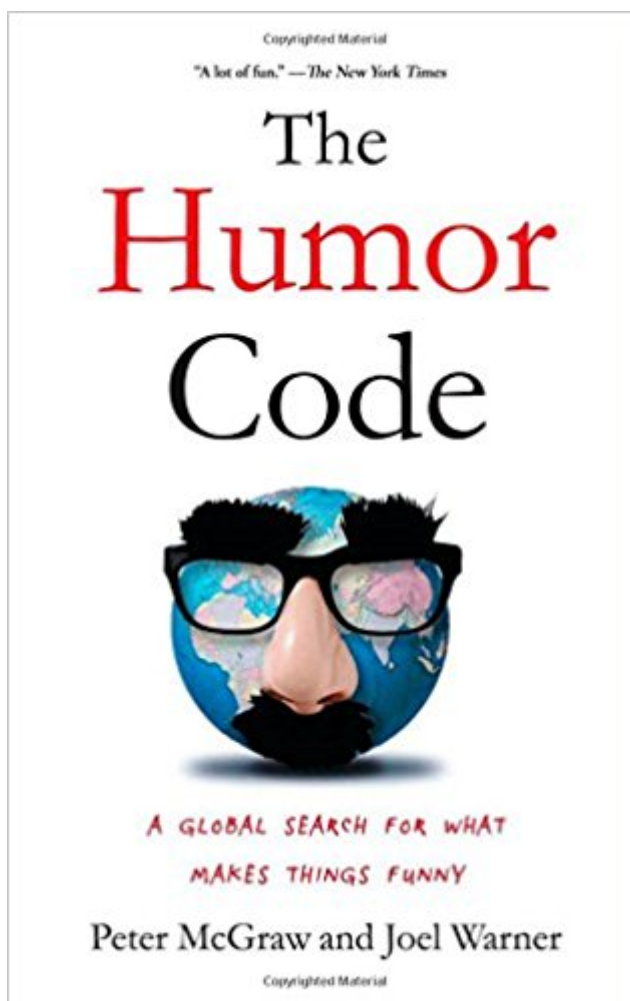


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The Humor Code: A Global Search For What Makes Things Funny



Synopsis

Part road-trip comedy and part social science experiment, a scientist and a journalist “shed fascinating light on what makes us laugh and why” (New York Post). Two guys. Nineteen experiments. Five continents. 91,000 miles. The Humor Code follows the madcap adventures and oddball experiments of Professor Peter McGraw and writer Joel Warner as they discover the secret behind what makes things funny. In their search, they interview countless comics, from Doug Stanhope to Louis CK and travel across the globe from Norway to New York, from Palestine to the . It’s an epic quest, both brainy and harebrained, that culminates at the world’s largest comedy festival where the pair put their hard-earned knowledge to the test. For the first time, they have established a comprehensive theory that answers the question “what makes things funny?” Based on original research from the Humor Research Lab (HuRL) at the University of Colorado, Boulder, and the pair’s experiences across the globe, The Humor Code explains the secret behind winning the > cartoon caption contest, why some dead baby jokes are funnier than others, and whether laughter really is the best medicine. Hilarious, surprising, and sometimes even touching, The Humor Code “lays out a convincing theory about how humor works, and why it’s an essential survival mechanism” (Mother Jones).

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Starred Review A few years ago, there was an episode of Family Guy in which Peter Griffin and his cohorts set off on a quest to find the origin of the world’s dirty jokes. Here, McGraw, founder of the Humor Research Lab at the University of Colorado, teams up with journalist Warner

to find, not just the source of some jokes, but the answer to the Big Question, What makes something funny? It's a lively book, taking the researchers around the world, asking experts (other humor researchers, comedians, writers), conducting hands-on experiments (taking improv classes, performing stand-up), trying to nail down why things make us laugh. You'd think this would be a no-brainer—we laugh because something is funny—but it's actually a very complicated and important subject. Humor research is a surprisingly highly charged field (when one researcher calls another's theory “flawed and bullshit,” you know there's some passion there), and the notions about what makes something funny are surprisingly varied, from McGraw's own “benign violation” theory, which posits that humor occurs when something seems simultaneously threatening and safe, to Arthur Koestler's idea that comedy results from the bisection of two mutually exclusive frames of reference. By asking us to explore the reasons why we laugh, the authors force us to look inside ourselves. It's not often you can say a book about comedy can teach us some serious lessons. This one does—and entertains us in the process.

--David Pitt --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

"It's not often you can say a book about comedy can teach us some serious lessons. This one does-and entertains us in the process." ---Booklist Starred Review --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

I bought this book because I really like humor and want to be funny. The book starts well but later on becomes a travelogue. Many passages could have been cut down and focused more on the message of what is humor in different settings. If you want to skip the travelogue just read chapter 9, p. 199. I really applaud the authors' quest to learn more about humor but the book could have been written more concisely. Also, I would have appreciated if there was more research based evidence.

The book hits all my favorite non-fiction themes--humor, travel, science, psychology, and experiential narrative. If you enjoy the literary adventures of AJ Jacobs or Bill Bryson, you'll enjoy this book.

Boring. Told us nothing about creating laughter. More of a travelogue than something providing insight into comedy.

Nice book to illustrate the science behind humor. I thoroughly enjoyed the journey of the authors. There is a sense of authenticity to the work. This theory is cool. Any one trying to create humor for their speeches should take a look at this theory. Good stuff.

I skimmed through the book before gifting it to my daughter's teacher. Very interesting and well-written; this book takes a unique yet scientific approach to analyzing what is considered funny around the world. I plan to buy it again to keep for myself.

It's a interesting read, I bought it because of the art of charm

Seldom am I disappointed with a book as I was with this one.

I lost interest after the first few chapters, but I was expecting this to be more analytical than a story

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