

FROM WHERE I SIT

JOHN COONEY

Serious Fun

When I reach the age of 120, I'll probably be interviewed on television. I'll probably be asked, "What's the secret of your longevity?" And I'll probably say, "Laughter and fun!" Because these two ingredients have featured large in the first 60 years of my life, and they will (I hope) in the second ...



You may not realise this. You may not even care. But some of the best words ever spoken have been spoken about laughter and fun.

It was Zorba the Greek who said, "What a man needs is a little madness!" It was Chirag Mehta, who said, "It's bad to suppress laughter – it goes back down and spreads to your hips." It was someone else (a grandma, I think) who said, "Laughing is good exercise – it's like jogging on the inside." And it was Mae West who said, "Too much of a good thing is wonderful!"

It was Brendan Gill who argued, "Not a shred of evidence exists in favour of the idea that life is serious." It was Anthony Burgess who complained, "Laugh and the world laughs with you – snore and you sleep alone!" It was Douglas Adams who claimed, "Life is like a grapefruit. It's orange and squishy, and has a few pips in it, and some folk have half a one for breakfast." And it was Groucho Marx who declared, "If you're not having fun, you're doing something wrong!"

It was the Bible that noted, "A cheerful heart is good medicine!" It was Alan Alda

A CONCLUSION IS THE PLACE WHERE YOU GOT TIRED OF THINKING ...

(M*A*S*H) who observed, “*When people are laughing, they’re generally not killing one another.*” It was a Scottish proverb that warned, “*Be happy while you’re living, for you’re a long time dead.*” And it was Woody Allen who confessed, “*I am thankful for laughter, except when milk comes out my nose.*”

Anyway, it was laughter and fun (and very little else) that was on my mind a few months back, when we headed for Rotorua with our kids and grandkids in tow. There were 19 of us in all, and it was my wife’s idea – acknowledging that I’d just celebrated yet another birthday with a zero on the end.

Well, we enjoyed ourselves more than we legally should’ve that weekend. We rowed on, paddled on, and fell into the lake. We shouted and yahoed and overtook each other on the luge. We hongied each other at the Tamaki Maori Village. We served packets of fish-food to overweight Rainbow Springs trout. And we soaked so long in the Polynesian Pools that our fingers and toes looked like raisins.

It was a BLAST, I tell you – from whoa-to-go – and a very good time was had by all! We spent what little was left of their future inheritance, ate more than we could carry, laughed ourselves silly, and bonded all over again as a family.

There were only two complaints, and they both came from me. Because I had to drive home with a bruised arm – which I got when falling into a goldfish-pond, trying to stop one of my grandkids doing the same (how embarrassing is that?). And a broken rib – which I got when I spun out on a slippery indoor go-kart track, and got rammed at high speed by one of my sons.

It was a scream, literally! But ah, what the heck? When a man’s halfway to 120, wounds like that are badges of honour! ❀

JOHN (GRAPEVINE’S FOUNDER & EDITOR) TRIES TO LIVE BY THIS MOTTO: “LIFE IS SHORT, SO BEND THE RULES, FORGIVE QUICKLY, KISS SLOWLY, LOVE TRULY, LAUGH UNCONTROLLABLY, AND NEVER REGRET ANYTHING THAT MADE YOU SMILE!”

THORT



I wish scientists would come up with a way to make dogs a lot bigger, but with a smaller head. That way, they’d still be good as watchdogs, but they wouldn’t eat so much. (Jack Handey)