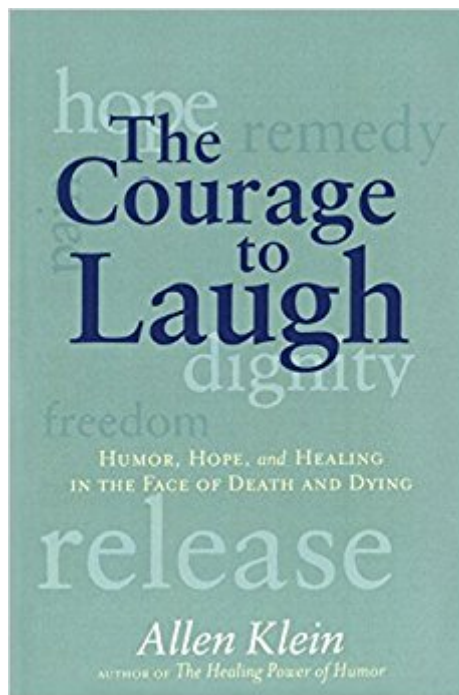




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# The Courage To Laugh: Humor, Hope, And Healing In The Face Of Death And Dying



## Synopsis

"Life," said George Bernard Shaw, "does not cease to be funny when someone dies, any more than it ceases to be serious when someone laughs." With heartening and amusing examples from a world in which many think there is no laughter, Allen Klein augments the truth of Shaw's insightfulness. Illustrating the inherent importance of the ability to laugh, Klein gives readers the power to face the end of life with dignity and compassion. Based on the author's years of giving speeches and leading workshops for patients and their caregivers and families, *The Courage to Laugh* will be the first book to: \* show how patients use humor to cope when life is threatened \* offer hope and encouragement to readers dealing with loss \* give readers permission to laugh when they feel like crying \* explain how popular culture can ease death-related fears \* provide uplifting quotes and jokes. With poignant wisdom from children, parents, doctors, and nurses, combined with the spirited writing of the author, *The Courage to Laugh* is a lifesaving tool for everyone experiencing a serious illness and for the people who care for them.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

After his wife died from a rare liver disease, Klein wrote *The Healing Power of Humor*, which explained how laughter had helped him recover from her untimely death. Calling himself a "jollytologist," the author, who lectures and leads seminars on humor, enlarges on this earlier theme by presenting a welcome compilation of many personal stories culled from his research into death and dying. These show the important role of laughter as well as tears in the grieving process. Although Klein stresses that humor should not be used to cover up grief, he believes that, for the

patient as well as loved ones, appropriate laughter is a refreshing and therapeutic tonic in the face of illness and death. Among the examples he provides are the sustaining power of humor for the terminally ill living in hospices, as well as the amazing capacity of AIDS patients to make jokes that ease their pain ("In my condition, I don't even buy green bananas anymore"). He describes the bravery of very sick children who seek out light moments to help them cope with their disease and includes the experiences of concentration camp survivors who sustained their will to live through humor. Never glib, Klein's affirmations allow a crucial measure of relief for moments of distress, or in the face of loss. Editor, David Groff; agent, Shelley Roth. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.

"The Courage to Laugh is not just about humor but about life." -- Bernie Siegel, M.D., author of *Love, Medicine & Miracles* --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

What a delight to read! It reinforces my thoughts on how people deal with death and dying and gives an entire new look at our final journey and how we get there.

Good book to have especially if you are going through or will be going through a tough time of losing someone.

The book was in great shape when it appeared at my door. I have never been disappointed yet.

Looking for inspirational literature for a cancer patient and I have not given it away nor have I read it.

Love it great reading everyone needs to learn to laugh --I attended his worksho and the book highlighted his workshop

Years ago, I learned about the work of Norman Cousins, then editor of "The Saturday Review." My late father was a real fan of that magazine and told me about Cousin's then radical ideas about how humor could help healing. His work is covered in his 1979 book, *Anatomy of an Illness* (Norton). Since then, I've had an interest in humor and how it helps us cope with the trials and tribulations of life. Allen Klein has taken the concept a step further, exploring in great detail how humor helps us cope with death. As I began the book, I read about Klein's experience with the death of his father. Thoughts of my father's death came creeping into my consciousness. Do I want to read this book? I

continued reading, and I'm glad I did. This book is a fascinating sociological study of humor and death. It's very well done, so well that the book could qualify as a college textbook as well as a very interesting read . . . and even a valuable guidebook for people working in hospitals, hospices, nursing homes, or caring for a loved one. The organization of *The Courage to Laugh* was obvious, and made the book easier to read, understand, and absorb. Part I answers the question, "Is Death Too Serious for Humor?" with four strong background chapters. The second part of the book, *Seeing Demise Thru Humorous Eyes*, is filled with an amazing collection of wit and understanding from a wide variety of sources. I became so engaged with this material, that I couldn't put the book down. I just kept reading! I also enjoyed the last part of the book, *Leave 'Em Laughing*, that looks at the subject through the eyes of those who are dying. Highly recommended for anyone dealing with death and dying or studying the topic. If you're a student of humor, this book is a treasure.

I purchased this book and read it after the deaths of three immediate family members (son, father, mother-in-law) occurred within a year's time. I reached a point wherein I asked myself, "How have I been able to cope with all the stress this year, and why am I coming unglued now?" The answer is in the title of the book. What helped me throughout the year was my wit. I realized that I needed to nurture my sense of humor as much as I needed food, clothing, shelter, love and prayer. Through Allen Klein's book I discovered that, in the face of trauma, humor is as much a saving grace as are spiritual/religious beliefs. I heartily recommend this book for anyone who is facing a terminal illness or who has a loved one who has a terminal illness, as well as for those who are at least a year past the death of their loved one (unless they have an extremely accessible wit). Laughter is excellent medicine. Buy this book, but then remember to take the medicine! Laughing in the face of death, or finding light when one feels that life is dark, is a challenging task. It takes courage to search thoroughly and find humor's rainbow behind the dark clouds of grief.

It has been years since my parents died and I am very fortunate that no-one I am close to is seriously ill, so I really didn't have a reason to read this book, but I was intrigued by the title. This is a wonderful book! It gives so much to the reader. It expands your heart and I found it giving me a certain feeling of grace - not that I have been spared - but a feeling of grace from reading about the wonderful people in this book. Yes, it's full of wonderful, noble people, but these people are also blessed with a sense of humor and class. I don't know if it would help someone who has never had a sense of humor, but I am positive that it would help anyone who has laughed at least once in their life. Mr. Klein's approach is not condescending or "let's laugh at the victim" style at all. It is warm and

joyous and a blessing to anyone who reads it. This book will not bring you down! It may open a path of communication for you. I cannot say enough about this book. Although I have no life threatening disease, I have suffered through horrible bouts of depression and this book was a God-send because it made me LAUGH! I am looking forward to reading his other books!

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