

JEWLARIOUS

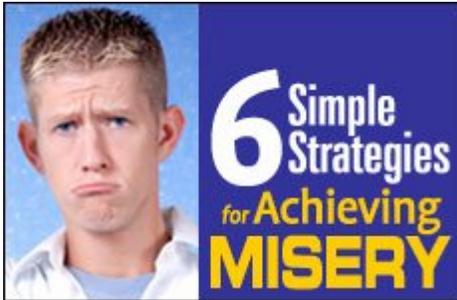
An Interactive Jewish Humor Book



Jewish Hospitals

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The sobering fact is that serenity and joy are natural states for us all. Fear not. Practiced regularly, these strategies vastly improve our odds of attaining despair

[by Sol Herzig, Ph.D.](#)

Many people innocently believe that all they have to do is sit back, coast through life, and misery will come to them. Nothing could be further from the truth! The sobering fact is that serenity and joy are natural states for us all. Just observe a child at play, yourself on a favorite vacation, or anyone absorbed in creative activity. As our minds clear of clutter and negative thinking, a profound sense of peace and contentment often emerges. Does this mean there's no hope? Absolutely not! The strategies outlined below, practiced regularly, vastly improve our odds of achieving misery.

1. CLING TO ENTITLEMENT

You are perfectly entitled to feelings of entitlement. It is your birthright to expect unflinching attention, loyalty, respect, and subservience from others. Contemplate the inherent, self-evident unfairness of anyone having something you want. Strive to see compromise, accommodation, patience, and responsibility, as somehow relevant only to "the other guy." In general, be aware that life owes you and that you were put on this planet to collect.

2. IT'S ALL PERSONAL

Malicious intent is always present if you just look carefully enough. This is particularly true regarding family members. Suppose your spouse overlooks one of your preferences. Seize the opportunity to view this as conclusive proof that you don't really matter to them and probably never have. If your children dawdle at bedtime, see them as viciously spiteful and yourself as a sorry excuse for a parent. It's really very simple. Ignore nothing, and always assume evil intent. Remember, if you don't take things personally no one will do it for you.

3. FOCUS ON PROBLEMS

There is really very little sense in having problems if you don't focus on them. It's crucial therefore to keep careful track of all your problems and constantly review them. Nurture the attitude that you can't really move on to anything unless everything is resolved first. Remember also that there is no solution without a problem, if you look closely enough. Always resist the temptation to ponder where problems go when you don't think about them.

4. MAGNIFY

Too often people cheat themselves out of misery by maintaining perspective. This is both needless as well as extremely counter productive. Why would anyone ever want to think of themselves as "just human" when "fatally flawed" and "irredeemably warped" are available? Similarly, when recalling past mistakes, why stop at instructive regret when paralyzing guilt is within reach? Sure it requires a bit of effort, but the payoff can be enormous. Just imagine the benefits of eventually believing that your negative thinking actually reflects reality.

5. EXPECT CATASTROPHE

It is critical to remember that really terrible things can occur at any moment. Let's start with the body. Begin by paying close attention to changes in bodily sensation, no matter how trivial. Next, let your imagination run wild. Anything involving flesh-eating bacteria or intestinal parasites will usually do the trick. People sometimes protest that their bodies feel perfectly fine. Not to worry! Think "Silent Killers." Feeling perfectly fine places you squarely at risk for these. Of course, there is no reason to stop at personal health issues. The range of potential catastrophe is vast. For example, there are suitcase bombs, encroaching asteroids, global recession, pandemics, killer bees, and so on. Simply use your imagination to craft a realistic sense of impending doom. Savor the pride you'll feel on your death bed knowing that nothing ever caught you by surprise.

6. JUST SAY "NO THANKS" TO GRATITUDE

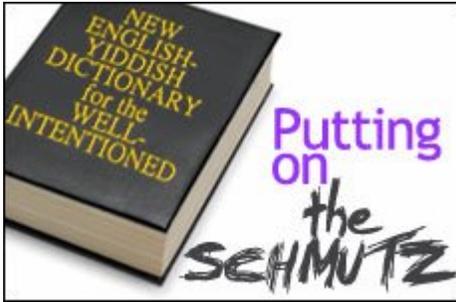
Gratitude is to misery what Kryptonite is to Superman. All the hard work you've invested in misery will go down the drain if you start fiddling around with gratitude. A zero tolerance policy is very much in order. This is very challenging, however, as life runs rampant with opportunities for gratefulness. Begin, therefore, by thoroughly discounting all the good in your life as a "given." Next, focus your mind on the many ways in which life continues to disappoint you. At an advanced level, you can even learn to see the bad in the good. For instance, should you get a big raise you could immediately focus on the tax implications. Eliminate gratitude from your life and misery will be right around the corner.

A final word. The beauty of misery is that the more you share it with others, the more you wind up having. So share generously. After all, misery loves company.

About the author:

Sol Herzig received his doctorate in Psychology from Ferkauf Graduate School of Yeshiva University. He has a full-time private practice in Highland Park, New Jersey and Flatbush, Brooklyn, seeing individuals and couples. He lives in Edison, New Jersey where his wife, children, and wonderful community continually confound his best efforts at achieving misery.

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Excerpts from the New English-Yiddish Dictionary.

[by Scott Blumenthal](#)

I know some Yiddish, just not enough to form a sentence. But it's not in its subjects and predicates that the language flourishes today. Rather, it's in its daily *shmear*. In the well-placed *shpilkes*, *kvell*, and *futzing*. It's the exclamation point with which we pepper our daily repartee ("Stop calling me. You are such a *nudnik*"). It is the salve with which our mothers soothe our troubled souls ("What, better you never see this *meeskeit* again anyway. Stop with the pity party and eat your *kugel*"). It is the code with which lovers, fused by a veneration only they understand, exchange endearments ("You want Harold should eat lactose, what with his stomach *tsores*?"). It's woven into the fabric of our lives.

Though my own command of the language is limited to a handful of words, I have taken it upon myself to pen what is, as of this date, the highly theoretical *New English-Yiddish Dictionary for the Well-Intentioned*. Here's what I have so far:

shmutz (shmoots) *n.* any undesirable substance; squalor. Normally associated with anything that may stain a shirt. *The last time I went to Crystal Palace, I got egg foo yung shmutz all over me.* Also *shmutzy*.

shmaltzy (shmawltsee) *adj.* ostentatious; full of bravado; pretentious. Often associated with show business or Chinese restaurants. *Morris, let's go to the smorgasbord place down the street; it isn't as shmaltzy.*

shmear (shmir) *n.* a lump; a shapeless mass. Normally though not strictly edible, generally used as a condiment or relish. *Forget Chinese tonight, Morris; let's stay home, watch "Dancing With the Stars," and have a bagel with a shmear.* Also *v.* *Just shmear it on there, Barbara.*

shpiel (shpeel) *n.* wordy explanation; direction; collection or accumulation of any kind. Often used in conjunction with the word "whole." *You don't have to give him your whole shpiel, Morris; just order the General Tsao's without water chestnuts.* Also: *Order the pu-pu platter and the egg drop soup with a wonton in it -- the whole shpiel, Morris.*

shmatte (shma•ta) *n.* fragment of cloth; a scrap; an article of clothing of low quality. *Morris, you're not going to Crystal Palace wearing that shmatte.*

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shmegeggie (shma•ge•gee) *n.* Not Yiddish, but adopted as such. A derogatory term; a clumsy or uncouth person. *Morris, don't be such a shmegeggie and just take the water chestnuts OFF.* Generally interchangeable with *shlemiel*.

shtick (shtik) *n.* routine; eccentricity; a person's "specialty." *What, I'm going to pay \$40 at a Japanese restaurant when half the money is to watch the knife guy, what with his chopping shtick? Then I'm supposed to tip him on top of that? Also shticky. If you want shticky, go already. I'll be at Crystal Palace.*

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Want to understand the differences between men and women? Welcome to my new amusement park...

[by Mark Miller](#)

In the wonderful, wide world of entertainment, mankind's greatest achievement, for those who relish pure fun, is the amusement park. Think about it. What other place can you go to that's in business solely for your pleasure? And that's legal. Okay, granted, Chuck E. Cheese, but that's not really for your pleasure; it's for your kids' pleasure. And for your migraine.

The problem with amusement parks is that they're designed, like Chuck E. Cheese, to appeal to children -- or at least to the child in every adult. Just for the record, the child in me is named Shlomo. He's pretty much a dysfunctional ingrate, so when we go to amusement parks, it's not a barrel of laughs for me. But Shlomo has a grand old time. I'd say more, but I think he's listening in. So mum's the word. I'll email you after he falls asleep.

Back to the topic at hand, I've always wondered why there weren't amusement parks specifically for adults. So I've taken it upon myself to design one. Would you like a private, free preview tour? (PAUSE) Good. That's the spirit. You Jewlarious folks are so adventurous. I love that about you. So, come along now, I've divided it in half based on gender so it's ladies first. As we begin our fabulous tour of Womanland, *cue the Celine Dion music, please*

Have a rewarding career, a loving husband, two beautiful children, an incredible house, spiritual growth, and a trust fund. Look for it in the park's Fantasyland section.

On your left, you'll notice Womanland's most popular ride -- The Tunnel Of Sensitivity. There, you'll begin your voyage seated next to a handsome audio-animatronic male, who expresses genuine interest in everything you say. He loves to travel and dance, cook and clean. His greatest concern is your needs. He cries openly and unashamedly, and not just when paying the mortgage. He will not be reading a newspaper as you attempt to communicate with him. And by the way, his middle name is "Commitment."

The line to get into Womanland's "You Can Have It All" pavilion is the longest in the park, but well worth it. While waiting, enjoy the complimentary copies of "Oprah" magazine and the monitors showing today's episodes of "Ellen" and "The View." Once inside, you will experience, through virtual reality, exactly what it's like to have a rewarding career, a loving

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husband, two beautiful children, an incredible house, spiritual growth, and a trust fund. Look for it in the park's Fantasyland section.

By now, you've no doubt worked up an appetite, so let's stop for a bite to eat at Rivka's Cafe. Since there are no men here to impress by pretending to have the appetite of a bird, you'll find no soups, salads, crepes, quiches or other healthy, teaser food on the menu. Rivka's Cafe is pure indulgence. Damn the cholesterol; full calories ahead. You can really be yourself here. So go ahead, pretend you're home alone, strap on the old feedbag, and pig out with the Five-Cheese Lasagna and Fettuccini Alfredo, followed by a long, leisurely soak in the Hagen-Dazs Baths. Feel like belching when you're through? It's not only allowed; it's required, so let 'er rip.

But don't relax now, because you'll wrap up with the most exciting activity of the day. 95% of Womanland is clothing shops! Wholesale! In each shop, incredible bargains abound in your size, none of the saleswomen are as attractive as you, and you look absolutely ravishing in everything.

MANLAND

Now let's go check out Manland. We'll first explore the most popular section for men because that gets crowded fast: the Zone of Irresponsibility,

But while waiting, enjoy the huge bronze sculpture of Bruce Willis.

Follow me into this huge house, affectionately dubbed Bachelor Heaven. Beer bottles, dirty socks, and half-eaten boxes of pizza litter the floors. There are only three non-stop activities here: watching sports, getting snacks, and bragging about your achievements. On weekdays, expect a two-hour wait to get in. But while waiting, enjoy the huge bronze sculpture of Bruce Willis.

For men who have just become engaged, there is the popular Hall Of Second Thoughts where one can accumulate cash and prizes by confessing one's doubts about one's engagement, the woman in question, and promises already made to have children. Bonus points are awarded for moaning about women you've dated in the past. Those who end up deciding to call off their engagement, walk away with the grand prize -- a brand new Ford Bronco.

In the Wedded Bliss Pavilion, married men relax in the world's most comfortable Barcalounger recliner. While they sleep, read "Sports Illustrated," or watch "My Name is Earl," their wives take care of their children and the entire running of the house. If any wife or child comes within a ten yard radius of the Barcalounger, the offending family member will receive a mild, yet discouraging 25-volt shock.

For males over 30, there's the "You Think You've Had Medical Problems?" display, in which there are graphic, three-dimensional recreations of every possible health-related problem.

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There are no prizes here, other than the satisfaction of sharing every mind-numbing detail of each one of your past and current medical problems, with anyone within earshot.

Well, our tour's nearly over, but I did want to give you a preview of one of the features in Jewishland, currently being constructed in the amusement park's West Bank. When you ride the state-of-the-art Roller Coaster of Guilt, you will be having more fun than anyone who's ever ridden a roller coaster. Hence, the guilt you will feel afterwards. Why should you be having so much fun, you'll ask yourself. Are you really worthy of this excitement? What about all your ancestors who never got to ride a roller coaster, much less the world's greatest one? With so much pain and suffering in the world, should you even be in an amusement park, period? Relax. Jewishland's Guilt Counselors will talk you through it all, help you relax, and send you off to the fascinating Hall of Alternative Occupations, where you'll learn about all the Jews who've been successful at jobs other than doctor, lawyer, and stand-up comedian. Emmis!

I fully expect these amusement parks to become popular, so I've already begun planning even more special-interest theme parks -- for policemen, fashion models, forest rangers, and accountants. Naturally, the future is uncertain, but I think you'll agree that two things are obvious: One - amusement parks can offer a multitude of insights into the nature of men, women and Jews. And two, that I've got way too much free time on my hands.

About the author:

Mark Miller has written for TV, movies and celebrities, performed stand-up comedy, and been a humor columnist for the Los Angeles Times Syndicate. He can be reached at markmiller2000@ca.rr.com.



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[The "Talk"](#)

[The Child- to-Parent Dictionary](#)

[My Name Is Mark and I'm a Jewish Date aholic](#)

[All I Really Need to Know I Learned Growing Up Jewish](#)



Need some New Year's resolutions? Try these on for size

[by Judy Gruen](#)

Research has shown that worldwide, more than 3 billion people make New Year's resolutions, but sadly, only about 16 percent actually keep them. Most avowals to eat more fiber, hire a personal trainer and open a savings account get dropped faster than a cell phone call in an elevator. Since these efforts at self-improvement are so tough, maybe we're just aiming too high.

Besides, Jewlarious readers know the truth: the time for sober and sincere New Year's resolutions is right before Rosh Hashanah, when the Almighty is tapping His Omniscient fingers, as it were, waiting for us to get a more meaningful life, or any life at all. January 1st is only the New Year on the Gregorian calendar, something we need to follow until Microsoft learns to program the Hebrew month of *Tevet* into our computers. (Come on, Bill, what are you waiting for?)

Enjoy what I call my "resolutions light" -- half the seriousness, twice the fun.

Still, we Jews don't need to feel left out when our coworkers are boasting of their own grim New Year's resolutions around the office. In fact, we can help. When they begin to feel dispirited by their failure to keep their paws off the donuts by January 7, we can ease those pangs of guilt by sharing the fact that we've been eating those very donuts since September. Then, over an iced latte, and some more donuts, we can share our own declarations with them, otherwise known as "resolutions light" -- half the seriousness, twice the fun.

Here are some that have worked for me:

Spend Less Time with Family & Friends

More than half of people surveyed claim they plan to spend more time with family and friends as the New Year dawns, yet no one dares touch on that thorny problem of annoying and pesky relatives, like your wheezy uncle Joe who has stiffed you in the birthday present department since you were a kid, or that in-law who can never resist telling you that you appear to have packed on a few pounds. If you are like 99 percent of the world's population with "problem" relatives, vowing to spend less time with them ought to be a snap.

Become a Power Napper

Any nitwit celebrity can spew a long list of benefits of exercise, but it takes a more sophisticated mind to grasp the remarkable perks of a daily snooze. Jogging isn't the only thing that can lower blood pressure, you know. Regular naps have been associated with better mood, more focused thinking, and a fail-safe way to skip out of boring department meetings at 2 p.m. Besides, you can't snack when you nap (trust me, I've tried it) so napping also helps you lose weight. Why not make this the year you stop the charade of joining the gym, and just buy a pillow for the office instead?

Toss Your Bathroom Scale

That's right. While Weight Watchers meetings throughout the world will be stampeded in January with millions of repentant pudgy-wudgies standing in line to be weighed by a thin person, you will be ahead of the game by not weighing yourself ever! After all, in today's high tech world, it's hard to even find a scale that doesn't also talk to you and give you bad news, such as your body mass index and the Dow Jones Industrial Average. If there's one thing I don't need, it's a talking scale. Do you?

Add Some Guilt to Your Life

Guilt is a highly underrated emotion, something that all Jews understand from birth. The guilt shortage across the planet is even more acute than global warming. Experts predict that by 2025, New York may be submerged under thirty feet of egotism and breathtaking swellheadedness. This is where we Jews can help. Once we convince non-Jews of the benefits of a heavy conscience, they may worry that they are running a little low on this feeling. Then, in the spirit of universal kinship, we offer to share our own, balancing the cultural guilt distribution just a tad. Would it kill you to give up some of that guilt?

Resist the Temptation to Get Organized

January is National Get Organized Month, but if you succumb to this annual lure, you are likely to be visited by a professional organizer wielding threatening weapons, such as color-coded file folders, drawer dividers, and, in severe cases, paper shredders. I once had an organizer clean my desk, but the sight was so unnerving I couldn't think straight. Being disorganized makes you relatable to normal people. I've been told that in some cases (I hope mine is among them) clutter is also a hallmark of genius.

Go Spend More Money

You've got all year to get a handle on your finances. January is the time when that intoxicating word, "Clearance," is dangled suggestively everywhere you shop. Avoiding a good sale isn't only bad money management, it's un-Jewish.

Read More Celebrity Gossip

Sure, the lives of most famous celebrities are shallow, silly, and frequently illegal. All the more reason to bone up on their misadventures and be grateful that God didn't make you a celebrity, too.

Don't Travel to Exotic Destinations

I don't know about you, but I don't like to travel anywhere that requires shots. It just sounds too dangerous. If you insist on making travel part of your New Year's plans, at least make it somewhere safe, say, for example, the Kern River Valley Turkey Vulture Festival or the Mushroom Festival in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania. After all, it takes no special talent to find thrills in Machu Pichu, but it takes authentic *joie de vivre* to find excitement studying turkey vultures or at a festival celebrating fungus.

Remember, the key to sticking with any New Year's resolutions is to keep your goals reasonable and to stay motivated. Here's to success in 5768!

About the author:

Judy Gruen is the author of two award-winning humor books. Judy's new book, *The Women's Daily Irony Supplement*, is available on amazon.com. Read more of her columns on www.judygruen.com.



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Playing a Jewish cartoon character on "Rugrats" taught me about who I am in real life.

[by Melanie Chartoff](#)

One afternoon in 1989, having just been cast to play my first cartoon role on some pilot called "Rugrats," on some new network called Nickelodeon, I received a frantic call from my voice agent (various aspects of me having been farmed out to an armada of acting, writing, singing, commercial and cleansing agents). Producers in New York wanted to audition me via phone to also play "the grandma from the Old Country" on the series that very afternoon!

"Which old country?" I asked.

"The Jewish one!" responded my agent.

Oy. There wasn't much else to go on, beyond a few adjectives faxed with rough sketches of a beefy (okay, fat) old woman in granny glasses, gray bun, apron, baggy stockings and scuffies.

"How cliché," I scoffed to myself. But I wanted the gig. Playing two characters on a show would be a coup. It would be fun to be grandma to a bunch of animated babies, to play the mother of the character I had already recorded -- I might be able to even talk to myself as my daughter in scenes. And get two lunches, and two cracks at the centerpiece at the holiday dinners....

The few audition lines read something like "Oh Lordy, Lordy, I'm so angry at you!" and "Boris, what have you done with our grandchildren, you silly man?" Although the show had been created by Jews, this script had clearly not been written by them. Having had no Hebrew schooling, beyond the family arguments of my childhood, my feel for enhancing this material was spotty to say the least. My agent, who feels (hopes) my gifts are boundless, said "Improvise!" And most non-Jews assume all us Jews just know the whole patois, that it's built in genetically or something.

During the two hours I had to prepare, I searched closets and dim memories for mementoes of my grandmothers. Both had passed away while I was still enduring the bouncing saddle-free on the knees bit, and the "I got your nose!" bit, as they'd pinch my nostrils, then the tip of their thumbs between their second and third fingers. I knew my nose had no thumbnail, but went along with it, humoring them because I loved their attentions and, much like with the

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wine for Elijah bit, you didn't want to ruin grownups' delusions about life or your awareness too soon.

I found two photos in which I was being hugged within an inch of my life by each of them, one Russian, one Austrian, and grinned in fond remembrance. Oh, there was a good reason I called them "bubbies" and they called me "bubalah" -- that was the sound one invariably made when squashed suffocating in their arms. "Blububbulalahabublah."

I was shocked to realize they both predicted this cliché role to a T, both plump with gray buns, horrible hosiery and unflattering footwear. Amazingly intuitive, this animator! I squeezed my brain really hard, recalling their smells, cooking, and very faintly their shoulder shrugs, upturned hands and plaintive inflections. Were those just East Coast grandmas? I needed more.

I rushed to the local kosher deli owned by a German Jew, Mrs. Gerechter, who had migrated up from Mexico, and who, I must add, also looked remarkably like the cartoon sketch. What IS this!? Had Jewish grandmas been born this way, aged this way or had they been societally, genetically engineered to give our culture comfort?! Maybe this was just God's way of getting me the job and a belated Jewish education.

Maybe this was just God's way of getting me the job and a belated Jewish education.

She was flattered that I showed so much interest in her (I was taping the whole thing) and began to share colorful tales of her life in Germany. She was so winningly, shockingly forthcoming that I got in the habit of going to pick up more food and history there often, and not just to bone up on a role. Mrs. G. made me miss the grandmas I never got to know.

So with a wing (turkey) and a prayer (an "oiy vey"), I placed the conference call. And with three different producers prompting from different cities with differing ideas of "Jewish grandma," I amalgamated a character named Minka, married to a gruff *schmendrick* named Boris, improvising in Yiddish gibberish how I thought she should sound and got the job on the spot.

T'was a mitzvah! Over the next decade and a half, I learned so much more Jewish lore whilst playing Minka. I got to narrate the first animated televised Hanukkah special, and to play a pivotal role in the "Rugrats Passover Special," too, opposite the gifted Michael Bell as Boris, with whom I got to squabble in all our episodes. We came as a unit in the writing. Those episodes were cited by the National Foundation for Jewish Culture for Outstanding Achievement in the 2001 Jewish Image awards. Imagine, me! Lapsed Jewess that I am, I got fan letters from a broad spectrum of Jewish adults worldwide.

But strangely, I also got a letter of complaint -- from my own mother no less! She felt the depictions ugly and Anti-Semitic. I was amazed.

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"So, Mom?" I asked. "Do you think the cartoon character Minnie Mouse demeans mice, or Olive Oil insults women? They ain't no decorations."

"That's not the point!" She felt that Minka's whininess and Boris' big nose were the sorts of specific characterizations that ridiculed rather than celebrated our people. And, besides, Minka seemed a stinging send up of her own mother. Hmm. She picked that up, too.

Alas, prejudice is in the eye of the offended. I expressed understanding and sympathy and helped buy her a condo and a new car with my "Rugrats" residuals to assuage her upset. We Jews provide for our elders, I'd learned. And, after all, she was the prototype for my Didi Pickles character on the show, a depiction she found unattractive yet acceptable, as the character was so universally beloved.

So, I now give thanks to my living mother and my late bubbies for the belated relating to my people. Now I get to have the honor of being a Jewish grandmother too - even if I only get to pinch cartoon cheeks.

About the author:

Melanie Chartoff considers herself an inventor -- of stories and characters for the page, stage and screen, including roles she's created on ABC's late night comedy answer to SNL, "Friday's," "Parker Lewis Can't Lose," "The Newhart Show," "Wiseguy," "Ally McBeal," "Touched by an Angel," and "Desperate Housewives." She can be heard daily as the voices of Didi and Minka on Nickleodeon's long-running "Rugrats" and its spin-off "All Grown Up." For more information about Melanie, you can visit her website at <http://melaniechartoff.com>



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There was no one more frugal than my dad. And we loved him for it

[by Melanie Chartoff](#)

Ah. Hectic Sunday mornings here in Los Angeles lately bring back a wash of childhood memories and a longing for their comforting rituals: an enormous breakfast, usually fried matzah, soaked in egg, fried in butter and onions; Mom retiring to the den to listen to, and sing along with, some Metropolitan Opera matinee; Dad cranking up the sports event du jour on the console, burrowing into his barcoulnger and grabbing the big, fat, multi-sectioned Sunday paper. But it was in his reach for the handy scissors from his side table where the family peace would be disrupted.

My kid sister and I had probably already appropriated the scissors. We'd be sitting at his feet with our paper doll books, (a primitive precursor to video games) trimming their two dimensional bodies, and cutting the latest looks with their all important white tabs that hooked those chic clothes onto those fair-haired and fragile girls, from their book. To us, this was important work. And the duel would begin.

My father would pile his coupons up like dollar bills, count them and savor the possible pennies to be saved.

My father, our resident hunter/gatherer with no new lands to conquer or tribes to vanquish, was a coupon compulsive, taking fervent pleasure in the careful extrication along the dotted lines of those precious discount-giving rectangles. He would pile them like dollar bills, rifle through them like his Monopoly money, count them, total and savor the possible pennies to be saved, newsprint smeared all over his fingertips (coupons were all black and white in those days), coaxing, bullying, guilt-tripping, teasing to talk us out of, then reluctantly relinquishing the scissors. He refused to buy another set til they had coupons for them.

My father prided himself on his thrift, often driving five miles out of his way to buy toilet paper for five cents off. Gas erupted from a bottomless cheap pit in those days; toilet paper, in limited supply for the masses during the Depression, did not. He was such a wheeler dealer. He'd try to sell my sister and me his home baked sugar cookies "one for a dime, two for a quarter" and chortle at our resisting the treat to figure it out with paper and pencil (early form of calculator). He was too mischievously twinkly to trust. He said he still awaited the rebate that was supposed to accompany his purchase of me, but I wasn't holding my breath. He told my sister he'd gotten her for two books of green stamps, but she never really believed him.

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What he especially loved later in his life, when prices escalated and deals evolved, was doing the arithmetic to deduce that the four pack of batteries in a new fangled blister pack for a quarter saved was a better deal than a single battery purchased at the hardware store. He sometimes bragged that the purchases he made ended up paying him.

"I made fifty cents on this deal and got the film for free!" That was a good day for my post retirement Dad. Coupons became his *raison d'etre* of deal making.

Later in life, one of his favorite things about his visits to me in Los Angeles was the supermarket chain with the double coupons: "Can you believe the savings!"

He'd ponder my future while we were visiting Hollywood's Wax Museum for half off, figuring out why I needed things he'd never have bought if he were home--things he would not have purchased were it not for the double coupons and 'if you can find it lower elsewhere' making them a quarter of their value. He'd proudly lay them at my feet, like a cat with a recently dismember rat, and await praise.

"But, Dad, dear? I'll never use white strips on my teeth or the economy size drum of bleach on the laundry." The discounted giant hand lotion would mold before I used it up. New chemical compounds would form on the supersize carton of milk in my dairy free diet. My patient friend James, an exemplar of gentility, would also suffer an onslaught of free MacDonald's fries, free, large popcorns at the movies and would ask me beseechingly to call my coupon crazy father off.

Toward the end of Dad's life, his personal crusade was restoring the coupon culture in the internet age. "Coca Cola issued the first coupons in 1894 and in 1994 they are trying to kill them. It's a tradition. It's a disgrace! You have lost my business!" he would write to their complaint department and get a free case of Classic Coke for his trouble. Hence began his new hobby -- harassing the complaint departments at Proctor and Gamble, then crowing with the triumph of the pay offs he received, the spoils which he'd give away as treats at Halloween to baffled children. When Internet coupons became prevalent in this Modern Age, he felt it a personal triumph, even though he personally, printer-less, could not cash in.

So now, on Sunday mornings, missing my late father, I shove aside the pithy, but coupon-free, *New York Times* in favor of the colorful, coupon-laden local newspaper. I delay the front page's end-of world alerts, the oh-so urgent movie listings ("See This Movie or Die!"), the far out fashion quarterly, in search of the coupon supplement. I become Melanie the Ripper -- a "tearerist" rather than a "cutter"-- honoring the perforations, protecting the expiration dates. I'll save a few bucks this week on a couple household cleaning items, probably enough to cover the cost of that local paper I'll never read, but mainly, my coupon compulsion will be a cozy communion with my frugal father.

Jewlarious: An Interactive Jewish Humor Book

About the author:

Melanie Chartoff considers herself an inventor -- of stories and characters for the page, stage and screen, including roles she's created on ABC's late night comedy answer to SNL, "Friday's," "Parker Lewis Can't Lose," "The Newhart Show," "Wiseguy," "Ally McBeal," "Touched by an Angel," and "Desperate Housewives." She can be heard daily as the voices of Didi and Minka on Nickleodeon's long-running "Rugrats" and its spin-off "All Grown Up." For more information about Melanie, you can visit her website at

<http://melaniechartoff.com>



To read more Melanie Chartoff humor articles:

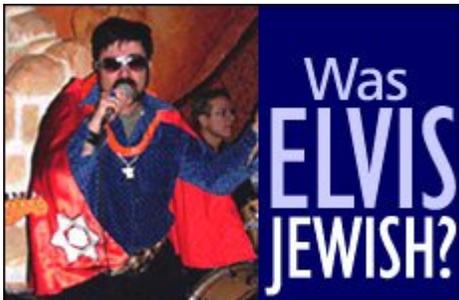
[Confessions of a Laugh Addict](#)

[I Was a Soupy Groupie](#)

[Trading Lives with Larry David](#)

[The Matzohrella Fella](#)

[The Art of Napping](#)



Orthodox Elvis impersonator Dan Hartal a.k.a. "Schmelvis" thinks so.

[by Richard Rabkin](#)

In 1998, *The Wall Street Journal* published an article titled, "All Shook Up in the Holy Land" exposing Elvis Presley's unlikely Jewish lineage. Apparently, Elvis' maternal great-great grandmother, Nancy Burdine, was a Jew. Her daughter gave birth to Doll Mansell who gave birth to Gladys Smith who gave birth to Elvis. Although it sounds improbable, according to Jewish law, which confers Jewish lineage by way of the mother, that makes Elvis Presley Jewish.

Furthermore, this fact was something that Elvis was apparently aware of and even sensitive to. For example, there is a famous picture of Elvis performing in Salt Lake City in 1972 wearing a Jewish "*chai*" symbol, and when Elvis' mother Gladys died in 1959 he made sure to put a Jewish Star of David on her headstone. But even if Elvis may have been technically Jewish, and was even aware of his background, he was not at all observant.

There is another Elvis however who is in fact observant. Dan Hartal is the world's only Orthodox Jewish Elvis impersonator, and goes by the moniker -- Elvis Schmelvis.

Hartal's unusual story begins in an unusual place -- the Montreal Hospital of Hope, a home for the aged where Hartal is employed as the Music Coordinator. When he began his work, he wanted to find a way to combine his love of performing for the elderly Jewish residents with his love for Elvis Presley's music. The result was Elvis songs with a Jewish twist like "Jerusalem Hotel" instead of "Heartbreak Hotel," or "Love me Blender" instead of "Love me Tender."

"After one of my performances," Hartal recalls, "one of the residents said to me, 'You aren't Elvis, you're Schmelvis.'" And "Schmelvis" was born.

Soon thereafter, Schmelvis paired up with documentary filmmaker Max Wallace for another unusual journey. They wanted to make the pilgrimage to Elvis' home in Graceland and recite *kaddish* - the Jewish memorial prayer that is recited on the anniversary of someone's passing - his *yahrtzeit*. They decided to bring some cameras along and make a film out of their experience.

The result is "Schmelvis: Searching for the King's Jewish Roots," and the film does exactly that. For example, we learn that Elvis grew up in "the Pinch" -- the Jewish quarter of Memphis where his mother worked in the "shmata business," a predominantly Jewish

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enterprise at the time. As a teenager the future king was the "Shabbos goy" (i.e. performed tasks otherwise prohibited to Jews on the Sabbath) for his upstairs neighbors at 462 Alabama Ave., Rabbi Alfred and Jeannette Fruchter, who was the Rabbi at the local synagogue. The Presleys regularly came over for Friday night dinner, and Elvis had a penchant for the Rebbetzin's cooking.

In watching the movie and speaking to Hartal, it is hard not to come to the conclusion that there is something almost spiritual in the love that diehard Elvis fans have for their "king." "Elvis had a special *neshama* (soul)," says Hartal. "You don't see followers of John Lennon or Jim Morrison behaving the same way that Elvis fans do. There was something special beyond the man. His spirit, his music, his connection."

If there is one regret that Geller has about his time with Elvis it's that he wasn't able to wrap *teffilin* with him.

According to Larry Geller, Elvis' hair stylist and at times spiritual guru, Elvis was quite spiritual in his own way. When he worked for Elvis, Geller was involved with Eastern religions and would often give Elvis books of a spiritual nature. Geller subsequently became an Orthodox Jew. According to Hartal, Geller, whom he calls Chaim Lev, said that if there is one regret that he has about his time with Elvis it is that he wasn't able to wrap *teffilin* with him.

As documented in the movie, in the end, the group was successful in giving Elvis the Jewish tribute that they felt was long overdue. Initially they had only 7 of the 10 Jewish males required for a *minyán* (quorum) to recite the mourner's *kaddish*. But fortunately, or miraculously as Hartal asserts, three more Jews came "out of nowhere" and Rabbi Reuven Poupko led the group in prayer.

Since the release of the film, Schmervis has become a much sought after performer. He also has a new release coming out called "From Memphis to the Holy Land" timed to coincide with Elvis's 30th "*yahrtzeit*."

When asked what he thinks Elvis' reaction would be to Schmervis' music, the movie, and the fact that they got a *minyán* at Graceland to recite the mourner's *kaddish* on Elvis' *yahrtzeit*, Hartal pauses to reflect and answers, "He would probably say 'Uh...thank you, thank you very much.'"

About the author:

Richard Rabkin is the President and CEO of Jewlarious

To read more Richard Rabkin humor articles:

[The Mensch from Manhattan Stand Up and Sit Down Laughing for Peace](#)

[British, Jewish and Proud The First Jewish Grammy](#)



Competition heats up to draft best "Daveners."

[by Isidore Rappoport](#)

In an effort to increase attendance, the Emanuel Synagogue of People in New Connecticut (ESPNC) announced the formation of what they are calling the "Fantasy Shul League" (FSL). "Fantasy sports leagues are all the rage among men between 18-35 years old," said ESPNC president, David Light, "and we're trying to bring the kind of enthusiasm you generally see on the sports field, into the house of worship."

Light has named former ESPNC *gabbi* (ritual assistant) Saul Korin commissioner of the FSL. Korin will supervise the draft and will be responsible for overseeing official scoring, trades and the waiver wire. The league will consist of 36 "team owners" who will draft members of the congregation for their team. "Every member of the synagogue will be eligible for the draft, as long as they have paid at least part of their 2007/2008 dues," said commissioner Korin. Each team will consist of a minyan, with seven players designated as starters, three as reserves on the bench.

Like Fantasy Football, team members of the FSL will have designated positions on teams; quarterback (*shaliach tzibur* -- leader of the services), three running backs (*aliyot* - reciting the blessings over the Torah), two wide receivers (*hagbahah/galil'yah* - raising and tying the Torah), tight end (*ba'al koreh* - torah reader), defense/special teams (*maftir/haftorah* - reciting passages from the prophets) and a kicker (*peticha* - opening the ark). The point scoring system is based on people's involvement in services (a list of the official scoring structure can be find at the bottom of this article).

The shul has been abuzz about the upcoming draft and team owners have been developing scouting reports trying to evaluate who the weekday regulars are, Shabbat morning regulars, who can lead services, who can read torah, and who can read haftorah. "I've even heard that several owners are getting team kippahs made to be worn as a kind of team jersey," said ESPNC President Light.

Discussing nuances of Fantasy Shul League strategy, commissioner Korin said, "For example, team owners need to weigh the pluses and minus of drafting a Cohen, Levi or Israel. While those from the tribe of Israel have more opportunities for aliyahs, there are fewer Cohens and Levites in the shul."

Reaction to the FSL has been quite positive and there has been a noticeable up tick in participation at ESPNC as members try to improve their ranking in the upcoming draft. There

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were even reports that competition for roles in a recent Thursday morning torah service became so fierce that one congregant actually tackled another on his way up to open the ark. In order to prevent future conflict the shul's gabbai will increase security, and institute a rigorous anti-doping policy.

Fantasy Shul League Scoring System:

Leading Maariv: 7

Leading Psukei D'Zimra: 3

Leading weekday Shachrit: 9

Leading Shabbat Shachrit: 10 (extra point for hitting the high notes in kedusha)

Leading weekday Mincha: 5

Leading Shabbat Mincha: 6

Kabbalat Shabbat and Maariv: 11

Carlbach style Kabbalat Shabbat and Maariv: 13

Shabbat Musaf: 8

Carlbach style musaf: 10

Shabbat Musaf/Rosh chodesh: 11

About the author:

Isidore Rappoport is a freelance writer living in New York. He also owns a smoothie stand on 92nd and Broadway.

To read more Isidore Rappoport humor articles:

[The Shushan Times](#)

[Mid-Term Synagogue Elections Turn Ugly](#)

[Shul Bans Two for Testing Positive for Davening](#)

[Entenmann Bar Mitzvah](#)



First there was Charlton Heston, and now there's Jim Halpert.

[by Isidore Rappoport](#)

INTERIOR MICHAEL'S TALKING HEAD

MICHAEL (to camera)

Why is this office different from all other offices? Easy, we're like a tribe, a family. We're not an unaffiliated group of random people -- we are the chosen people of Dunder Mifflin. As head of the office I am trusted with godlike responsibilities. I have rescued these people from the desert of unemployment and delivered them to the promised land of working for Michael Scott.

INTERIOR OFFICE - MORNING

Michael approaches Pam at her desk.

MICHAEL

Pam, I'm sensing people are unhappy and if my people aren't happy, then I'm not happy.

Michael looks at the camera smiles then frowns.

PAM

Well...lately, Dwight has really been coming down hard on everyone.

Michael walks over to Dwight who is hovering over Ryan reviewing some documents.

DWIGHT

I don't care how long it takes. This is all wrong and totally unacceptable. You're just going to have to start all over again.

Dwight drops the papers on Ryan's desk.

MICHAEL

Ryan, what's going on here?

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DWIGHT

Just cracking the whip, everything is under control.

RYAN

I was just wrapping up my sales summaries.

DWIGHT

You mean just starting.

Ryan looks at the camera with disdain.

MICHAEL

Ease up Dwight. What's the big deal?

DWIGHT

As assistant manager, since Jim left,

MICHAEL

Assistant to the manager.

DWIGHT

My "pyramid of efficiency" system has increased office productivity 134%.

MICHAEL

That's great but are people still having as much fun?

Pan the office. All are at their desks looking dreary and expressionless.

DWIGHT TALKING HEAD

DWIGHT

I see an opportunity - a task if you will, then I take that task and master it. Did you know that Schrute in Scandinavian means "great king - ruler of many."

EXTERIOR DUNDER MIFFLIN STAMFORD OFFICE - EARLY MORNING

Jim gets out of his car in the empty parking lot and walks towards the office.

Michael crouched behind a bush fumbles a match book he is playing with and mistakenly sets the bush on fire.

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MICHAEL (crouched behind the burning bush)
Jim over here!

Jim startled to see the burning bush and Michael. He hurries over as the fire dies down.

JIM
Michael, what a surprise. You meeting with Josh at corporate?

MICHAEL
No, no, no, I need to talk to you.

JIM
Ok. You could have just called. Why the burning bush?

MICHAEL
Never mind that. This needs to be face to face, mano o mano.

JIM
Alright, is everything ok?

MICHAEL
It's Dwight, he's out of control.

JIM
Really! I can't imagine that.

Jim smiles at the camera.

MICHAEL
He's become a slave driver, working everyone to the bone. He's killing the office spirit. I need you back in Scranton.

JIM
Well Michael, you're his boss why not just talk to him - or try demoting him. Make him assistant to the assistant to the manager.

MICHAEL
Jim, I need to teach him a lesson and I need your help.

JIM
I don't think so Michael.

MICHAEL
Jim, the office needs you. Your people need you. Pam needs you.

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JIM TALKING HEAD

JIM (to Camera)

What can I say, it wasn't an easy decision but when Michael gave me his blessing to put Dwight in his place, well it was an offer I couldn't refuse.

INTERIOR DUNDER MIFFLIN SCRANTON - MORNING

Michael enters the office. Everyone is fast at work or at least sitting at their desks.

MICHAEL

Please gather around, I have an announcement to make.

Everyone begrudgingly gets up from their desks and gathers by Pam's desk.

DWIGHT

What's this about Michael, you didn't tell me about any announcements.

MICHAEL

I know everyone is really busy getting their work done, but I have heard your groans and seen your suffering.

KEVIN

Is this about reinstituting movie Mondays?

Stanley stands there working his crossword puzzle.

DWIGHT

Is this about my request to work through lunch?

KELLY

I love surprises.

MICHAEL

Ladies and Gentlemen (Michael makes the drum roll sound) I give you Jim Halpert.

Jim enters with a slight wave and a big smile.

DWIGHT TALKING HEAD

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DWIGHT (to camera)

Am I surprised Jim is back? Not at all, the Stamford office is far inferior to Scranton and he wants back in. He's just going to have to learn his place in my pyramid of efficiency.

Dwight holds up a diagram in the shape of a pyramid. Everyone's name is written at the bottom of the pyramid except for Angela who is in the middle. Sitting atop the pyramid are caricatures of Dwight and Michael.

DWIGHT (to camera cont.)

I will just add him to the foundation.

INTERIOR OFFICE - Day

Jim, Dwight and Ryan sit at their desks working.

JIM

You know Dwight, now that I'm back, I'm Michael's number two.

DWIGHT

I don't think so. Things have changed quite a bit since you left. You're at the bottom of the pyramid of efficiency.

Jim looks at Ryan who stares at him and then walks a way.

DWIGHT

Ryan, where are you going?

RYAN

Bathroom.

DWIGHT

Make it quick

Ryan walks off.

JIM

Let's play a little word association.

DWIGHT

No, you should be doing your work.

JIM

If Michael is number one...

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DWIGHT

I'm his number two

JIM

If Michael is President...

DWIGHT

I'm his Vice President

JIM

If Michael is King...

DWIGHT

I'm his Queen

Jim looks at the camera with a half smile.

JIM

Great but now I'm back and I have a message for you: LET IT GO. This office is not here to serve you.

DWIGHT

Never! These people may not like me, but they are going to work for me.

JIM

We'll see about that.

INTERIOR OFFICE - WATERCOOLER - DAY

Michael peers out from behind the blinds in his office. Everyone is at their desk working. Pam gets a glass of water from the water cooler and brings it to Dwight's desk.

PAM

Dwight I think there is something wrong with the water.

Dwight takes the cup from her. He examines it, smells it, swirls it around.

DWIGHT

Nonsense, it looks ok to me.

PAM

I think it tastes funny.

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Dwight stands up and walks over to get a cup of water. Jim makes like he is talking to Stanley. Stanley ignores him. Dwight takes a cup of water and drinks.

DWIGHT

Tastes find to me.

Pam feigns to hear to him

PAM

What did you say?

Dwight walks over to Pam. Jim takes out syringe of red dye and plunges it in to the water cooler.

DWIGHT

I said it tastes find to me.

PAM

Dwight, I wouldn't drink that.

DWIGHT

It's perfectly fine.

Dwight chugs the rest of the water as Pam points to the water cooler. Dwight notices her pointing and turns to see the water cooler which is now blood red. Dwight spits out the water and eyes Jim suspiciously as he walks out of the kitchen.

JIM

Hey Dwight, nice tie. Looks like you spilled something on it.

Dwight looks down to notice his tie is wet.

INTERIOR CONFERENCE ROOM - Day

Everyone is gathered in the conference room as Michael lectures. A soft subtle chirping/buzzing noise can be heard.

MICHAEL

I hope you enjoyed this week's staff meeting, any questions.

ANGELA

What's that chirping noise?

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DWIGHT

That's odd it sounds like a sub-Saharan locust or cicadas, most likely female.

The chirping/buzzing noise is getting louder and now there is a croaking noise as well.

MICHAEL

I think it sounds more like a frog.

KEVIN

Is it a frog or toad?

DWIGHT

I definitely hear locust actually but there is a hint of frog.

A rumble is heard outside the conference room.

KEVIN

Why are there farm animals running around the office?

Everyone but Jim springs up to look out the conference window into the office area.

DWIGHT

Those are wild animals.

Several wild chicken, geese and pigs rumble around. Frogs and crickets are scattered about their desks.

Michael scared, locks himself and everyone in the conference room.

TOBY

Dwight, didn't we talk about you bringing animals into the workplace?

DWIGHT

Don't look at me, these aren't my animals. Jim did this!

Dwight points an accusing finger at Jim.

PAM

Is it just me, or do these animals look really sick?

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DWIGHT

I'd recognize that excessive secretion of stringy foamy saliva anywhere - these animals have Hoof and Mouth Disease!

A chirping/buzzing sound in the background gets louder and louder. Suddenly a ceiling panel falls and a bunch of flying insects fall into the room.

DWIGHT

Locusts! Everyone take cover! They are going to eat us alive!

KELLY

Ryan, my hair!

JIM (whispers to Dwight)

I warned you to *let it go*.

EXTERIOR - OFFICE - MORNING

Dwight stands blocking the door, not allowing anyone to enter.

PHYLLIS

Dwight, you are making us all late. The health and safety inspector said we could all go back to work.

Michael walks up.

MICHAEL

Good morning everybody, thank you for waiting for me but that is completely unnecessary, welcome but unnecessary.

KEVIN

Old McDwight won't let us in.

MICHAEL

Dwight, what seems to be the problem? The health officials have informed us that any trace of your animal friends has been removed.

DWIGHT

This has nothing to do with the animals. I have been informed that the office has been infected with lice.

KELLY

Uuuuh, that is like the grossest thing ever. Am I going to have to

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shave my head? I don't want to be bald! Ryan my hair -- check my hair.

Kelly shoves her head and hair at Ryan.

PAM

I had lice in third grade, it wasn't so bad.

Dwight begins to scratch his hair.

JIM (to Dwight)

Is this what you call the pyramid of efficiency? I warned you: *Let it go.*

DWIGHT (to Jim)

Never!

INTERIOR OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Everyone is filtering back in the office and getting situated except Dwight who stares perplexed at his desk which is covered in what appears to be boil marks.

JIM

Everything OK Dwight?

Dwight ignores him as he examines the boil marks on his desk.

Pam walks by.

PAM

Dwight, what's on your desk?

DWIGHT

I don't know, perhaps Jim can explain.

JIM

How should I know?

DWIGHT (to Jim)

You can't stop me. I'm going to clean this mess up and make sure everyone gets back to work.

JIM

Let it go.

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Dwight marches off towards the kitchen as he opens the door a bucket full of ice falls down on him. Dwight turns around and through the window gestures toward Jim making a pyramid sign with his fingers.

Jim shakes his head.

Dwight heads towards the bathroom and upon opening the door we hear another bucket of ice rain down on him.

INTERIOR OFFICE - EVENING

Jim and Dwight sit at their desks staring at each other.

DWIGHT

I know what you have been doing. Maybe it's time for you to go back to Stamford?

JIM

I know what you've been doing and I warned you but you wouldn't listen.

Dwight holds up his drawing of the pyramid of efficiency.

DWIGHT

You can't stop my pyramid of efficiency!

JIM

Really?

DWIGHT

Yes really, as long as there is blood in these veins, I will make sure that work gets done in this office.

Jim claps his hands and the lights suddenly go out. Computers shut down, the office is completely dark.

MICHAEL

Everyone remain calm the situation is under control. OUCH!

INTERIOR MICHAEL'S OFFICE - MORNING

Michael sits behind his desk as Jim and Dwight are in front of him.

DWIGHT

Michael, I have come to the realization that I was wrong about my

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pyramid of efficiency. I'm turning it over to you as my higher authority. I'm sorry to have disappointed you.

Dwight hands Michael his pyramid of efficiency.

MICHAEL

You know Dwight there is a lesson in this for you. You became so obsessed with building this pyramid, that you started oppressing your coworkers. No one wants to work through lunch or on weekends.

JIM

Dwight, I'm glad to hear you let it go. I didn't want to have to implement my final assault.

Jim hands Dwight his bobble head doll.

JIM

I was going to have your little friend assassinated

Dwight looks at Jim alarmed and then cradles the bobble head.

INTERIOR MICHAEL'S TALKING HEAD

MICHAEL (to camera)

It's like I like to say, we're more than an office, we're a family.

About the author:

Isidore Rappoport is a freelance writer living in New York. He also owns a smoothie stand on 92nd and Broadway.

To read more Isidore Rappoport humor articles:

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[Entenmann Bar Mitzvah](#)

Jewish Jokes

The Jewish Chinese Drycleaner

Walking through San Francisco's Chinatown, a tourist from the Midwest was enjoying the artistry of all the Chinese restaurants, shops, signs and banners when he turned a corner and saw a building with the sign "Moishe Plotnik's Laundry." "Moishe Plotnik?" he wondered. "How does that belong in Chinatown?"

He walked into the shop and saw a fairly standard looking drycleaner, although he could see that the proprietors were clearly aware of the uniqueness of the store name as there were baseball hats, T-shirts and coffee mugs emblazoned with the logo "Moishe Plotnik's Chinese Laundry." The tourist selected a coffee cup as a conversation piece to take back to his office. Behind the counter was a smiling old Chinese gentleman who thanked him for his purchase. The tourist asked, "Can you explain how this place got a name like 'Moishe Plotnik's Laundry?'"

The old man answered, "Ah...Evleebody ask me that. It name of owner."

Looking around, the tourist asked, "Is he here?"

"It me," replies the old man.

"Really? You're Chinese. How did you ever get a name like Moishe Plotnik?"

"Is simple", said the old man. Many, many year ago I come to this country. I standing in line at 'Documentation Center of Immigration.' Man in front of me was Jewish man from Poland. Lady at counter look at him and say, "What your name?"

He say, "Moishe Plotnik."

Then she look at me and say, "What your name?"

I say, "Sam Ting."

Famous Last Words

A Catholic priest, a Protestant minister, and a rabbi are discussing what they would like people to say after they die and their bodies are on display in open caskets.

Priest: I would like someone to say "He was a righteous man, an honest man, and very generous."

Minister: I would like someone to say "He was very kind and fair, and he was very good to his parishioners."

Rabbi: I would want someone to say "Look, he's moving."

A Jewish Success Story

A young man asked Morris, an old wealthy man, how he made his money.

Morris took off his glasses and said, "Well, son, it was 1932 during the heart of the Great Depression. I was down to my last nickel.

"So I invested that nickel in an apple. I spent the entire day polishing the apple and, at the end of the day, I sold the apple for ten cents.

"The next morning, I invested those ten cents in two apples. I spent the entire day polishing them and sold them at 5:00 pm for 20 cents. I continued this system for a month, by the end of which I'd accumulated the sum of \$1.60.....

"Then my wife's uncle Bernie died and left us two million dollars."

To read more Jewish jokes: [Jewlariious online](#)

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Videos of Jewish Comedians and Comedy Skits



[Even Stephen: The Great Debate](#)

by *The Daily Show*
Whose God is greater?



[Shecky Green Live \(Audio\)](#)

by *Shecky Green*
Shecky Green loves to tell Jewish Jokes. Listen and he'll tell you why.



[Introducing iPhone](#)

by *Jewlarious.com Staff*
Think different... very different.



[Peter Himmelman's Yiddish Song](#)

by *Peter Himmelman*
Peter Himmelman's yiddish speaking grandmother used to sing this song for him. Now he's singing it for her...



[Jeff Rothpan Live](#)

by *Josh Howie*
Jeff isn't losing his hair. He knows exactly where it is -- in his brush.



[The Moshav Band](#)

by *Jewlarious.com Staff*
A short video on one of the most popular acts in Jewish music.

[Click here](#) to view more hilarious videos.

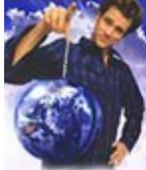
Jtube Questionable Broadcasts

Video **CRAZY
people**

[Crazy People](#)

by Jewlarious.com Staff

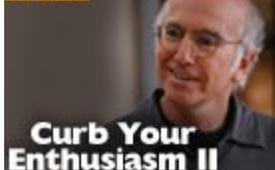
Do you think advertising the truth would work?

Video **Bruce
ALMIGHTY**

[Bruce Almighty](#)

by Jewlarious.com Staff

What would you do if you were God?

Video **Curb Your
Enthusiasm II**

[Curb Your Enthusiasm II](#)

by Jewlarious.com Staff

Did Jeff do the wrong thing by trying to help someone?

Video 

[Team America](#)

by Jewlarious.com Staff

Is the world better off with or without the United Nations?

Video 

[X-Men](#)

by Jewlarious.com Staff

What is the best way to fight anti-Semitism?

[Click here](#) to view more Jtube Questionable Broadcasts.



Why now is the best time to launch Jewlarious.com -- a new site dedicated to Jewish humor.

The congregants were shocked when they entered the rabbi's study only to see him watching Al-Jazeera, the Arab satellite news station. "Rabbi," said the shul president. "How can you be watching such anti-Semitic propaganda? Are you, God forbid, some sort of a self-hating Jew?"

"On the contrary," the Rabbi replied. "When I read the New York Times, I see such terrible things: that Israel is branded as the 'aggressor' despite the fact that it is defending itself against terrorists, that rockets are raining down on Israeli cities, and now the violence has spread to Jews around the world -- such *tzuras*. But when I watch Al-Jazeera, I see so much more: that the Jews control the American government, the banks, the media, and that we're even on the verge of taking over the entire world. Watching Al-Jazeera makes me feel a whole lot better!"

One of the reasons why this joke is amusing is that it takes our current situation, one which is tragic and at times seemingly hopeless, and turns it on its head by suggesting that our enemies are not that menacing at all. In fact, they are actually helping us -- and that makes it funny.

In a sense, this is much like the history of the Jewish People itself. For thousands of years we have been struggling through trying times, but we always manage to keep things in perspective by turning our perception of reality on its head to see what truly lies beneath. One of the ways we have always done this is by using one of our unique gifts: our sense of humor.

We Jews are known for our sense of humor, and this goes way back -- all the way to the times of the Bible. The first recorded laughter in Jewish tradition results from tragic circumstances -- the inability of our patriarch Abraham and matriarch Sarah to have children. But when the angels tell Sarah that at the age of 90 she will miraculously give birth, she laughs. A situation which was seemingly hopeless -- infertility -- has now been transformed into the miraculous -- a 90 year old woman and a 100 year old man becoming new parents. Now that's funny.

Jewish humor through the ages has helped us deal with situations that seemed unbearable. When we see our world literally crashing down around us, we might think to ourselves that

Jewlarious: An Interactive Jewish Humor Book

there is no way we will be able to survive. Laughter shows the absurdity of the situation and helps us pull through.

Likewise, some might claim that now is not the right time to launch Jewlarious.com -- a website dedicated to Jewish humor. But it is times like these when we need our unique sense of humor most! The current situation can appear hopeless. But we Jews have been enduring hopeless times for thousands of years, yet remarkably, we continue to survive, and perhaps even more remarkably, have managed to keep our sense of humor through it all.

Some have wondered what the secret is to our survival. Perhaps a small part is owed to our sense of humor. Our ability to make light of difficult situations, to see beyond today and know that there will be a better tomorrow. That no matter how unbearable our current state is, we will get through it somehow, and survive. In this spirit, Jewlarious.com is being launched, and we hope we are playing our small part by reminding the world of the Jewish people's secret weapon: our sense of humor.

If you would like to submit a joke to Jewlarious or sign up to receive new Jewlarious jokes via e-mail: (<http://www.aish.com/jewlarious/submitJoke.asp>)