

Wit and Wits

Category: Hospitalized

written by R. Lynn Barnett | June 3, 2025

My husband was recently hospitalized for a long and arduous cancer surgery. A few days post-surgery, one of his nurses told us that she had to leave early, but that a blonde lady would be coming in momentarily to relieve her. Sure enough, this other nurse comes in, having overheard this comment, and says, "I'm the blonde lady." My husband noticed that every woman in there was blonde: the aforesaid nurse, the respiratory therapist and the physical therapist. My husband said, "Every woman in here is blonde. I guess it's not a good time for a (dumb) blonde joke." Everyone laughed.

I was glad he had his wits and his wit about him, even in the face of a hospital stay, including "hospital food." Although, frankly, their grits were better than mine. Our hospital stay involved grit, grits, wit and wits. I say "our" stay because a patient's hospitalization involves not only the patient and healthcare workers, but the patient's family as well.

Speaking of family, my mom also had a sense of humor regarding her hospitalization for breast cancer, discovered via a mammogram. When hospital staff asked her how she felt, she'd say, "I feel fine; I just take lousy pictures."

Having and sharing a sense of humor, especially in the face of illness, isn't a denial of the situation. It just counter-balances the other inevitable emotions of a hospital stay: stress, fear and pain, to name a few.

Not every situation lends itself to humor, but when it does, I'd suggest trying to embrace your inner wit. To wit: "A priest, a minister, and a rabbi walk into a hospital room..."

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