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DIFFERENT ADVENTURES ON PLANET EARTH...



BY JEFF K

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Tell that to the tomato.

In 28 years, I've done the Heimlich Maneuver two times.

For those of you like me who don't math good, that's an average of one Heimlich every 14 years.

The first time, my previous girlfriend had become so fond of a tomato slice that she'd reserved the entirety of her face-hole for the sole purpose of its consumption.

Spreading its little tomato arms and legs out like when you try to put an unwilling cat in a bathtub, this fruit wasn't going down without a fight.

The struggle resulted in the tomato lodging itself in her throat. She made the universal hand motion for "Help me, you jackass. I'm choking!"

I sprung into action.

Long story short, I don't refer to her as my previous girlfriend because the tomato won.

Jump to one relationship and five years later, I was in the lobby of the restaurant at which I worked when a guy came stumbling out of the dining room, face as red as that belligerent tomato from five years before.

Bent over and trying to breathe, this guy's food was clearly trying to kill him.

I sprung into action.

A couple quick pumps later, he coughs. Breathes. Face returning to a normal shade of not-Kool-aid-Man.

Regaining composure, he tells me all he'd really needed was some water because he'd simply inhaled a pepper flake and in fact, wasn't dying. Also, that I wouldn't recognize a real choking victim if they hit me in the face. That my Heimlich technique was "bad form" and I "did it wrong."

Tell that to the tomato, you jerk.

"Watch this."

The setting is usually the same.

You're around some friends and even more strangers. You're about to do something awesome. You're playing it out in your head; images of people whispering back and forth, talking about how awesome it was, that awesome thing you did. People are clapping, cheering. Women are throwing their undergarments at you.

The words are usually the same.

The precursor to your shattered ego. The prelude to laughter in unison. Laughter at your expense because that awesome thing you were going to do turned out to be one huge, gigantic, poorly-judged assessment of just how little awesome you possess.

"Watch this."

Some time ago, I was walking through the dining room of the restaurant at which I worked at sort of a fast pace. As I was doing this, I'd quickly realized there was a chair in the middle of the room that I was dangerously close to barreling over. Instead of doing the rational thing and, I don't know, changing the direction in which I was walking or moving the chair and continuing my journey unharmed, I thought it'd be a good idea to just do a quick hop over the seat. The chair is short. I am tall. I thought I could make it. And it was going to be so quick and awesome, you guys.

"Watch this."

In front of coworkers and about 20 strangers, my foot clips the seat of the chair while I'm in mid-flight. A half-second later, I was pretzled on the floor with said chair; all eyes on me for the longest, least awesome half-second of my life.

Six Feet in the Right Direction

I am not a smart man.

Nor am I observant of the surroundings which extend further than a three-foot diameter around my body.

I wait tables in a corporate setting, and part of the deal is interacting with people from all walks of life without saying anything stupid, even to the ones who deserve it.

So, whenever anyone asks me how I am, I just say some bullshit like, "Livin' the dream!" or, "Another day in paradise!"

Makes me throw up in my mouth. So I had to change it up. Something new and fresh so my coworkers wouldn't hate my increasingly fake, sarcastic stock answers.

It was one day at the restaurant that a large party had come in after a funeral. I knew they were there, in the back of my mind.

I knew.

But that didn't stop my brain and mouth from not communicating.

As the party was finishing up and leaving, I was just outside the front beverage station, this large party slowly passing by and on their way out, when one of my coworkers asked me how I was.

"Six feet in the right direction," I said, at first happy with my new response, but then mortified when I realized I was heard by no less than 20 people who had just come from a goddamn funeral.

Everyone got quiet. I knew. Immediately.

I knew.

"Hey, can you take care of my tables for a few minutes? I'll be in the cooler, bashing my head against the wall."

About Author

Jeff K

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Why is the website called bytestories.com?

This is a place for "byte-sized" stories and there is a 1500 character (about 250 words) limit for two main reasons. Firstly, we want you to know that "War and Peace" isn't required to leave your mark. Secondly, it takes about 2 minutes to read each story meaning you can head here whenever you want a quick (and entertaining) read.

If you would like to share a story or create your own eBook, simply head to bytestories.com, Register an account and click on the "Share a Story" button.