



Simple Truth

Now we're going to get into one of my favorite humor techniques. It is called **Simple Truth**.

It's a lot like the double entendre. As you remember, with the double entendre, you take the implied meaning of a word and turn it into the comedic meaning of a word. With Simple Truth, you take the implied meaning of a phrase and turn it into the simple truth meaning of that phrase.

We often speak in metaphor and euphemism. "*With the sun on my face and the wind in my hair...*" In reality if the sun was *on* your face, I don't think you would have to worry about your hair.

We can use this comedy structure for so many things, scripture, poetry, song lyrics, common phrases, clichés, slogans, etc.

You're all probably familiar with the "It's a Small World," ride at Disneyland. A lot of people complain that that song gets stuck in their heads, so it's a perfect target for comedy...

*You ever listen to that song, "It's a small world?" They're like, (singing),
"It's a world of joy.
It's a world of tears.
It's a world of hope.
It's a world of fears..."*

Isn't that a song about being bi-polar?"

Simple Truth is a perfect example of using the element of surprise to get the pay off.

In order to do "just the facts" exercises it is wise to have the knowledge basic joke structure and an understanding of how human beings think linearly. Our entire lives we've been told to think of what a sentence means using context. What is the meaning in the context of the phrase?

Because of this kind of learning. Our brains are patterned to think of the implied meaning of a phrase. A comedian's job is to learn to think alternately.

The great thing about, Simple Truth, is that it doesn't have to just be facts and statistics, it can also be phrases and clichés that are commonly used everyday.

Doctor: I don't like the looks of your husband.

Wife: Neither do I, doctor, but he's good to the children.

With more practice and continued writing, you will develop your ear and your mind to process the facts in a humorous way.

My girlfriend said, "you never looked out for me." I said, "Of course I did, and whenever you came around I ran like hell."



I was watching a commercial for the erectile dysfunction drug called Cialis. At the end of the commercial the disclaimer says: "If you experience an erection that lasts more than four hours call your doctor." If I have an erection that lasts more than four hours, I'm calling everyone!

One quick way to become familiar with this concept is to study comedian Steven Wright.

I went to a restaurant. They said they serve breakfast anytime. So I ordered French toast during the Renaissance.

Everywhere is walking distance, if you have the time.

Now that you have an idea of how Simple Truth works, you should be able to put a few together yourself. Get some paper and a pen and get ready to write funny. Listen and write down the first part of these "Just the Facts" clichés and come up with an ending that twists the logic of the statement and makes it funny.

1. Every twelve and a half seconds, some woman in the US gets pregnant.
2. Call me when you're free.
3. They don't serve women at the bar.
4. I've been on the road for three weeks.
5. War is not the answer.
6. My girlfriend spent half the day on her phone.
7. I love pumping iron.

It is my belief that as a humor writer you should be able to take any sentence or logical grouping of words and make it funny. Sometimes you have to take the words and re-group them so as to create a set up that leads the listener one direction so that you can surprise him with an ending. Here is an example:

Take this question: *Can you tell me how long you should brush a dog?* Not really much to work with here. But if we take that statement and re-phrase it giving it a double-entendre possibility: *Can you tell me how long dogs should be brushed?*

Now of course we see the possibilities open up. In the second version we've opened up the possibility that the question is referring to *long dogs*. And, of course, the answer could be as simple as *Same as short ones*.

Let's see how you did with the "Simple Truth" exercises we set up earlier. Here are some of the tag lines I came up with:

1. Every twelve and a half seconds a woman in the US gets pregnant.
Joke: Wow! I've got to slow down.
2. Call me when you're free.
Joke: Otherwise, I don't think I can afford you.
3. They don't serve women at the bar.



Joke: For that you have to go to the brothels.

4. I've been on the road for three weeks.

Joke: Which is weird because I only went grocery shopping.

5. War is not the answer.

Joke: Unless the question is: What is "Raw" backwards.

Or: Unless the question is: Novel by Tolstoy "_____ and Peace.

6. My girlfriend spent half the day on her phone.

Joke: I hope she had it set to vibrate.

7. I love pumping iron. Yeah! That's the name of this stripper I'm dating.

Compare your taglines to the ones here. I'm sure you came up with some good ones. Notice, that in most cases the taglines are short and to the point.