

How Far Should You Take a Joke?

Submitted by Jennifer Janostin

How far should you take a joke? I've always thought that the sky's the limit. Maybe I was wrong!

Everyone knows about the discussions and small jokes that go on in an OR. We have a strange sense of humour. I guess we probably need one when you look at some of the things that we deal with on a day to day basis.

For instance, several years ago I happened to be working on the morning of April fools day . It was a Saturday morning and although no planning had been involved a joke ended up taking on a life of its own. We had been working on a small baby and of course the heat was set very warm. I started thinking that I hadn't played a good joke on anyone in a long time. I got the idea to phone the Sunday charge nurse and play a small joke on her.

At first it was going to be a quick joke but I received such a great response from her that it continued on throughout the day. I told her that some babies were being born and needed surgery tomorrow. This happens all the time so that was not very exciting; however these babies were going to involve a very complex case. We had to separate Siamese twins.

Well as we all know this is not a simple procedure. It takes a huge team. These Siamese twins were joined at the hip and shared a kidney. When I gave her the news of the case I also told her that we had started gathering a team for her. I chose our casual nurses who didn't work often and the brand new nurses with no experience. It still would have been a good team of nurses but in a case like this your most experienced nurses would be an asset. She was not happy with the team because of their inexperience however I told her that this was the best that I could do!

After discussing the case with the surgeons and anaesthetist that I was working with we started making a plan. Everyone wanted a piece of the action. My anaesthetist did not want any help. No second anaesthetist, no Respiratory Technician no other hands! He is a miracle worker! My surgical team started making demands of what type of instruments they wanted. They requested some ancient stuff! They discussed how long the case was to take and what should happen. So I made calls throughout the day keeping her updated on the plans we had started.

Now this nurse likes to be prepared. No surprises. In the afternoon she took it upon herself to call our good humoured general surgeon and discuss the case more thoroughly. He answered all of her questions without giving us away.

Finally in the end the joke had gone on past the 1200 deadline of April fools into the evening. While we were all working away on a case. The whole team got together and we gave her a call to tell her the good news. We all shouted APRIL FOOLS into the phone. She was very surprised and relieved. She swore that she would get me back some day. I'm still waiting.

Thank goodness she has a great sense of humour and we remain great friends to this day. Did I take this too far.....? Never mind, we all need to have some fun at work! Talk about great team work!