

Comedy: The Most Powerful Therapy

The ability to find your own misfortune funny is rare and powerful.

Long ago, I worked for an expert in it. Everything was funny to him, especially anticipated and actual misfortune. Speeding tickets, flat tires, threats from creditors, even an emergency appendectomy were all parts of the wildly entertaining narrative he inhabited. He enjoyed his own life as if it were a sitcom full of predictably ill-timed occurrences and tragicomedy.

I've heard a variously attributed quote about how a paper cut is tragedy, while falling in an open sewer and dying is comedy. My friend experienced both as comedy. It made him invincible. Not a stoic acceptance of pain and suffering. Not an optimist's insistence on silver linings. My friend had something else. Not somber respect for difficulty, nor sunny defiance of it. Cheeriness and constant laughter *because* of it. In fact, he almost looked with delight for the unexpected two steps back after every step forward.

He never saw himself as a victim, just a guy who got a front row seat to the ironic absurdity of life. He loved his life, spoke openly about how good he had it, while laughing about the latest loss or bad news.

I used to find it fun and quirky. The further down my own journey I've made it, the more I see it as one of the greatest secrets I've yet encountered. This outlook is magic. The shocking irreverence of it. It's juvenile snickering in the face of a menacing opponent. It makes you invincible. Parody, comedy, satire, laughter at all of it, everything. Unseriousness in serious moments. Like one never-ending under-the-breath pun at the never-ending board meeting of life.

Laugh at stuff. Laugh at yourself. Laugh at your misfortune. You're on a hero's journey. But there's no reason the narrative can't look a little more like Spaceballs than Star Wars. You save the galaxy either way, but one's a lot funnier.