

# Making Ripples

by Amanda Bancroft

Mary Poppins was right. “In every job that must be done, there is an element of fun. You find the fun, and – SNAP – the job’s a game!” Not everything in life gets a spoon full of sugar to help the medicine go down, but, difference-makers can make lemonade with lemons. Keeping a positive attitude and finding something to chuckle at in each situation may actually help resolve problems facing the world.

I’m not sure if there is scientific backing to this idea, but it seems to be common knowledge similar to the concept of imagining that an audience is naked if stage fright is holding you back from public speaking. It really does seem to help to imagine that a person who is hurting us, or creating great harm in the world and our environment, is funny-looking (let’s say, orange). As long as this mindset doesn’t lead to bullying or name-calling, because those things increase the harm in the world, then it’s a fine strategy to pull ourselves up and keep going. Inwardly laughing at the ridiculousness of someone’s behavior can help mitigate anger, too.

Perhaps you have a not-so-pleasant illness or, yikes, the composting toilet needs emptied! Grumbling about it is understandable. Yet there are plenty of bathroom jokes and ways of laughing about the things that bodies do when sick, and it’s amazing how quickly the spirit is lifted by engaging in a competition to see whose voice sounds funniest with a stuffy nose, etc. Finding the fun gets us back on our feet quicker, and makes unpleasant jobs feel like less of a burden. I think there are many kinds of heroes, and one kind is the person who keeps their sense of humor right up until their last moment of life.

Maybe that neighborhood project you’re working on to protect a stream or improve sidewalks or help children learn to read is going as slow as molasses. Someone you’re working with may be slower than a snail! Imagine that they are literally snails, all dressed up in bureaucratic clothes, and get as creative as you wish. Even when someone is shouting at you, it’s possible to inwardly laugh at something and de-escalate a situation, keeping your cool. Although, sometimes it can be hard not to laugh aloud!

After laughing, I sometimes get my best ideas for what to do when a project is stalled. Usually the answer is to Google something that hadn’t occurred to me. The resolution may be closer than you think! Which brings up another strategy: online searches that blatantly “waste time.” Making the world a better place often requires one to immerse themselves in the suffering of others and our planet, in addition to the feats of endurance required of some do-gooders. There is, therefore, no such thing as too many cute kitten pictures!

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