Humor and Health: I’m Not Funny

I’m okay with being the person who takes life seriously.

October 28, 2019 By Karen Hoyt

Karen Hoyt is a blogger who has a story about hepatitis C, cirrhosis, end-stage liver disease, liver cancer, and liver transplantation. This excerpt first appeared on Karen’s I Help C blog.

This entire month was filled with encounters and opportunities to laugh. I’ve failed to post since my blog about positivity due to travel and busyness. I’ll tell you more about that later, let’s move right into humor and health as I tell you why I’m not funny. In the end, you can decide.

Not a Joker — Listening to me tell a joke is painful. I forget parts and have to back up and add them in. I never remember the punchline. It’s useless, so I gave it up years ago. I think too much to be funny.

Nerdishness — I’m okay with being the person who takes life seriously. I want a good outcome. I’m not going to miss a thing in life. I eat well when I’m sick. I want it all, even if that means hard work. My inner life, daily routines, relationships, and spirituality all point to the fact that I put in the time to make sure that nothing is left to chance. Some people like me have what is called a dry sense of humor. I don’t.

Tender Heart — Sarcasm is not easy for me. I didn’t like listening to Don Rickles when I was growing up. I can’t make fun of people. Our boys are hilariously sarcastic, and also have the best hearts in the world. When they jab, we know it’s from a love of jest and fun. When I jab back at them and get a laugh, it feels so very good. But it’s not a natural thing for me.

I’m So Punny — The problem is, I’m usually the only one who gets my puns. My family will tell you they spend more time laughing at My Laughter than at the jokes I make. I have a loud, explosive Oh HA HA HA kind of laugh. My daughter is also quite serious, but in NYC, we laughed it up, especially while in a live audience with Jimmy Fallon.

An Education in Humorosity

Sickness and Health Humor — At a recent Health Union (HU) workshop in Philly, our keynote speaker was Nora McInerny. She’s a true stand-up comedian, author, and podcaster. She’s a person who has experienced tragedy and keeps moving forward. She has won my respect, and my heart with her insight into humor. Google her podcast: “Terrible, Thanks for Asking” and her books, including one I’m reading now: No Happy Endings. An entire room of health advocates laughed till

we cried during her presentation. I wrote a funny blog for HU, it got some traffic and was titled What Not to Say to a Person With Hepatitis. I'm still not funny.

Humor School — Next up in Philly, Rebecca Braglio led us in a break out session titled "How to Use Humor Effectively." She was brilliant … and funny. During the Q & A, my friend Lawrence and I had some fun with our lack of humor. I held the mic to ask a question saying, "Hi. I'm Karen and I'm not funny…" and talked about making use of the ridiculous, which is a form of humor I'm quite good at.

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