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10 Principles for a Happy Life and Career

Principle 6: Humor

By Michael A. Crawford, CPA

Editor's Note: Mike Crawford has, by even his own accounts, had a successful and happy career as a CPA in Oklahoma. He says there are 10 basic principles that have guided him through a joyful life and a fulfilling career. In this and future issues of CPAFOCUS, Crawford shares that idea and those principles.

he day without laughter is a day wasted."

—Charlie Chaplin

Good humor isn't synonymous with the ability to tell funny jokes. Humor is an attitude and is evident in the face and voice of anyone who possesses it. Those who truly love life can easily recognize the many humorous aspects of everyday life. They are aware of the endless sources of humor around them and seize the opportunity to make others laugh at them or with them when the time is right.

For the past few years, my wonderfully nutty mother, Virginia, has been a constant source of daily humor in my life. Following my father's passing in 2011, I've taken on a caregiver role that involves daily contact and significant time spent in her company. To help ease our pain and grief over the loss of Dad and to do our best to be happy, we use humor at every opportunity. Thankfully for me, my mom is unintentionally the best comedic sidekick a person could request. Her ongoing tendencies to talk before thinking, to endlessly misuse the English language and her endearing small town vocabulary make for a limitless supply of opportunities for humorous one-liners. Lucky for me, she also possesses a good sense of humor and is more than willing to laugh at herself and occasionally offer up a funny comeback in return.

I lovingly refer to her frequent verbal missteps as "Virginia-isms." For example:

- "It takes me about an hour to walk 60 minutes." (Her intended communication was that it takes her about one hour to walk three miles.)
- "I'm going out with my son this afternoon to get some pot." (This was her explanation to a neighbor about accompanying me to pick up a piece of free cookware at a local giveaway.)
- "I can tell you which way is south, it just depends on which way I am standing." (She was explaining her mastery of direction to me.)

Of course, this is the same mother that had me celebrating the wrong birthday for 36 years. I grew up celebrating my birthday on March 13. It wasn't until I was 36 years old and applied for a passport that I discovered my birthday is actually March 14. I mean really, how do you get the birthdate of your first born child wrong? But that's just my mom—always a great source of daily humor!

"Against the assault of laughter, nothing can stand." –Mark Twain $\ensuremath{\mathfrak{C}}$