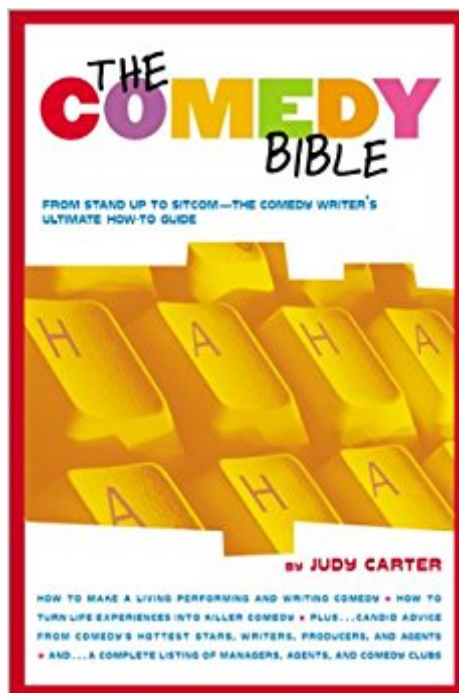




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# The Comedy Bible: From Stand-up To Sitcom--The Comedy Writer's Ultimate "How To" Guide



## Synopsis

Judy Carter, guru to aspiring comedy writers and stand-up comics, tells all about the biz of being funny and writing funny in this bright, entertaining, and totally practical guide on how to draw humor from your life and turn it into a career. Do you think you're funny? Do you want to turn your sense of humor into a career? If the answer is yes, then Judy Carter's *The Comedy Bible* is for you. The guru to aspiring stand-up comics provides the complete scoop on being funny and writing funny for money. If you've got a sense of humor, you can learn to make a career out of comedy, says Judy Carter. Whether it's creating a killer stand-up act, writing a spec sitcom, or providing jokes for radio or one-liners for greeting cards, Carter provides step-by-step instructions in *The Comedy Bible*. She helps readers first determine which genre of comedy writing or performing suits them best and then directs them in developing, refining, and selling their work. Using the hands-on workbook format that was so effective in her bestselling first book, *Stand-Up Comedy: The Book*, Carter offers a series of day-by-day exercises that draw on her many years as a successful stand-up comic and the head of a nationally known comedy school. Also included are practical tips and advice from today's top comedy professionals—from Bernie Brillstein to Christopher Titus to Richard Lewis. She presents the pros and cons of the various comedy fields—stand-up, script, speech and joke writing, one-person shows, humor essays—and shows how to tailor your material for each. She teaches how to find your "authentic" voice—the true source of comedy. And, perhaps most important, Carter explains how to take a finished product to the next level—making money—by pitching it to a buyer and negotiating a contract. Written in Carter's unique, take-no-prisoners voice, *The Comedy Bible* is practical, inspirational, and funny.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

is an author, speaking/comedy coach, and speaker. Her message of using comedy techniques to decrease cubicle stress makes Carter an in-demand speaker for Fortune 500 companies where her keynotes entertain and inspire.

From Part One: Warm-up -- Is There Any Hope for You? What Do You Want to Be When You Grow Up? "When adults ask kids, 'What do you want to be when you grow up?' they're just looking for clues themselves." -- Paula Poundstone There are a lot of ways to make a living from comedy. You can perform it, write it, draw it, or manage it. From the list below, check which ones you're interested in or think you know you're good at.

Performing Comedy

Stand-up comic Depending on the quality of your act, you can work at comedy clubs, hotels, concert venues, colleges, or corporate meetings, on cruise ships, at open mikes, or at your aunt Thelma's eightieth birthday party.

Improviser Sketch TV shows such as Saturday Night Live and Mad TV scout improvisers from improv troupes such as Second City (in Chicago and Toronto) and the Groundlings (in Los Angeles), as well as improv festivals (Austin, Texas, Montreal, Canada). Improvisers are in demand for acting and TV commercials as well as for voice-over work, feature animation, and game shows.

Commercial actor Funny people who can add sizzle to ad copy are cast in high-paying TV commercials.

Voice-over performer Comedy timing and technique are required in this field, which needs comics to add funny character voices to cartoons, TV commercials, and feature animation.

Warm-up for TV shows Most TV shows hire a comic to warm up the live studio audience before and during the taping of TV shows and infomercials.

Radio comedy Funny song parodies turned unknown "Weird Al" Yankovic into a famous and rich man. Radio stations buy prerecorded song parodies, impersonations, and other comedy bits produced by small production houses that specialize in creating this type of material.

Radio talk show host As more talk shows fill the AM and FM airwaves, radio producers are turning to comics to keep their listeners laughing and listening.

Cruise ship entertainer Imagine doing your act for your grandmother -- that's the kind of act you need to work cruise ships. If you've got four different twenty-minute clean sets and don't mind living with your audience for a few weeks, then this could be for you.

Corporate humorist If you can make people laugh with clean material, then entertaining at corporate events might be just your thing.

**Writing Comedy** Customized stand-up material Some stand-up comics who perform supplement their income by writing for other comics. And then there are those funny people who have never done stand-up themselves but who write it for others, such as funnyman Bruce Vilanch, who writes for Bette Midler and the Academy Awards show. **TV sitcoms** Comics are hired to staff sitcoms or develop sitcoms for stand-up comics who have development deals. Many of the most successful sitcoms are based on stand-up comedy acts. Stand-up comics Larry David and Jerry Seinfeld became billionaires when they turned their stand-up acts into one of the most successful sitcoms ever -- Seinfeld. **Punch-up** TV and film producers hire comics for the important job of punching up, or adding laughs to, a script. **Screenwriting and directing** Comedy directors often start their careers with live performances. Betty Thomas started in an improv troupe and went on to direct features such as *The Brady Bunch Movie*. Tom Shadyac, director of *Patch Adams*, *Liar, Liar*, and *The Nutty Professor*, actually started out in my stand-up workshop. Two years later, he directed his first feature, *Ace Ventura*. **Literary writing** "Funny" can also translate into books, magazine articles, and newspaper columns. George Carlin turned his unused stand-up material into the book *Brain Droppings*. Comedy director/screenwriter Nora Ephron (*You've Got Mail*, *Sleepless in Seattle*) wrote short funny magazine pieces that later became a popular book, *Mixed Nuts*. Dave Barry expresses his "funny" in a nationally syndicated column and in books. **Development and producing** Funny ideas often translate into projects for commercial TV and film. Paul Reubens's character Pee-wee Herman started out as a character in an improv show at the Groundlings. It turned into an HBO special, two feature films, and an award-winning children's TV series. **Animation writing** All major studios actively look for funny people to write and punch up their TV and feature animation projects. Irene Mecchi began as a comedy writer, writing comedy material for Lily Tomlin. Now she works for Disney animation and was the screenwriter of *The Lion King*. **Internet work** Because a good laugh can stop an Internet surfer at a Web site, companies such as Excite, Yahoo!, and AOL hire comics to write catchy copy. **Speechwriting** Many CEOs and politicians turn to comedy writers to provide sound bites so that they get noticed, win over their audiences, and don't get stuck with their foot in their mouth. "I know what they say about me -- that I'm so stiff that racks buy their suits off me." -- Al Gore, 1998, written by Mark Katz **Marketing Comedy** **Merchandising** Funny ideas can turn into funny products, such as Pet Rocks, screen savers, or greeting cards. Skyler Thomas, who started writing jokes in my class, put his jokes on T-shirts. They became major sellers and he now runs a multimillion-dollar T-shirt business called Don't Panic, with stores nationwide. **Ad copy** Who do you think writes those funny bits in ads that get your attention? Comedy writers. "Most relationships don't last as long as the L.A. Marathon." -- L.A. billboard **Managing and booking** Many agents and

managers started by putting shows together for themselves and ended up booking others. Right now, of course, you don't need to make a commitment to any specific comedy field. Actually, no matter which field of comedy you are interested in at the start of this book, be open to the possibility of shifting winds. You might be totally committed to performing stand-up until someone offers you a \$50,000-a-year job writing funny ads for toilet cleaners. It could happen. You might start off thinking you want to be a stand-up comic and end up discovering that you have a lot of ideas that can work as sitcoms. Billy Riback started out doing stand-up at the Improv at \$25 a night, and now he produces comedy TV shows making millions. Conan O'Brien and Garry Shandling were both sitcom writers before they became comedy stars. In 1978 David Letterman was a joke writer for Jimmie "Dy-No-Mite" Walker. The Zucker brothers and Jim Abrahams, who created and directed the movies *Airplane!*, *Naked Gun*, and *Ghost*, began their careers in a comedy improv troupe in Madison, Wisconsin, called Kentucky Fried Theater. And then there's Gary Coleman, who started off as a comedy actor starring in his own sitcom and ended up as a security guard. Go figure! The various fields of comedy can morph into one another. Sometimes a comic's act becomes the basis for a sitcom (*Roseanne*), or a screenplay becomes a sitcom (*M\*A\*S\*H*, *Suddenly Susan*). Even jokes have become merchandise: Rosie O'Donnell's slingshot toy has sold over 2 million units. I became a stand-up comic thanks to United Airlines. I started off as a funny magician working at the Magic Castle in Hollywood -- I levitated celery, sawed a man in half, and performed a death-defying escape from my grandmother's girdle. United Airlines changed the course of my career when I arrived in Cincinnati and my act arrived in Newark. That night I walked onstage without my tricks, without an act. I was so scared that I just started babbling about what happened, and to my surprise, I got laughs. I then ranted about all the humiliations of my life and the laughs got bigger, and before I knew it, my twenty-minute set ended. It was then that I learned the biggest lesson about comedy: truth is funny and shows up even when your luggage doesn't. I became a stand-up comic, because why schlepp around a bunch of props when people will pay you just for your ideas? Recently I've added to my work schedule by doing funny motivational speaking at Fortune 500 companies. Who knew? The bottom line is, funny people are not limited to one field of comedy, and many of them overlap. For right now, you don't need to know what you want to be when you grow up -- all you need is your sense of humor. But first, let's make sure you have one.

**The Right Stuff** -- Do You Have What It Takes? Some people, no matter how hard they try, just aren't funny. It takes a certain disposition to do comedy. So, how do you know if you have the right stuff?

**The Yuk Factor** Circle the answers that describe you best. yes no Do you think that you're funnier than most of the schmucks you see on TV? yes no Every time you open your mouth, does an inner voice say,

"You should be writing this down" -- even during sex? yes no Are you jealous of everyone who makes a living from comedy? yes no Could you think of funny jokes even at a funeral? yes no Do you ever think that you are the only sane one in your crazy family? yes no When you get angry, do you get funny? yes no Would you tell people your most embarrassing moments and inadequacies if you could get a laugh? yes no Do you notice the quirks of life that other people miss? yes no Do you study the minute details of life, such as lint? yes no Do you sometimes imagine a future full of the im... --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This is an outstanding book on the basics of humor. It is a delightful read and chocked full of great information. This book would be excellent for someone wanting to learn more about comedy, comedians who are just getting started, or experienced comedians. It has something for anyone looking for information about comedy. I love it! Judy Carter is a talented comedian who has a knack for writing and teaching what she knows.

The best book I've read that gives clear guidelines on how to put together a stand-up set. I honestly never thought I would be able to do it, but I followed all the instructions and came up with decent stuff, performed it and had loads of fun. Highly recommended!

Great book. Helped me to be more structured and analytical in my comedy writing in a way that helped me be more creative.

If you are toying with the idea of learning standup as a hobby or possibly a career, this is a great book to give you things to learn and ways to prepare for testing yourself and your material to see if anyone laughs. You learn from this book both a theory of what comedy is and how to get started. Comedy is a very creative process and it can be fun and rewarding. For most comedians the rewards are not becoming the next Seinfeld but spending some time thinking about what bugs you or is important to you and developing a performance that kills. Some of the examples in the book may be dated, but so am I.

Good graduation gift for fun-loving high school grad who is still undecided on career.

Fairly helpful and insightful. Encouraging.

I wholly regret buying this book. First, it's a self-help book. I started getting doubts on how Judy Carter's grasp of comedy after reading through the first chapter and suffering through some of the hackiest jokes I've read. I highly recommend watching her stand up, just to inform you of the type of material you'll be taught. The author includes a section on hack, and clearly has no idea what it means (Advice to the author: If you're writing a joke to a pre-conceived formula, it's probably hack). One item mentioned here is to not tell stories, as you shouldn't talk about things unique to yourself. This is the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard and discounts so many amazing comics- Louis C.K., Marc Maron, Patton Oswalt, Mike Birbiglia, John Mulaney, etc. (The trick is making stories about things like having rare sleeping disorders relatable to the common man in a roundabout way). The problem is that this book offers an oversimplified view of comedy. Alternative comedy is completely disregarded. This book is for you if you want to write very basic humor that appeals to people in a lowest common denominator way. I gave the book two stars because it does contain some mildly valuable industry advice if you want to go that route, such as issues with agents and writing sitcoms, but one has to wonder how successful this can make you, considering her career in comedy.

This was the very first book I bought when I started stand up comedy and I still refer to it now. Today, I am also a published author and have written my own book regarding the business side of things --

[http://www..com/How-Quit-Your-Full-Time-Comedian-ebook/dp/B00L5LU6YS/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1404241278&sr=1-1&keywords=how+to+quit+your+day+job+and+be+a+full-time+comedian](http://www..com/How-Quit-Your-Full-Time-Comedian-ebook/dp/B00L5LU6YS/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1404241278&sr=1-1&keywords=how+to+quit+your+day+job+and+be+a+full-time+comedian)

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