

The Courage to Laugh

Humor, Hope, and Healing in the Face of Death and Dying

by Allen Klein

Is Death too serious for humor? This is the title of the first chapter of Allen's book. This book will give you hope and courage to face a dying patient in the hospital. It is filled with wisdom, stories and anecdotes from patients, doctors, nurses, children and comedians. This is a book you can refer to over and over again – a definite item for every caring clown's book shelf?

A Sensitive Spirit

"I believe that as long as we are not in a state of shock, there is always something to laugh about. What happens in what we label a serious situation, however, is that we turn off our humor antenna. The humor is there, but we don't see it. And even if we do find the humor, we often negate it and label it inappropriate. Yes, laughing at someone else's troubles is inappropriate, but sharing a laugh about some aspect of that trouble is not. So how do we determine what is appropriate and what is not?"

"Humor is appropriate if it comes from an *open heart*. I've always believed that is true, but I've recently heard another term that can also guide us toward appropriate humor. One minister, with a wonderful image, said, "If you use humor with a sensitive spirit, then it will turn out okay."

"Using humor to poke fun at death is in bad taste if it puts down someone who is suffering. But appropriate humor ' ' that which naturally comes out of adversity ' ' gives those dealing with life's challenging situations, power over a powerless situation. . . . I believe appropriate humor in the death - and - dying process can provide even more - much more. You will see from the stories in this book how humor helped people cope; how it empowered them and how it was defiant, triumphant and life-affirming; how it provided perspective and balance; and how it diverted their attention, gave them comic relief, and liberated them from their loss.

"Humor can provide enormous benefits in tumultuous times. The problem is how to find it [Allen then continues to give suggestions.]

Allen Klein is an award-winning professional speaker and author who shows people nationwide how to deal with "not=so-funny stuff." Previous books include [The Healing Power of Humor](#), and [Quotations to Cheer You Up When the Whole World is Getting You Down](#).
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