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MEDIA RELEASE

Think You Know Funny?

According to Gene Perret, funny is funny, and what people are laughing at today is much like what people were laughing at yesterday, “We think because a gag is old, it’s old-fashioned. That’s not necessarily so.”

In case you doubt Perret’s qualifications to make such a judgement, consider the following: Perret was Bob Hope’s head joke writer for more than a decade, he has won three Emmys, he has written and produced numerous situation comedies including *Three’s Company* and *Welcome Back Kotter*, and he authored *the* book comedy writers have used for more than 25 years to break into the industry. Proof in point: Joe Medeiros, head writer of *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*, says, “My career all started because of [Perret’s] book.”

Think you can tell old jokes from new? The following is a list of gags about marriage. It’s adapted from *The New Comedy Writing Step by Step*, Perret’s newly updated edition of his classic tome. See if you can tell which are older and which are current.

- a) I chased a girl for two years only to discover that her tastes were exactly like mine. We were both crazy about girls.
- b) Marriage is an adventure—like going to war.
- c) Getting married is like sitting in a tub of hot water. After you’ve been in it for a while, it’s not so hot.
- d) Marriage is forever—some days longer.
- e) Always get married in the morning. That way if it doesn’t work out you haven’t wasted the whole day.
- f) I love being married. It’s so great to find that one special person you want to annoy for the rest of your life.

Have you read them carefully? Have you made any decisions? Are some definitely old? Some definitely new? It’s hard to tell the new from the old, isn’t it? Here’s the skinny:

- a) This gag is attributed to Groucho Marx—definitely *old school*.
- b) This one’s from G. K. Chesterton—even more *old school*.
- c) This is a Minnie Pearl line, so it’s not exactly current.
- d) This one is only four years old. Perret wrote it as the title for a joke book about marriage.
- e) This one is from Mickey Rooney, who’s not exactly knocking ’em dead in today’s comedy clubs.
- f) This one is from Rita Rudner—definitely today’s comedy.

If you want to write comedy, or just add humor to anything you write, you could do worse than to pick up a copy of Perret’s *The New Comedy Writing Step by Step: Revised and Updated with Words of Instruction, Encouragement, and Inspiration from Legends of the Comedy Profession*. It’s available at brick and mortar bookstores, online bookstores, and from the publisher at QuillDriverBooks.com or 1-800-497-4909.

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