

Laughter Rx

It Doesn't Taste Funny

It Just Reads That Way



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I Feel Your Pain

by Barb Best

Perhaps I know best why it is man alone who laughs; he alone suffers so deeply that he had to invent laughter. ~Friedrich Nietzsche

Geez, Nietzsche was a bummer. However...

A highly developed sense of humor has always been a *fundamental* power tool in my survival kit. It drives my personal philosophy and sharpens my worldview.

For me, humor is a form of palliative care for the many pains of life. From everyday vicissitudes (don't you love that word?) to unusually distressing times, comedy gives me a cutting edge.

If you can find humor in painful situations and transform it to laughter, you will keep body and soul together. Integration is key.

Take death, for instance. What do we want when we are dying? Besides having our loved ones nearby and all the butter pecan ice cream we can eat, most of us want our doctors to keep us as pain-free as possible.

In my teens, both my parents were stricken with cancer within a few years. My mother's cancer was treated successfully with radiation, but complications left her disabled. My father was then diagnosed with advanced stomach cancer. The surgeon who removed his stomach connected a feeding tube to his small intestine. This was his only sustenance 'til he died four months later. As principal caregiver, I handled the feedings. This required the grim task of inserting a funnel-like apparatus to the end of the tube and pouring a fairly repulsive smelling, sticky liquid carefully into the funnel. The process was an intimate one, but also tricky because it was essential to simultaneously hold the tube in place at the hole in his abdomen. Backups, cord tugs, or spills caused him physical pain, frustration and embarrassment.

One early morning, I was half-asleep while doing the first feeding. I nodded off for a nanosecond, waking up just in time to stop from yanking the tube out and pouring the liquid all over my father's lap, legs, bed. As we watched the liquid circle the top of the funnel in slow motion, then recede gradually like flood waters, I shrugged and said, "Oops." Then we laughed. We laughed heartily. My mother, who was watching anxiously, laughed. It was the first time anyone laughed in months.

Terminal cancer, chronic illness, and dying is tough enough without some humor to blunt the misery that both patient and caregiver are feeling.

How do you spell relief? I spell it L-A-U-G-H-T-E-R.

Barb Best feels your pain. An Erma Bombeck Global Humor Winner and a Top 10 in The Robert Benchley Humor Competition, her comedy material has been performed by Joan Rivers and published in numerous print and online magazines such as [More.com](#) and [Divinecaroline.com](#).

I have an essay in the new humor anthology "[My Funny Major Medical](#)" at Amazon.

Read her eBook [100 Fast & Funny: Ha-Musings by Barb Best](#) and her piece "Report Card" in the perennial hit humor anthology "[My Funny Valentine](#)."

You can subscribe to her popular humor blog on pop culture and entertainment at [BarbBest.com](#) and stalk her on Twitter [@HaBarb](#).



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'Twas the night before Christmas and night in the ward

I glanced at the names that graced the white board.

The charts were all piled on the desk without care

In the hopes I'd have time to see what was there.

The patients were restless, moving about in their beds

While call bells went off, causing pain in my head.

Charge nurse in scrubs, I with my lab coat

Waited for the effects of our latest coffee jolt.

When way down the hall, there arose such a clatter!

We ran from the office to see what was the matter. Away down the hall, I flew like a flash

Clipped my knee on a wheelchair, my teeth I did gnash. The light in the hall, turned low for the night

Showed me a scene that gave me a fright. Because what to my fearful eyes should appear

A lonely walking patient, coming ever so near.

The patient stumbled forward, an IV in his hand

You may have noticed that your December **Laughter Rx** is arriving a bit late.

I am excited to announce a project begun with Mary Jo Crowley, known in our family as Merry Joke, has come to fruition after 12 years.

My talented cartoonist Theresa McCracken created 26 delightful illustrations to go along with, **You Have**

Karen's Kolumn

Everything from A-Z. It is a lighthearted punny romp through the Medical Dictionary filled with daffynitions made to make you smile.

I have included a link to its [preview here](#). I plan to sell through Smashwords for \$3.99. It makes a funny stocking stuffer for your medical colleagues and humorous healthcare associates.

You can follow me on Twitter @klee49. I would like to expand subscribers beyond the 200 now on the email list and add to the [Likes on Facebook](#)

Thank you all for assisting me in my life purpose of humor/healing/service

As Mel Brooks says, "May the farce be with you!"

'Twas the Night Before Christmas for Nurses

Courtesy [Scrubs Magazine](#)

Trailing behind, a catheter bag, a train so grand

Now Nurse! Now Doctor! Now anyone here!

Come on anybody, I want me some beer!

Along he went to the top of the hall,

My colleague and I were afraid he would fall!

By his side I did go, to help calm him down

He greeted my presence with an obvious frown

He called for a chair and then again for a beer

We quietly told him, "Sorry, we don't serve that here."

And then, in a twinkling, I heard in a room

A lady calling, she needs a broom!

A crash we then heard, the patient came to the door

Come, see what's a mess, see on

the floor!

I left the beer drinker to go have a peek

The sight on the floor made me send out a shriek.

I went to the phone: "Get me housekeeping, please!

I need your help now, I'm starting to wheeze!"

The patient was moved to a room that was clean

I thought of the patients I hadn't yet seen.

The patients got settled, the call bells stopped beeping

Midnight was coming, we felt the time creeping.

IVs we did check and vital signs we did take

Wondering if this Christmas, we'd both get a break.

Back down to the desk, we had paperwork to do

Looked at the clock, still plenty of night to get through.

We went through chart after chart, the orders we checked

When the call bells went off, down the hallway we trekked!

Midnight was coming, Christmas Eve would soon end

We wondered if admin would mind if some rules we would bend

For the holiday season is the time for some fun

As long as our patient work was all done!

We went back to the desk, just for a moment or two

When we found treats on the desk—from where and from who?

The treats, they were good and touching to get

But from where they arrived, we hadn't found yet.

We heard sounds of someone running out of sight

And heard very clearly, "Merry Christmas to all and to all a good night!"

Cartoon

by [Theresa McCracken](#)



Christmas is So Commercialized

by Karen Lee and Mary Jo Crowley

10. With the rising cost of fuel, people are actually hoping to get coal in their stockings.
9. The reindeer quit to do an Alpo commercial.
8. Santa hired an image consultant and now he's lost 100 pounds and wears Armani suits.
7. The *Neiman Marcus Christmas Catalog* went to #1 on the NY Times bestseller list.
6. It's so bad, even my rabbi sent Christmas cards this year.
5. This year the Three Wise Men are liquidating, consolidating and refinancing.
4. Our town Nativity Scene has Jesus wearing a Rolex.
3. The Pope celebrated Midnight Mass...at Bloomingdales.
2. I asked my kids where they wanted to go for their Christmas vacation. They said, "shopping".
1. If Bing Crosby were alive today, he'd be singing "I'm Dreaming of a Hyped Christmas."



[Photo by miheco](#)

Hanukkah

by Karen Lee

Hanukkah lasts eight days which should add up to a lot of presents, unless you had my parents. Day one red, day two blue, by the end of the week, wow, a whole pack of crayolas.

Hanukkah is a very confusing holiday because it falls on a different date every year...sort of like Zsa Zsa's birthday.

Trying to explain the concept of Hanukkah is useless to kids; they just want the goodies. It's a lot like explaining the Fiscal Cliff to adults.

Wish lists are pretty long at our house...the Pentagon has asked for less

Hanukkah gelt is chocolate money. How do I know? My holiday bonus just melted.

I don't see all the fuss about the miracle of the lamp oil lasting 8 days...fruitcakes last forever and you don't see a holiday celebrating that.

I'm a reform Jew. That means I still celebrate Hanukkah, but I send a Christmas card to the boss.

Just once I would like to come to work and hear "Dreidel, Dreidel" in the elevator.

Dave Barry on Christmas

“Once again we find ourselves enmeshed in the Holiday Season, that very special time of year when we join with our loved ones in sharing centuries-old traditions such as trying to find a parking space at the mall. We traditionally do this in my family by driving around the parking lot until we see a shopper emerge from the mall, then we follow her, in very much the same spirit as the Three Wise Men, who 2,000 years ago followed a star, week after week, until it led them to a parking space.”