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1**TOPIC:** Ability

How She Looks

After the doctor completed his examination of a woman, he took her husband to the side. "I don't like the looks of your wife at all," the doctor confided.

"She may not be much to look at, Doc," agreed the husband. "But listen, she's an excellent cook and the kids seem to like her."

Dates & Places Used:

2**TOPIC:** Ability

Dogs and Bikes

An animal shelter attendant checked the identification tag of a dog that was brought in by the police. He then called the owner and explained that she would need to come to the animal shelter and pay the fines and charges, and then she could get her dog.

The woman asked, "What are these fines and charges?"

The attendant answered, "You have to pay the animal shelter's standard charges and the police department's fine because your dog was chasing a man on his bicycle."

The woman hesitated and said, "That must not be my dog! My dog doesn't know how to ride a bicycle!"

Dates & Places Used:

3**TOPIC:** Ability

What I Can Do

There is an old joke about a man who, when he was asked if he could play a violin, answered, "I don't know. I've never tried."

This is psychologically a very wise reply. Those who have never tried to play a violin really do not know whether or not they can. Those who say too early in life and too firmly, "No, I'm not at all musical," shut themselves off prematurely from whole areas of life that may have proved rewarding.

Each of us has unknown possibilities, undiscovered potentialities. One big advantage of having an open self-concept rather than a rigid one is that we will continue to expose ourselves to new experiences and therefore continue to discover more and more about ourselves as we grow older.

Dates & Places Used:

4

TOPIC: Ability

Seen the Dog Bowl

A mother asked her son, "Have you seen the dog bowl?"
"No," the boy replied, "but he's pretty good at skating!"

Dates & Places Used:

5

TOPIC: Ability

One Could Get Hurt

A man decided to commit suicide. Saturating his body with gasoline, he put a rope around his neck and tied it to a tree limb that jutted out over a river. He put a pistol to his temple. He then set a match to his body, jumped from the tree, and pulled the trigger on the pistol. Missing his temple, the bullet hit the rope and cut it, and he fell into the water below, which immediately put out the flames. As he climbed back up the riverbank gasping, he said, "Wow! If I wasn't such a good swimmer, I would have drowned!"

Dates & Places Used:

6

TOPIC: Ability

Milsap on Blindness

"People are always asking me if being blind heightened my sense of hearing. The answer is no. I can't hear the grass grow

or anything like that. The thing being blind did do for me was get me into a school where they taught me how to play the piano.”

Dates & Places Used:

7

TOPIC: Abuse

Getting Off in Buffalo

An important executive boarded a New York to Chicago train. He explained to the porter, “I’m a heavy sleeper, and I want you to be sure to wake me at 5:00 A.M. to get off at Buffalo. Regardless of what I say, get me up and get me off the train. I may resist you, but I have to get off at Buffalo.”

But the next morning the executive awakened just as the train pulled into Chicago. He was infuriated, and with abusive language he poured out his anger on the porter.

As the executive stomped down the platform toward the station, another passenger asked the porter, “How could you stand there and take that kind of talk from that fellow?”

The porter replied, “That was nothing. You should have heard what the man I put off in Buffalo said!”

Dates & Places Used:

8

TOPIC: Abuse

Completely Ignored

A man walked into a psychiatrist’s office and said, “My problem is that people seem to ignore me.”

The psychiatrist walked to the door and called out, “Next!”

Dates & Places Used:

9

TOPIC: Acceptance

Wanting to Kiss a Mule

A little prospector wearing clean shoes walked into a saloon. A big cowboy said to his friend, "Watch me make this dude dance." He walked over to the prospector and said, "You're a foreigner, aren't you?"

"You might say that," said the little prospector. "I'm from the city, and I'm prospecting for gold."

The cowboy said, "Tell me dude, can you dance?"

The little dude said, "No sir, I never did learn."

"Well I'm going to teach you. You'll be surprised how fast you can learn." With that the cowboy pulled out his gun and started shooting at the prospector's feet.

Hopping, jumping, and shaking, the prospector "danced" out the door.

About an hour later the cowboy left the saloon. As soon as he stepped out the door, he heard a click. He looked around, and there, next to his head, was the biggest shotgun he'd ever seen. The little prospector said, "Cowboy, have you ever kissed a mule?"

"No," said the cowboy, "but I always wanted to."

Dates & Places Used:

10

TOPIC: Accidents

Careless Cruise Control

A man was standing in a motor home dealership when a motor home was towed in for repairs. The front of the home was badly damaged. The man was curious as to how the motor home had gotten so mangled, so he walked over to the service department to ask. The manager explained that the owner of the motor home had been driving on the interstate and had set the cruise control and gone back to the kitchen to make himself a sandwich.

There are just so many things to remember.

Dates & Places Used:

11

TOPIC: Accidents

The Golf Ball Missile

I read about Mathieu Boya, who was practicing his golf swing in a pasture adjacent to the Benin Air Base in Africa. The story goes that back in 1987 he accidentally destroyed his country's entire air force!

With one swing of the golf club, Boya set off an unbelievable series of events. The shot—"a glorious slice" it was called—hit a bird, which in turn dropped onto the windshield of a trainer jet, whose pilot was taxiing into position for takeoff. The pilot lost control of his plane and plowed into four shiny Albatross jets, totally demolishing the entire air force of Benin.

Boya was jailed immediately for "hooliganism," and his attorney said he had no chance of winning a trial. Meanwhile, the country had no money in its treasury and wanted Boya to pay \$40 million to replace the jets. Boya made \$275 per year and figured it would take 145,000 years to pay off his debt to society.

Few golfers could match that story, although I have heard of some complaining of their "wayward shots." The point is that we have seen what a chain reaction can do. Like falling dominoes, one event leads to a chain of events larger than could have been created by a single event.

But a positive chain of events can happen too. This Sunday our church will kick off our financial campaign. One good pledge can lead to a whole series of exciting things to come. It's time for many of our members to get out their pocketbooks and start some better things rolling at this church.

Dates & Places Used:

12

TOPIC: Accidents

Just the Good News

A woman called her husband at work to talk. He explained that he was very busy and asked her if she could wait until he came home.

His wife said she just wanted to share some good news and bad news. The husband really was busy and needed to get off the phone. He told his wife just to tell him the good news.

She answered, "The air bags work fine."

Dates & Places Used:

13

TOPIC: Accidents

Elderly Parking

Two elderly women talking: "The thing I hate about parking is the noisy crash."

Dates & Places Used:

14

TOPIC: Accomplishments

Motion or Action

Never mistake motion for action. (*Ernest Hemingway*)

Dates & Places Used:

15

TOPIC: Accomplishments

Speed of Death

Author and drama critic Alexander Woolcott liked to sit at the window of his New York apartment overlooking the East River and watch the boats go by. A visitor once asked him, "How can you sit here by the hour watching one battered old tugboat after another chugging by at ten knots? It sounds pretty dull."

Woolcott explained, "It's not always tugboats. Every now and then a dead body floats by."

His guest was taken up short and exclaimed, "A dead body? What's a dead body doing in the river?"

The reviewer shrugged and replied, "I can't say for sure, but my guess would be about five knots."

Dates & Places Used:

16**TOPIC:** Accomplishments

Laying or Lying

A gal from the city asked an old farmer, “Which is grammatically correct: to say a hen is ‘setting’ or ‘sitting?’”

The farmer replied, “I guess I don’t know that one, miss, and it really don’t interest me none. What does interest me when I hear a hen cackle is if she’s ‘laying’ or ‘lying.’”

Dates & Places Used:

17**TOPIC:** Action

Prayer Gets Some Help

Many marvelous stories can be used to illustrate the various facets of prayer. In particular I like the story that English statesman William Gladstone told that illustrates prayer coupled with a sort of persistent (if also perverse) action. It seems Gladstone knew of a little girl in his neighborhood who believed strongly in the efficacy of prayer. Her current concern was a trap that her brother had made to catch birds. Being a bird lover, she prayed that God would frustrate her brother’s designs and that he would be unsuccessful in his plan. She had shared this resolution with Gladstone and told him how hard she was praying.

One day, upon encountering her, Gladstone observed a particular radiance to her countenance. He said to her, “Julia, you look so pleased. Are you still confident your prayers will be answered?”

Julia smiled a knowing smile and retorted, “I know for sure that my prayers will be answered. Yesterday I kicked my brother’s trap to pieces.”

Dates & Places Used:

18**TOPIC:** Action

Hit Home Runs—Then Talk

The former chaplain of the Boston Red Sox talked with a young player who was constantly quoting Scripture. He told the