

"I realize that humor isn't for everyone. It's only for people who want to have fun, enjoy life, and feel alive."

»Anne Wilson Schaefer

Wisely Ignorant



During a recent conversation with a senior manager friend about some of the issues he was having with employee morale, I asked a few questions about areas I suspected might be at the core of his problem.

In the middle of explaining a few things to me, he seemed to have an "A-ha moment" about one of his more problematic people.

He told me, "You really hit the nail on the head."

I responded, "Thanks, but I wasn't holding the hammer. That was you."

When he tried to give me credit for knowing more than I did, I told him, "Look... I think 25% of what I bring to the table is a comfort with admitting ignorance."

That cracked him up.

The point I made to my friend was that when you admit that you don't know everything about a situation or subject,

Constructive Humor



I've been making the same joke to my sons for the better part of a week.

Well, I like the joke. I'm not sure they totally appreciate the humor.

During spring break, when many of our family and friends are off doing fun things, we've been working nearly non-stop on a home for my parents to move to.

There are certain levels of construction that absolutely require professionals.

Gutting, designing, and rebuilding a kitchen and master bathroom are not what I consider DIY projects. We need professionals for that.

Fact of the Day: Those professionals charge a lot of money.

Trying to remain in the ballpark of our budget, the family has become an interior painting crew for the week.

you are more willing to ask relevant questions.

You are open to discover alternative options because you are more interested in learning than in pretending you already know.

I've long suggested to trainers and folks involved with the onboarding of employees to be less focused on how fast a person seems to pick up things and more interested in how well he/she picks up things.

Now, there is obviously pressure to get up to speed and competent as quickly as possible.

We should be careful, however, that we make it clear to our teams that it is okay not to understand something immediately.

Being ignorant of something you aren't familiar with isn't your fault.

Pretending to know something while remaining ignorant, well...is.

We need to also be aware that the practice of pretending to know something or feigning competence with a process happens with our customers as well.

As we introduce more and better tools to allow them to handle banking transactions through technology, it is vital that we ensure they are truly comfortable and competent with these tools.

Enthusiastically asking a customer if he or she has used your mobile app is a great way to find out.

It's not that I think painting doesn't take skill. It most certainly does.

It's just that interior painting is something you can usually get a "do over" on if you mess something up.

You can buy extra paint for less money than the labor cost of a painter. (Okay, that's what I keep telling myself.)

The joke I keep throwing out at my sons is, "Man... I love Spring Break. Can you feel the sea breeze? Smell that salt air!"

In actuality, the breeze is a shop fan and the air smells like Kilz Primer. (If you don't know what that stuff is, ask a friend. It stays with you for days.)

Something that I have been reminded of all week is the incredible impact of humor on our open-loop limbic systems.

No, it's not the paint fumes getting to me.

During periods in which the entire family is tired/hungry/sore/homicidal, even one person making others laugh seems to recharge everyone's batteries.

It's like a reset button.

It takes your mind off whatever body part is aching or the amount of work still ahead... if for a few seconds.

It lifts moods. And moods always spread.

(Our family specializes in repeating lines from the movie Nacho Libre. Okay, maybe those paint fumes are stronger than I thought.)

A person saying they understand may be different from a person who has actually used it.

That difference may be the difference between empowering customers and keeping them happy, or eventually losing them to a competitor who steps in to help them truly understand what they were hesitant to admit they didn't know.

There are going to be stretches along your way in which the work is harder and the stress is higher than you and your team would like.

Finding things to laugh at (including yourself) might be the difference between burning out... or shining through.

How will you help your team laugh today?

"The only guarantee for failure is to stop trying."

»John C. Maxwell



Dave Martin, author of [The In-Store Advantage](#), has become one of the most prolific writers in the banking industry. His keynote presentations, seminars, and podcasts have an authenticity and humor that brings teams of all sizes and seniority levels together.

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