



Time Flies Like A Banana

Words of Humor and Wisdom

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A somewhat self-indulgent experiment.
(masks from Ken's collection)



**Wisdom
and
Its Opposite**



Time



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**Time flies like an arrow, and
fruit flies like a banana.**

– Groucho Marx

**Time spent laughing is time spent
with the gods.**

– Japanese proverb



Nasrudin, the Wise-Fool



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Nasrudin was quite absentminded.

**One night before going to bed,
he lit a match to see if he'd blown the
candle out.**

**Another time, Nasrudin left a note
on the door of his shop saying
that he would return in an hour.**

**When he returned, he saw the note
and sat down to wait.**



The Sun and the Moon



Nasrudin entered the teahouse and declaimed: "The moon is more useful than the sun."

One of the patrons asked, "Why, Nasrudin?"

"We need the light more during the night than during the day."

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Which way?



If you come to a fork in the road,
take it.

If you don't know where you're
going, you'll end up somewhere
else.

– Yogi Berra

Two wrongs don't make a right,
but three lefts do. – anon.

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Suslick's 1st Law of Maps



All countries are the same size—
one map page.

– KSS

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Memories



Right now I'm having amnesia and
deja vu at the same time.
I think I've forgotten this before.

– Steven Wright

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Mime Meme



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**I played a blank tape on full volume.
The mime who lived next door
complained.**

– Steven Wright



Psychic



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**I almost had a psychic girlfriend,
but she left me before we met.**

– Steven Wright



Fear Factor Even



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What happens if you get scared
half to death,
twice?

– Steven Wright



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**Thinking
and
Knowing

or not**



Ignorance



I was gratified to be able to answer promptly. I said I didn't know.

– Mark Twain

The less you know, the more you think you know, because you don't know you don't know.

– Ray Stevens

It isn't what we don't know that gives us trouble, it's what we know that ain't so. – Will Rogers

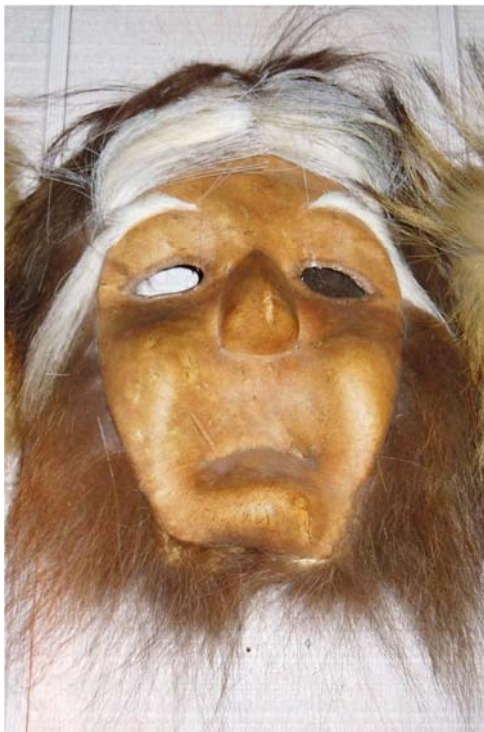
If you think an education is expensive, try ignorance.

– Andy McIntyre

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The Inside Story



Outside of a dog,
a book is man's best friend.
Inside of a dog, it's too dark to read.

– Groucho Marx

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Curiosity



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**The cure for boredom is curiosity.
There is no cure for curiosity.**

– Dorothy Parker



The Brain



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**I used to think that the brain was
the most wonderful organ in my
body.
Then I remembered who was telling
me this.**

– Emo Philips



Suslick's Observation on Ego



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Ego is a house cat.

It's nice to stroke, but watch out for the claws;

it needs feeding often, and heaven help you if it gets out the front door.

– KSS



Zat



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The late Gil Haight, Professor Emeritus of the University of Illinois, used to tell a story about Albert Einstein:

Gil was a graduate student at Princeton when Einstein was there, and they shared an interest in classical music. Einstein, in fact, was a gifted amateur violinist.

At a special concert presented by Yehudi Menuhin, Gil was seated just in front of Einstein. As the first piece began, Einstein was nodding his head with his eyes half shut and very softly humming to the music. Midway through the first piece, Einstein quietly said, "Ooooh, I can do zat!"

A bit later, he crooned excitedly, "Yes, yes, I can do zat, too!"

Finally, after a particularly difficult passage, Einstein shook his head slowly, sighed, and said softly and sadly, "Och, I could never do zat!"

– KSS



Simplicity



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Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler.

– A. Einstein



Diott's Law of Certainties



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**Diott's Law of Certainties:
The more actual data there is,
the less certain the explanation.**

**Suslick's Religious Corollary:
When there is no data,
there is complete certainty.**



Pure and Simple Truth



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**The pure and simple truth
is rarely pure and never simple.**

– Oscar Wilde



Finding Truth



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**Man will occasionally stumble
over the truth,
but most of the time,
he will pick himself up
and continue on.**

– Winston Churchill



Suslick's Law of Information Transport



**Knowledge comes by the truckload,
but wisdom arrives
one mouthful at a time.**

– KSS

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Reality



**Reality is that which,
when you stop believing in it,
doesn't go away.**

– Philip K. Dick

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Beauty



Though we travel the world over
to find the beautiful,
we must carry it with us or
we find it not.

– Ralph Waldo Emerson

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**Learning
and
Science**

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Suslick's Scheme of Priorities



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If it isn't worth doing,
it isn't worth doing right.

– KSS



Look at This



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You can observe a lot by watching.

– Yogi Berra



Baruch's Observation



**If all you have is a hammer,
everything looks like a nail.**

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Suslick's Law of Threes



**It always takes three times to do
anything right.**

**The first time you either overshoot
or undershoot;
the second time you either
over-compensate or
under-compensate.**

**It's not until the third time that you
have a chance to get it right.**

– KSS

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Brauman's Laws



Brauman's 1st Law: Just because you don't understand someone's explanation, that doesn't mean that he's right.

Brauman's 2nd Law: One's accuracy of measurement often exceeds one's precision of explanation.
(Suslick's rephrasing: If it's smaller than a kcal, screw it.)

Brauman's 3rd Law: If you need to use complex statistics to answer a simple question, you've done the wrong experiment. (Suslick's commentary: but sometimes, that's the only experiment possible.)

– John I. Brauman

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The Laws of Arthur C. Clarke



Clarke's 1st Law: When a distinguished but elderly scientist states that something is possible, he is almost certainly right. When he states that something is impossible, he is very probably wrong.

Clarke's Second Law: The only way of discovering the limits of the possible is to venture a little way past them into the impossible.

Clarke's Third Law: Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.

– Arthur C. Clarke, "Profiles of The Future"

Gehm's Corollary to Clarke's Third Law: Any technology distinguishable from magic is insufficiently advanced.

– Barry Gehm. *Analog*, 1991

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New Truths



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A new scientific truth does not triumph by convincing its opponents and making them see the light, but rather because its opponents eventually die, and a new generation grows up that is familiar with it.

Science advances one funeral at a time.

– Max Planck

You can't teach an old dogma new tricks. – Dorothy Parker



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Society



Punctuality



The problem with punctuality is that there is never anyone there to appreciate it.

– KSS

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The Dispute



(In memory of Alvin Suslick, M.D.)

To settle a violent dispute, two men went to the Rabbi. The wizened old scholar listened with care to the first man's tale and said, "You're right."

But the second man leaped up, crying "Rabbi, it wasn't like that at all. It was this way...." After this version, the Rabbi turned to the second man and said, "You're right."

A spectator, bewildered by all these goings-on, called out, "Rabbi, first you say one is right and then the other. But they both can't be right!"

And the Rabbi winked at the bystander and whispered, "*You're right, too!*"

– KSS

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Problems



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**For every complex problem,
there is a solution that is
simple, neat, and wrong.**

– H. L. Mencken (1880-1956)



Self-Consciousness



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**Man is the only animal that blushes.
Or needs to.**

– Mark Twain



Friendship



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Friends help you move.
Real friends help you move
bodies.

– anon.



Others



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If it's true that
we are here to help others,
then what *exactly* are
the others here for?

– George Carlin

We all know that there are people
who do not love their fellow man,
and I hate people like that!

– Tom Lehrer



Never Ask Why



My dad was a great raconteur. He would tell this story about his training as a psychiatrist:

An elder, very German psychiatrist would play act as a patient and my father would interview him. The "patient" would describe some behavior or anxiety, and my father was supposed to probe gently, saying such things as "And this bothers you?" or "Interesting..." or "And does this suggest anything to you?"

After one particularly peculiar description by the "patient", my father asked, "And why do you do this?"

At this point, the elder psychiatrist stood up, looked down over his thick, round glasses, and screamed, "Vhy? Vhy? Becuss I'm crazy, zat's vhy!"

Never ask a crazy person why.

– KSS

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Business

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Enough



You can never get enough of what you don't really need.

– Harold Ramis

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The Bed-Bug Letter



When I went off to Stanford for my Ph.D., my father (a great raconteur and a UI alum) told me about an apocryphal exchange between a traveling salesman and Leland Stanford, then president of the Central Pacific Railroad (and later, of course, the donor behind the founding of Stanford University).

The salesman had been traveling on an overnight train in a Pullman car and discovered bedbugs in his pull-down bed. Upon his return, he wrote an incensed letter to directly to Stanford.

Much to the salesman's surprise, he received by return post a handwritten letter on Stanford's own stationery. The letter read, "My dear sir: I am mortified to read of your troubles on our train. Such a thing has never before occurred on the Central Pacific, and I have taken immediate action to rectify the situation. We have fumigated the entire train, disciplined the staff and fired the head porter. Please take my personal assurance that this will never happen again. (signed) Leland Stanford."

Well, the salesman was perfectly pleased with the letter and completely satisfied, until he noticed in the envelope a slip of paper with a scribbled message that read "Send this bastard the bedbug letter."

– KSS

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Suslick's Rule of Couture



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Ties are what administrators use to cut off the flow of blood to their brains.

– KSS

We should distrust any enterprise that requires new clothes.

– Henry David Thoreau



Suslick's Management Caveat



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1. There is no such thing as a pet shark.

2. If you bring in a shark to get rid of a shark, all you get is a bigger, meaner shark.

– KSS



Current Events



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A fool and his money are soon elected.

– Will Rogers

**In this world of sin and sorrow
there is always something
to be thankful for.**

**As for me, I rejoice that I am not
a Republican.**

– H. L. Mencken



Ginsburg



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Ginsburg walks into a bar, turns to the bartender and shouts, “Bartender, bring me a beer, bring everyone in the house a beer. When Ginsburg drinks, everybody drinks!”

The bartender is very happy and serves everyone a drink. A few minutes later, Ginsburg tells the bartender, “Bring me a sandwich, bring everyone in the house a sandwich. When Ginsburg eats, everybody eats!”

The bartender is delighted and has the kitchen make up a bunch of sandwiches. This goes on for a few more rounds of beer, everyone is happy, and Ginsburg is everyone’s best friend.

Finally Ginsburg asks for the bill. The bartender brings him the huge bill, and Ginsburg pulls out his wallet, looks at the bill for a minute, and puts down a twenty dollar bill. The bartender is startled and sputters, “But, but sir, this is only enough for one person!”

Ginsburg says, “That’s right. When Ginsburg pays, everybody pays.”



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Life, the Future, and its Alternative



Youth and Old Age



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Youth would be an ideal state if it came a little later in life.

– Herbert Henry Asquith

Soon we'll be out amid
the cold world's strife.
Soon we'll be sliding down
the razor blade of life.
So let's give a toast,
as each of us recalls,
to ivy-covered professors
in ivy-covered halls.

– Tom Lehrer



Schopenhauer's Law of Entropy



If you put a spoonful of wine
in a barrel full of sewage,
you get a barrel of sewage.

If you put a spoonful of sewage
in a barrel full of wine,
you get a barrel of sewage.

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Here and Now



Hard work pays off in the future.
Laziness pays off now.

– anon.

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Old



**Everybody wants to get old,
but nobody wants to be old.**

– Goethe

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Bah Humbug



**Why should I care about posterity?
What's posterity ever done for me?**

– Groucho Marx

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Time



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Time is mother nature's way of keeping everything from happening all at once.

– John Archibald Wheeler

Out of Time

My old clock used to tell the time and subdivide diurnity; but now its lost both hands & chime and only tells eternity.

– Piet Hein



The Universe



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Nothing is Indispensable

(Groom to warn the universe against megalomania)

The universe may be as great as they say. But it wouldn't be missed if it didn't exist.

– Piet Hein



The Future



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The future ain't what it used to be.

– Yogi Berra

And it never was.

– KSS



When I Die



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**When I die, I want to die
like my grandfather,
who died peacefully in his sleep.**

**Not screaming like
all the passengers in his car.**

– anon.



Why Are We Here?



Walking one evening along a deserted road, Nasrudin saw in the distance a troop of horsemen coming towards him. His imagination started to work; he saw himself captured, beaten, and sold as a slave. Nasrudin panicked and dove into a ditch at the side of the road where he lay quivering in fear with his hands covering his head.

Puzzled at his strange behavior, the men, friends, after all, stopped and asked, "Nasrudin, what are you doing down there? Can we help?"

"Just because you can ask a question, does not mean that there is a simple answer," said Nasrudin, who now realized what had happened. "It all depends on your point of view. If you must know, however: *I am here because of you, and you are here because of me.*"