



## HUMOR IN NOT-SO-FUNNY TIMES

by Allen Klein, CSP, MA

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Bill Cosby once said, "If you can find humor in anything, you can survive it."

When you can find humor in trying times, one of the first and most important things that happens is that you see your perplexing problems in a new way--you suddenly have a new perspective of them. As a result of this new vantage point, you may also see new ways to deal with them.

There is an amusing tale that I sometimes tell in my workshops that illustrates how a little humor can help ease a troublesome situation. It comes from the Jewish tradition. The story says that the world will come to an end in three days. In three days, everything will be deluged by water and everyone will drown.

After hearing this, the Pope goes on television and says, "Don't worry, if you all turn to Christ, you will be saved."

The head of the Zen community also goes on TV and says, "Don't worry, if you put your faith in Buddha, you will be saved."

Then the head Rabbi of Israel appears on TV and says, "Don't worry folks, we have three days to learn how to swim under water."

Humor can be one of our best survival tools. Victor Frankl knew this when he was incarcerated in a German concentration camp. Humor gave him hope for the future and something to look forward to each day.

It can do the same for you. At work, when you are forced to do more with less, or in life, when difficulties or disasters strike, humor can give you the upper hand. You may not be able to change a situation but with humor you can change your attitude about it. As Frankl noted, "the last of human freedoms is to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances...."

Your attitude are the crayons that color your world. Constantly color your picture gray and your picture will always be bleak. Try adding some bright colors to the picture by including humor and your picture begins to lighten up.

Today's business climate may not be pleasant. Cutbacks, pay cuts and layoffs do not make any one's job easy. But that does not mean that the humor need stop.

Humor can help you cope with the unbearable so that you can stay on the bright side of things until the bright side actually comes along.

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