and works with as well as about the slides he used during the presentations.

There is another 2-hour workshop which was presented by Dr. Jarvis at the N.S.A. Convention in 1982. It is available along with notes.

You will find that Charlies presents a unique blend of humor and education in these tapes. Some of the humorous materials in the workshop tapes do not appear in any of the 4 "Prescription for the Happy Life" series.

The following write-up is necessary in order for people who have ordered the Humor Workshop cassette tapes to understand more clearly what is taking place during the first hour of the workshop. When listening to the tapes, one hears me talking about several of my friends. The ones I mentioned: Here are some comments about them that might be of interest and aid. Then I have printed out the slides that were shown to that audience and if you will refer to these sheets as I talk, I believe you will benefit greatly. In the first hour I am talking about dedication, study, and success in *any* chosen vocation, not just professional public speaking. I never thought these tapes would be of interest except to those present that particular day, but I've had numerous requests for the tapes. I hope the following pages will help you a great deal.

Charles Plumb -- the friend and P.O.W. whom I introduce at the first of the meeting. Charlie and I are good friends now, but that Humor Workshop occasion was the first time we had met. I mentioned that he had been a P.O.W. in Vietnam for three years. That is incorrect. Charlie's plane was hit by a missile and he ejected, was captured, tortured and went through all that goes with being a prisoner of the Vietnamese war regime for nearly *six* years. My mistake was in not finding out the correct statistics before mentioning him. Sorry.

Cavett Robert -- The co-founder, with Marilyn Cundiff, of the National Speakers Association. Cavett is a legend in the speaking field, a great motivational speaker, a beloved man by all the members of the N.S.A. "The Cavett," a bronze figure of Cavett Robert, was sculpted and is given each year by the N.S.A. to that member who has emulated the example as set by Cavett as sharing and caring for the profession of public speaking and his or her fellow members of the N.S.A. Is similar to the Gene Hersholt Award for contributions and honor to the movie industry. To their shame and my chagrin, some speakers who have received this award for meritorious service to their profession have used it in their advertising as "The Oscar of the Speaking Profession," which it is *not*. It is an award for service, not excellence. They may be excellent speakers, too, but that is not the point and not the requirement. This award should not be used by a professional person for marketing purposes. When I admonished one friend for this misdeed, he told me, "Well, Charlie, it's marketing and I am going to continue to use it that way." I replied, "Well, just so you know that indeed you are *using* it." It is for service to a wonderful profession. It *could* be given to a person who is not a good speaker, or perhaps *not* a speaker, but a wonderful contributor to the profession in other ways.

Bill Gove -- wonderful humorous, motivational speaker and the first President of the N.S.A. A great friend of mine, I kidded Bill all during the workshop for he is on the front row and readily available. You can hear him laugh. He is the one who asked about Mr. Ben Franklin, of The Associated Clubs. One can also hear him comment during the workshop. It was wonderful to have him there and he was a friendly, very beneficial foil for me during that day. Made the day much more interesting and entertaining. A very caring, kind man and I wish my life with him could go on much, much longer.

Charley Willey -- My best friend in public speaking circles. A minister of twenty-seven years of service to his church, the Disciples of Christ denomination, which also is Maxine's and my denomination. We were baptized and married in the First Christian Church of Brady, Texas. Charley and his marvelous, gracious wife, Betty, are like brother and sister to us, but we don't get to see them enough, for we live so far apart. They live in Moline, Illinois. Here is a man I would have liked to

have been my brother. Only trouble is that we like to quip at each other too much. We can't be serious for too long a period when we're together. I am delighted he was there that very significant day in my life. He is a great speaker, very humorous, with marvelous content, a message for vibrant, dedicated service to his fellow man and woman. One walks out of his engagements filled with a message of hope and successful living. The world needs many more people such as the Willeys.

Bill Johnson -- I did not mention Bill, but he is the one who taped the workshop and was my advisor for the workshop. He is very savvy as to all phases of public speaking and production. He was the first Executive Director of the National Speakers Association and later was President of General Cassette Corporation, which taped for years the proceedings of the N.S.A. annual conventions. He taped the entire workshop day. His wonderful wife, Marge, was also a great help. She registered everyone and handled all the details of the meeting. Bill is a great friend, also, and an extremely fortunate man to have married such a lovely lady as Marge. Over the years he has gotten a bit weary of me telling him this, but he knows it *is* true. Same with me, having Maxine, of course.

Bob Bale -- Now deceased, but a great speaker on Sales and Motivation in his time. A vibrant and wonderful athlete, he and his best friend had a terrible automobile wreck which killed his friend instantly and put Bob in the hospital for months. He was so mangled that his therapy was excruciating, but he did live but walked haltingly all the rest of his life. The first time I met him was at the Phoenix Convention Center when he came up those steps and the escalator to hear me speak. I watched him struggle along and winced each step he took. With all this he still exercised his marvelous sense of humor. When I saw him walking so dreadfully, a foot or so at a step, I asked him, "Bob, can I help you?" He looked at me as though he was offended and shouted, "Of course you can. I'd love it! But Charlie, where would you be tomorrow?" Isn't that an amazing attitude? We both laughed. However, I waited until he laughed first, then joined him.

I was the banquet speaker for the N.S.A. convention Thursday night, two days before the Humor Workshop. He was selected to introduce me. To select such a vibrant, humorous man to introduce someone is a risk for the program-planner. Did not bother me at all. I enjoyed it. Bob did do his thing, took 19 minutes to introduce me. Some people were perturbed by this. One person sent me a display of multiple photos depicting the event. I treasure this display of photos of the unforgettable event and look at it often and smile. Bob had most of the people laughing. The ones who were not were those who have always thought *any* introduction over one minute is too long. However, I *did* enjoy it and when Bob finished, I walked to the lectern, leaned on it for awhile and the people wondered what I would say. I asked, "Are there any questions?" Then, I waited. The people started laughing, and they laughed and laughed, then they applauded, and stood up, still applauding. . It made for a fine start. Remember: Do the unexpected.

Bob took me to the airport in his car when I left Phoenix the next morning. We had a very pleasant, entertaining visit. When I left him, I thanked him and said, "We ought to get together again for a couple of days and talk, Bob." I'll never forget what he said and the exuberant manner in which he said it. He smiled and nearly shouted, "Charlie, it'd take a week!" What a man!

I miss Bob. He died shortly after I met him. We would have had such great moments, such wonderful discussions of humor and our experiences.

General Comments:

Pedantic -- It was disappointing to me that I sound as though I am being pedantic. I did not mean to be,

just as I did not mean to be blunt with anyone of my friends in this audience. If I do sound that way to you, forgive me. This was a very emotional experience for me -- the first time I had talked *about* humor in a teaching situation.

Blunt -- one of my friends who attended thought I was a bit "blunt" at times. Again, I did not mean to be, but if I were to hold another Humor Workshop, when someone had commented, my replies would have been softer. For instance when I asked if anyone knew the definition of a joke, and Art Fetting had said, "Surprise," I should have said, "That's good, but is an element *in* a joke."

This next remark may sound brusque in itself, but I now think a bit of bluntness is all right. If a person asks you to help him/her, we shouldn't lie. If they need to improve, we should discreetly tell them so. Benefits. It does no good to tell an aspiring speaker he or she is great when in fact they are not even good. Do you agree? Try to help, but do remember: Everyone cannot do this, especially for a living, for to do that, one has to be outstanding, unless he or she is a celebrity. Then, they are not paid for speaking but for *being there*, on display, to sign autographs, etc.

Jimmy Gross and Peggy - their act -- Jimmy and Peggy put on a fantastic program. I sat in the second row and enjoyed the whole thirty-minute act. Tremendous! The lady sitting next to me, who was not aware that I was to follow them, turned to me and asked, "How would you like to follow that?" My reply is on the tape.

"Braggadocio" - a noun, no such adjective as "braggadocious" -- have heard people such as commentators, specifically Rush Limbaugh, use this. I had never looked up the word. My friend, Charley Willey advised me that there was no such word as what I considered the adjective. I appreciated that. We should help each other. We still do today, twenty years later. Since he and I are "in fun" most of the time we're together, he **loved** correcting me. He did it discreetly, not in public that day. Could have, but did not.

Bob Murphey -- A natural wit and comic personality, humor comes easily to Bob. We are close friends. He is from Nacogdoches, Texas, "The Home of the Zip Code," as he puts it in his talks. Says, "Nobody could spell our town so they give us a number. Then everyone else wanted a number." I read part of Bob's letter for I wanted to show them what a witty man he is. A fine man, one of the best humorous speakers in America, very *fast* with his humor. A natural story-teller. His comments about a "scholarship for the meeting" and "your bait..." are hilarious. Listen to the crowd as I read these parts of his letter to me concerning the workshop.

Slides Used:

LOWLY MOTIVATED: Man sitting dolefully under a tree, leaning back against the trunk, and has a sign around his neck: "LOWLY MOTIVATED."

Two old toothless men: Obviously enjoying a coffee session, laughing with mouths wide open, really enjoying themselves, both of them practically toothless..

Remarks: "You don't have to have teeth to be happy."

Lee Trevino, with teeth tightly clenched.

Remarks: "They do help with a missed putt."

Something to do.
Desire to do it.
Put your heart into it.

Biggest frustration is to be the only one who cares. When a dentist sees all those pitiful mouths every day, when patients come in without brushing their teeth, when we see all the terrible periodontal conditions and the patients do not attach much importance to any of this -- perhaps because it does not show -- this attitude depresses dentists who are very committed to saving teeth and bone structure, who are dedicated practitioners of oral health procedures. Remember: the profession of dentistry leads the suicide statistics of all the professions.

Cartoon of a little character, with a BIG mouth, practically ALL mouth, with little tiny legs. Mouth is wide open. I say, "This is what a lot of dentists think a person looks like."

"To every tooth there is attached a people." This is what I used to tell audiences and especially dental students. Doctors -- no matter what kind of doctors -- are taught about people as things, organs, veins, arteries, etc. Then, unless they are very human relations minded, they tend to treat people as things. In my talks I say, "We must love people and use things and if you get that reversed, you are in serious trouble." Doctors say, "Nurse, where did you put the heart attack?" and the nurse answers, "In room 512." The heart attack occurred to Mr. Schultz and he was put in room 512." However, I explain to people that if doctors were the human and public relations minded people they would like them to be, chances are very good that these people would not have been doctors -- they would have been salespeople.

What you want to do to them, you want to do for them. As stated above, the biggest frustration for the dentist is to be the only one who cares. You care more about their oral health than they do. This will give you skizzums of the gizzums.

Remove the germs, once a day, with floss and brush. This is when the patient asked me, "Do I have to floss them all?" And I said, "No, just floss those you want to save."

4921 hours - hours spent in dental school training and no one teaches the students to talk to patients in terms they can understand. We communicate with each other in our jargon and the patients are not familiar with such terms as periodontoclasia, medial, distal, etc.

"How much does the average dentist make?" What is "average"? "What does the average dentist make?" "Pitiful dentures." When I was at the dental school, a couple of "journalists" from one of the local T.V. stations wanted to interview me. I thought it would be about my speaking career, but these people were mad, acted as though they had come from an orthodontist's office where they had been quoted a price for treatment, a price they thought very exorbitant. In dental practice, the dentist must learn to talk to angry people and alleviate the source of their anger. Humor is a great vehicle with which to do this.

"Why can't we get an appointment when we want to?" I then explained that I'd like to go on an airline trip when I want to, but the airlines have found that they must stick to their scheduling that has proved itself most reliable and efficient. Simple logic and reasoning.

“Why can’t our children get an appointment after school?” Seems logical but at that time, the children would be tired and would not cooperate as they must if the dentist is to do his/her absolute best work and thus benefit the patient. Talk in terms of benefits and you communicate better.

“There is only one reason people should listen to you. What is it?” The next thing out of your mouth will benefit *them*.

Wheelbarrow Story - drawing of me standing next to a wheelbarrow as if to invite a person to get in. Old story of the wire walker who is going to cross the Niagara river, at the falls, pushing a wheelbarrow while walking on a wire stretched above the falls from the United States side to the Canadian side. He keeps asking, “Do you think I can do it?” and the crowd responds wildly, “You can do it!” Then, he asks for a volunteer, to get in the wheelbarrow. Moral: The third easiest thing in the world to do is to talk a philosophy you never have to live.

Microphone plugged into the dental chair, and I, as a cartoon character, holding the microphone. An caricaturist drew this of me, wondering what I was doing and would I leave dentistry for speaking.

“Successful people do what failures will *not* do.” What do failures not do?” Attend meetings, organize, get out of bed and get started on a plan of work, etc. Leading up to “Think and Grow Rich,” and its 13 steps.

“What is the second step in problem-solving?” What’s the first? Although very simple, this should be taught and ingrained in every grammar school student, then repeated a few times during the student’s education at different levels, using adequate teaching examples.

“Successful people form *habits* of doing what failures will not do.” For instance, failures will not attend meetings, seminars, workshops. Self-development, self-management.

“Wish Ida” The Wish Ida approach to life. “I wish Ida done this or that.” Life is short. One must plan, then carry out one’s plan.

“If ‘it’s’ and ‘buts’ were candy and nuts, oh, what a Christmas it would be!” The crewel work piece that Pamela (our daughter) had done for me, and which now hangs in my home. Howard Cosell had been saying, “if,” “but,” and “except for,” when talking about certain football players on the *Monday Night Football* program. Don Meredith had enough of that and being a good friend of Cosell’s, teasingly said the above. Excuses are the tools of the ineffective. That quote stuck in my mind and became part of my philosophy of life and success. I mentioned this to Pamela and bless her heart, she had this done in crewel work for me. It is beautiful and I appreciate it very much. It will be part of my will.

“Those biscuits had good intentions. They squatted, ready to rise, but cooked in the squat.”
-- Zig Ziglar.. They *intended* to rise, but never got around to it.

“Trouble getting started” Tremendous Jones, great motivational speaker, rants and raves in front of his audiences, facetiously acting as though he’s a bit mad at all of them for not informing him of all these basics they did not tell him, “Why didn’t you tell me this?! You didn’t tell me this!
I don’t have trouble getting started -- I have trouble getting started getting started!”

Luck is spelled W-O-R-K. Luck is a word used to explain the success of people we don't like.

Law of Supply and Demand One has to meet this basic premise. Supply and Demand works all the time in the market. One has to make himself/herself *nearly* indispensable. None of us really are, but we must pursue that status. What attributes, what talents do you have that the market forces need desperately? Then, another question: How easily are you replaced?

"Saying something is so does not mean it *is* so. It means you *said* it is so." This statement prior to telling the story of the old rabbi: "Life is like a river." The Third Easiest Thing to Do in the World is to talk a philosophy you never have to live.

"You gotta have the goods." Prior to telling the story of the lion and the rabbit. Benefits.

"It's nice to be wanted." Old story of the fellow who walked into the Post Office and saw his picture on the bulletin board.

You will be successful in relation to the following:

1. What you do.
2. The ability with which you do it.
3. The difficulty of replacing you.

A reputation is...

Easy to gain.

Easy to keep.

Easy to lose.

Nearly impossible to regain.

Do it once... This slide was shown, then the other part of it was discussed. Whatever you do, do it so well the first time that they will want you to do it for them again. This is vital. Success is when preparedness meets opportunity. Disaster is when unpreparedness meets opportunity. This is basic and goes hand in hand with another old truism, "No one yet has devised a method to get a second chance at a first impression." This is how I got started in dentistry and also in speaking. Forgive me if this sounds self-serving, but I did it once and they wanted me to do it again. Then, it gets even more significant. Hans Selye, the father of the stress movement, coined the term, "Altruistic Egotism." That means that you ought to get so effective at whatever you do, and get your clients, your customers, your patients, so used to your excellence at what you do, that they will want you to live a long, long time so you can render your beneficial service for them all their lives. Make yourself nearly indispensable to your customers, clients, or patients -- *nearly* irreplaceable.

Cause and Effect -- discussed this a bit. Money, Prestige, Respect, these are effects. Jack Nicklaus says he never worried about money -- he worried about performance. People must be singularly effective. They must be unique. Speakers say to me, "I'd like to speak like Dr. McFarland." I used to ask them, "He can't make it?" They'd look at me quizzically. I'd say, "You have to be unique. No use to be *like* someone. Be your own person.

THINK AND GROW RICH -- the book by Napoleon Hill. It's thirteen steps to success.

THINK and Grow Rich -- the way I think it should be. People do not think -- they *think* they think.

1 hour a day for five years -- Earl Nightingale said that if a person will study his/her specialty for one hour a day and apply himself to this pursuit for five years he/she will be sought after, will be paid to speak about his/her specialty. I knew I would hold this Humor Workshop years before I actually did it. The prospect of it had occupied my mind that long.

"A Cluttered Desk Is A Sign of Genius" -- makes a lazy person feel better. The lout needs to organize, one of the steps of *T&GR*.

Over learn -- Ray Monsalvatge, memory expert. His system, "A Memory System Which Works"

Have a definite, clear, practical goal.

Have the means to achieve that goal.

Apply all your means to that end.

Have intermediate goals and terminal goals. When Jack Nicklaus starts to hit a golf shot, observe him carefully. He stands behind the ball, he looks at his terminal goal, the green or a specific place in the fairway where he must place the ball in order to be in the best position to hit the *next* shot, then he looks closer to the tee, picks out a spot in the grass over which his ball must pass so that it will proceed directly to that farther spot in the fairway or on the green. Then, he commits this to his subconscious and trusts his swing. The ball hits right where he wanted it to, on

the fairway, or on the green. Then, when he putts, his procedure is the same: sights the hole, which side of the hole he wants the ball to go in, the grain of the green, the slope, the speed his mind figures, then he putts and when the ball goes in, people think he's lucky. Lucky?

Who said the above three sentences about these goals? Was it Zig Ziglar, or another modern motivational, self-development speaker? No, it was Aristotle.

Breaks -- not luck, but some breaks. You must take advantage of any breaks you get. Be ready for them.

Role precedes goal -- I heard this first from Dr. William Glasser, famous psychiatrist and author, speaker. He and I were on the program in 1972 for Earl Nightingale's Human Resources Congress, Chicago O'Hare Airport Hyatt Regency Hotel. Dr. Glasser made a wonderful talk that day and I'll always remember it. I have a tape of it and play it about once a year. In that talk he also said the following:

In order to be successful and happy, one must:

1. Love and *be* loved.

2. Do something worthwhile, not only to yourself, but to someone else.