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How to Claim Your Free Online Humour Course

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How to Claim Your Free Online Humour Course

To say thank you for buying this book, I'm giving you free membership to my online course – More Funny, More Followers – that lets you start 'funnying up' your material *right now*. It normally costs \$297 and contains over 20 videos explaining joke formats you can use straight away.

Please head over to martinwilson.com/freecourse to claim your free membership.

To help you try out new material on a friendly audience, you also get access to the *More Funny, More Money* Facebook group: facebook.com/groups/morefunnymoremoney/

Lastly, in the book I refer to comics, funny videos, books, etc. To make it easier for you to find them I've created a page where all these references are in one place: morefunnymoremoney.com/p/bookresources

Introduction: How Going Broke Taught Me to Use Humour

In 2009 I did my first ever keynote – to a room full of other speakers – and got a standing ovation. I had worked very hard with an excellent speaking mentor, Matt Church, and he'd helped me get the balance right between thoughtful content and lots of humour. It all went incredibly well.

Three years later I was more than \$150,000 in debt. I couldn't get any speaking work. This was frustrating, to say the least, and a massive blow to my ego after the world of comedy. There, if you're funny enough, word spreads and you get all the work you can handle. So after I received a standing ovation I thought, 'Here we go, I'm a professional speaker now.'

However, on that day I was given the worst piece of advice anyone could possibly have passed on. Someone from one of the speaking bureaus was in the audience. She took me aside after

the presentations and said, ‘Don’t tell people you’re funny. These days people only book *serious* business speakers with *serious* content and *serious* marketing.’

So for three years, based on that massive bum steer, I was out there trying to convince people that a former award-winning comedian was now a ‘serious change speaker’. This, of course, put me up against CEOs and other business leaders who had led large companies through huge mergers, acquisitions and corporate change management programs.

To cut a long story short, I went broke. Soon I was up to my eyeballs in debt. For three years I averaged four speaking gigs a year – after spending eight years doing stand-up in the UK averaging four gigs *a week*! I had come back from overseas with a couple of hundred thousand dollars in the bank, and four years later I was almost that much in debt and at my absolute wits’ end. In four short years I’d gone from feeling like an all-conquering hero, returning triumphantly from battle, to an absolute loser, driving his family and their future down a road to nowhere.

I can’t tell you the number of times I fought back tears of frustration while I desperately racked my brain for ways to sell this awesome keynote I’d created. I checked my phone a hundred times a day, desperately willing there to be an enquiry.

My wife, Allie, was incredibly supportive – she’d been at the back of the room for that first keynote and knew my speech was great – but the strain was starting to show. One day, when I hadn’t had any work for about six months, she burst into tears and shouted to God, the universe or anyone who would listen, ‘We just need one paid gig, *please*! Let us have one paid gig so I can keep the faith.’ About 10 seconds later the phone rang with

a speaking engagement for the Queensland Health Department; that kept us going for another couple of months.

It was around this time that other speakers started contacting me, asking for help to ‘funny up’ their speaking so they would get more work. I helped out presentation-skills coach Michelle Bowden, did some funny for resilience speaker Graeme Cowan, and worked with Matt Church, Dr Adam Fraser, Gihan Perera, and many other wonderful speakers (comedians who all got me to sign a confidentiality clause). They all came to me saying things like ‘I want to stand out from my competition; I want to be funnier’. So I’d help them get more work by using humour, and then go back to pretending I was ‘a totally serious speaker with totally serious content’ and slide further into debt. You’re probably reading this thinking, ‘Why didn’t he put two and two together?’ In hindsight, I was a total idiot. But when you’re living in constant fear of bankruptcy, you don’t see the obvious right in front of you.

Then, one day, I got a call from a different bureau consultant, telling me that a very well-known speaker had asked for my phone number. He had a speaking showcase coming up and wanted my help to ‘funny up his presentation so he would stand out from the other speakers’. (That phrase again! D’oh!)

She then said to me, ‘Do you mind if I ask why this person is asking for *your* help?’

I replied, ‘Well, I was a full-time stand-up in the UK for eight years and I’m a former Australian Comic of the Year.’

The line went totally silent for about 15 seconds, then this wonderful woman said to me, ‘Marty, are those facts on every single page of your website in huge red letters?’ I sheepishly

replied that someone had told me not to mention in my marketing that I was funny. She shouted at me, ‘Hang up the phone right now, go and fill your website with quotes and testimonials for how funny you are, then call me back. Let’s arrange a coffee next week to talk about how we can spread the word about your use of humour.’

This was in June, and I’d done one gig that year. In the next six months I bombarded people with testimonials about how funny my speaking was, and I did 36 speaking gigs. The following year I did 72, and since then I’ve done between 90 and 100 speaking engagements every year, and I’ve raised my prices every year.

Since I started spreading the word about how I use humour, and plastering my website with testimonials like ‘the funniest speaker I’ve ever seen’, the work has been rolling in.

So ask yourself:

- When you’re presenting to a group, do their eyes sparkle or gently glaze over?
- If you’re giving a speech, are they nodding in agreement or just nodding off?
- At the end of your new business pitch, do people write you a cheque? Or check their pulse?

We Remember Funny

In uncertain times like these, when change and disruption are the norm, if you want to get your business known, your message heard and your products and services sold, you can’t afford to be forgettable. You have to stand out, be known and round up a

tribe. For your message and your brand to survive – and thrive – in today's marketplace, you must be memorable.

And funny makes ideas stick.

What are the television ads you remember? The funny ones. How many childhood conversations can you remember word for word? Close to none? And how many jokes can you remember? Probably plenty. Funny implants in our brains far more easily and securely than facts. So if you can weave humour in with your speaking, it's like coating your message, your brand and your business with superglue for the brain.

Entertaining New Ideas Is Easier with a Smile

Laughter has the ability to break down resistance to new ideas and, just as importantly, to challenge old beliefs.

Whether you're evaluating current, possibly outdated, beliefs or raising possibilities with 'Imagine if' statements, humour helps the mind stay open. It's even in our language: when we are asking someone to hold back on objections and open their mind to a new possibility for a moment, we often say 'humour me'.

So use this in your speaking. When a room bursts out laughing at one of your points, they have instantly agreed that your idea is true. They can't take that laughter of agreement back. This is a much gentler way to make points that are difficult or uncomfortable, then we can all laugh together at our shared foibles. An understanding has been reached. An unspoken truth has been revealed or a common experience has been acknowledged.

In Shakespeare's plays isn't it always The Fool who said the awkward, dangerous truths no one else could? Many a true word is spoken in jest.

Make Learning from Mistakes More Enjoyable

Mel Brooks once said, 'Tragedy is when I cut my finger. Comedy is when you fall down a sewer and die.' So if you can let the audience laugh at you and your mistakes, it creates an easy way for them to learn about their own humanity. Being able to greet mistakes and missteps with lightness and humour frees up the lessons within those mistakes.

Humour can create context for information, making it more pertinent and memorable. Something as simple as falling might be an error we'd repeat over and over again; laughing at ourselves, or others, and thinking, 'Well, I won't do that again,' makes it less likely.

Stand Up, Stand Out

We buy from people we know, like and trust, and humour is the most socially acceptable and scientifically proven way to build rapport in seconds. Psychologists agree that shared laughter creates an almost instant connection that transcends the intellect and occurs on a subliminal, emotional level. And who doesn't want a deeper connection – and the persuasiveness that it brings – with people we are trying to influence in business?

Humour is a learnable skill. And I'm going to teach you how to get it.