

Too much to write in two hours

When I was studying to be a writer, I remember a professor saying, "If the funny parts don't make you laugh, and the sad parts don't make you cry, and the provocative parts don't make you think, then you have work to do."

Since then, I have learned that the best of the aforementioned experiences come from real life. The antics of people from day-to-day are often much funnier than anything a writer could create. And nothing is sadder than events that we all have to live through as we complete our life cycle.

Without a doubt, the funniest of the funny comes from kids doing their best to survive the trials and tribulations of childhood. Sometimes the funny things children do and say are not only priceless; they are precious.

Although no sane adult would ever do anything to hurt a child's feelings, once in a while they are so funny that we can't help but bust out laughing and hope for the best.

Children learning to communicate create an endless supply of material for columnists, comedians, and anyone who makes a living recounting the never-ending human comedy.

When they have not yet learned to read and write and their vocabulary is hopefully improving on a day-to-day basis, children's efforts to master communicative skills can sometimes be downright hilarious.

For instance, I remember my son was visibly upset because he thought he was growing up to be a "bean." He didn't understand the word "being," so when someone told him he was a "wonderful human being," he equated "being" to the closest word that sounded similar, which was "bean."

As far as he was concerned, he was a "wonderful human bean," and that did not set well with him at all. I believe he was not quite four when he came up with that gem.

The little ones have yet to learn that "write," "right," and "rite" have completely different meanings. When I stop to think about it, I know adults who do not have a complete understanding of that example. Maybe something simpler would be better.

Children have no idea that "two," "too," and "to" are three completely different words. In a child's mind, it makes perfect sense that they are all the same word because they sound the same. Examples like that make me have a deeper compassion for anyone trying to learn English as a second language. The complexities are mind-boggling.

I remember a childhood friend wanting to know why every story his mother ever read to him started out with "Once a pony time." He didn't understand, "Once upon a time," and he wanted to know what horses had to do with the story.

Not too long ago I heard a conversation between two school-age boys who were trying to sort out the meaning of a "tropical depression." They knew it had something to do with



You can't beat a system you can't understand

By Sam Bari

the weather.

"I know that a tropical depression brings rain," said one.

"Yeah, and that's depressing," said the other. "Makes sense. Depressing is sad. I'm always sad when it rains. My mom says that when it rains, the angels are crying."

"Do you believe that?" asked the other.

"What, that there are angels, or that they cry?"

"Well . . . both," he replied.

"I guess I believe in angels. But I don't think they cry."

How can anyone compete with logic like that? It makes more sense than paying for car insurance that will be cancelled

the first time you make a claim.

Growing up is an endless journey of lessons that are confusing, and sometimes painful. When I was 12 or 13 years old, a farmer overheard a conversation I was having with my friend Brian while we were on summer vacation. We were complaining about school and discussing what we would do if we could quit.

"You boys don't look too busy," the farmer said. "You want to give me a hand and make a few bucks?" We eagerly said "yes."

We worked for half a day for that farmer. We tossed hay bales onto a wagon, cleaned out a shed, slopped pigs, and shoveled manure. By the time we were finished, we hardly had the strength to get on our bicycles.

"That's every day life if you quit school," the farmer said smiling.

We then realized — you can't beat a system you can't understand.

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