



## Humor Is A Magical Interface, by Steve Bhaerman

Humor is a magical interface between the logical and intuitive minds. Consequently, it has the power to bypass the left-brain's linear gatekeepers and allow outside-the-box ideas to come in under the radar. Which is not to say that all comedy awakens. We've all experienced brutality thinly disguised as "humor," usually with the unfunny disclaimer, "What's the matter? Can't take a joke?"

Some kinds of humor perpetuate prejudice, misunderstanding, denial, separation. They are merely reflecting the prejudice, misunderstanding, denial and separation that now exist. The best kind of humor is a vehicle for love that not only leaves them laughing, it leaves them smiling. By understanding, embracing and practicing humor

at its best, we can add to the "laugh force" on the planet, and allow enlightening humor to strike more frequently.

"Laughter is medicine." We've heard it so often, it's almost a cliché. To go a bit deeper, laughter is "medicine" in the Native American sense ... a form of magic that can transmute suffering into insight, rigidity into flexibility, separation into connection. As an alchemical (or we might say, all-comical) tool, humor has the power to heal the heart and free the mind. Wholehearted hearty laughter naturally kindles joy. [!]

On rare occasions, a joke fires on all cylinders. One such story, purported to be true, is something that happened during the Cuban missile crisis in 1962. As you may or may not remember, this is the closest we as a world have come to nuclear holocaust. [!]  
Fortunately, wiser heads and hearts prevailed on both sides.

However, in the midst of the crisis there were some American and Soviet delegates meeting to discuss possible trade between the two countries. When news of the missile crisis hit, there was tremendous tension and the room fell silent. Finally, one of the Soviet delegates stood up and proposed that they take turns telling jokes. He volunteered to start. "What's the difference between capitalism and communism?" "In capitalism, man exploits man. In communism, it's the other way around." The room erupted in laughter, the kind of explosion that heals. When the laughter died down, they were able to continue their business in peace and equanimity. [!]

Ever since I heard this story many, many years ago I have held it as the highest octave of humor -- a joke that offered physical and emotional release, and mental and spiritual insight. Instantly, the

room was transformed as each individual recognized him or herself -- as well as everyone else -- as humans, united at the heart.

--Steve Bhaerman, aka Swami Beyondananda

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