

Maintaining Balance through Humour and Play

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In the 20 years since I began nursing in the field of palliative care, I have had the privilege of journeying alongside many amazing people who have shared their wisdom so freely. My teachers have often been disguised under the title of 'patient' or 'client'. And one of the most frequent lessons that I've been taught in this school of life (through words or demonstration) is: Humour helps when times are tough!

There have been many books and articles written about the benefits of humour and laughter on the quality of life. I for one am a believer! Any chance I get, I encourage any caregiver, especially Hospice Volunteers, to intentionally incorporate more humour into their lives as a means toward maintaining balance and wholeness. And as in most aspects of my life, as I hear myself reminding others, I am reminded again to 'practice what I preach'!

At my university graduation, the keynote speaker told us: Life is like learning to play the violin and giving a concert at the same time! So I invite you to join me in practicing and playing the music of laughter!

Creating a 'Kit':

One of many ways we can promote humour and laughter in our own lives is by creating our own special "Kit" to keep on hand for moments when we need a lift. The Kit could be called a "Humour First Aid Kit" or a "Joy Kit", or an "Inner Clown Care Kit", or whatever you like. (This is not an original idea, but I don't know where I first absorbed this concept. So I just humbly and gratefully acknowledge those who have come before me!)

All you need:

- An old **SHOE BOX** (can be decorated if you wish; see labels on last page)
- **MEMORIES** of what has tickled your funny bone in the past.
- An **IMAGINATION!**

Contents:

What goes inside a "Kit" depends on each individual. **YOU** decide what you want inside your **personalized** Kit. There are no "right or wrong" ways to do this! Enlist the help of family or friends to add to the fun!

Perhaps you may wish to go to a dollar store with your 'inner child' awake. Use all 5 senses. Try not to evaluate your choices. When you find yourself asking 'but what would I do with that?' don't worry - that's what your 'Kit' is for! And remember: your 'Kit' is always a work-in-progress. You can add to it any time. The whole idea is to have a place where you can go for a little break in your day, to play. So whether it is to colour a picture while smelling the crayon, or to squeeze some play dough, your inner clown is acknowledged and affirmed!

Take some time to jot down some ideas now:



Barb Nolan is an experienced palliative care nurse who has nurtured her inner clown in delightful ways. She even has a clown persona! Currently, Barb is the Day Hospice Coordinator at Hospice Niagara (905)984-8766 ext. 270.

Cut along dotted line. Then attach to your shoe box cover.

Humour First Aid Kit!

Cut along dotted line. Then attach to your shoe box cover.

Inner Clown Care Kit!

Cut along dotted line. Then attach to your shoe box cover.

My Joy Kit!