

HOW TO RECALL AND RETELL ANY JOKE YOU EVER HEAR

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A politician (insert any politician here) visited a nursing home during his campaign for president (fill in any office the politician was running for). No one seemed to be paying any attention to him as he toured the facility. Feeling a bit frustrated, he walked up to a man in a wheelchair. "Excuse me," the candidate said, "Do you know who I am." The patient looked up, shook his head, and replied, "No, I don't. But if you ask at the front desk, I'm sure the nurse will be able to help you."



Many of us cannot successfully remember jokes because we don't know we're going to like a joke until after it's over. That's when we try to memorize it by "rewinding" the tape, but there is no tape in our memory.

A joke is an oral narrative. As such, it requires inflection, physical movement, and expression. A key to successful joke-telling is to report it as if you were telling a story to someone, a story that "really happened." You can't memorize someone else's telling of a joke. You need to improvise, to sound as if you were telling it for the first time. To those that say "I can't improvise," I say "balderdash"(or some such word). Unless someone writes a script for you while you sleep and leaves it on your night table, then you, like the rest of us, improvise most of our conversation every day.

Like Gaul, jokes are divided into 3 parts. Although the parts are not always clearly delineated, they are usually there.

1. THE SETUP is the reason we're interested in the story. (Ex: The politician visited a nursing home recently in order to drum up support for his health care plan.)

2. DEVELOPMENT is a problem or difficulty that happens. ("Excuse me," the President said, "do you know who I am.") Jokes are never about the specific people or places they seem to be about. They are about problems and solutions. That's why the same jokes keep coming around. I first heard this joke told when President Bush II was running for re-election.

3. PUNCHLINE is the solution to the problem told from a different point-of-view (In this case, the patient's). The greater the shift in point of view, the greater the laugh. ("No, I don't. But if you ask at the front desk, the nurse will be able to help you.")

(this section intentionally left blank, please scroll to the next page for part 2!)

HOW TO RECALL AND RETELL ANY JOKE YOU EVER HEAR part2

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When you hear a joke or story you'd like to retell

☺ Write down the outline (parts 1-3) in a notebook or speak into a recorder. The key to success is to **write the punch line down first!!!!**

☺ Transfer the outline to a 3x5 card or other system such as computer or journal.

☺ Next, construct a story that makes sense for you around the skeleton. Include details such as names, cities, job titles, school.

☺ Practice reading the story to a mirror, into a recorder, or in front of your dog or your cat (a dog is better than a cat because at least a dog looks like it cares).

☺ Take the card (or notes) with you, go up to someone and say something like: "I'd like to tell you a joke" and use the card or notes as reminders.

☺ Read the notes or refer to them as to tell the joke. After the 1st, 2nd or 3rd time you will be telling the joke successfully because you're not relying on memorization. You can change it around, alter details, and customize it for your audience. As long as you remember the 3 parts, you will be successful.

(GESELL'S GUIDE TO GUARANTEED GUFFAWS)

Don't apologize beforehand; Practice, practice, practice;

Have an air of confidence: Know your audience;

Know you might fail (You'll get over it!);

You don't have to make everyone in the audience laugh (unless it's an audience of one).

→ If you can only remember 1 of the 3 parts...

remember THE PUNCHLINE.