Wok & Roll

Peter Kwong

**Need a good laugh? These aphorisms will do the trick**

Just when I thought that my brain was running on empty and that I needed some extra fuel to recharge, I thought of my dear old friend Phil Peterson. Actually, old is just a term to describe our relationship.

Even though Phil is in his 80s, there is no way anyone can call him old. For someone who still skis in the winter snow, canoes in the wild Alaska weeks at a time; hikes and camps wherever suits his fancy, who is full of energy and life, you can’t call him old.

I always told him that I want to be like him when I grow up. He was in my writing class and already has a bunch of published books under his belt.

I particularly like the “Northern Moon;” so much to learn about the history of the Northwoods. How folks learned to survive during the prohibition period by making moonshine is a great story, and it all happened here.

“Hey, Phil, got something funny that I can use to fill the slot?” That is a professional chat. Simple words, yet expressing the dire need of screaming “Help, help me. Deadline is coming up and I’ve nothing to fill the space.”

As usual, he cracked a smile and said, “Sure, Pete, I’ll get some funny jokes for you.” Then a week later, he sent me a bunch of jokes that are aphorisms.

Good Lord, instead of helping, now he is putting me to work. Just what the heck is aphorisms? After much research, I’ve come up with these explanations:

1. Confronted by a broadminded, witty and tolerant cosmopolitan, for whom the infinite varieties of human custom offered a source of inexhaustible fascination. Thucydides presented himself as a humorless nationalist, an intellectual given to political aphorisms and abstract generalizations. – Peter Green, New York Review of Books, 15 May 2008
2. The Sun twice went into journalism legend. First, its city editor, John Bogart, is generally credited with the aphorism “When a dog bites a man, that’s not news. But when a man bites a dog, that’s news.” And second, the paper delivered America’s most treasured editorial in 1897, when a young girl, whose playmates had told her there was no Santa Claus, wrote and asked the Sun to tell her the truth. – Peter Andrews, American Heritage, October 1994

I think it will be a while before I ask Phil for help again. Goodness, I spent many sleepless nights going through dictionary just to understand all that jazz. I thought my college days were way behind me.

Regardless, here are the jokes he sent, hope you enjoy them:

* I read that 4,153,237 people got married last year. Not to cause any trouble, but shouldn’t that be an even number?
* I find it ironic that the colors of red, white and blue stand for freedom until they are flashing behind you.
* When wearing a bikini, women reveal 90 percent of their body. Men are so polite that they only look at the covered parts.
* Relationships are a bit like algebra. Have you ever looked at your X and wondered Y?
* America is a country which produces citizens who will cross the ocean to fight for democracy but won’t cross the street to vote.
* You know that tingly little feeling you get when you love someone? That’s common sense leaving the body.
* My therapist says I have a preoccupation with vengeance. We’ll see about that.
* I think my neighbor is stalking me, as she’s been googling my name on her computer. I saw it through my telescope last night.
* Money talks — but all mine ever says is goodbye.
* You’re not fat, you’re just easier to see.
* If you think nobody cares whether you’re alive, try missing a couple of payments.
* I always wondered what the job application is like at Hooters. Do they just give you a bra and say, “Here, fill this out?”
* I can’t understand why women are OK that department stores sell an older women’s clothing line named, “Sag Harbor.”
* Denny’s has a slogan, “If it’s your birthday, the meal is on us.” If you’re in Denny’s and it’s your birthday, your life sucks.
* The location of your mailbox shows you how far away from your house you can go in a robe before you start looking like a mental patient.
* Money can’t buy happiness, but it keeps the kids in touch.
* The reason Mayberry was so peaceful and quiet was because nobody was married. Andy, Aunt Bea, Barney, Floyd, Howard, Goober, Gomer, Sam, Ernest T. Bass, Helen, Thelma Lou, Clara, and of course, Opie, were all single. The only married person was Otis, and he stayed drunk.

I feel better now, knowing and understanding what an aphorism is. All of a sudden, I remember other famous quotes:

* If you can’t stand the heat, stay out of the kitchen.
* The buck stops here.
* Less is more.
* Hindsight is 20/20.

Also, it reminds me of one of my favorite comedians, Rodney Dangerfield; he is known for his famous one-liners laced with aphorisms (now that I understand what it means).

* Once I saw a policeman and asked him to find my parents. I said to him, “Do you think we’ll ever find them?” He said, “I don’t know, kid. There are so many places they can hide.”
* I looked up the family tree and found out that I was the sap.
* When I was a kid I got no respect. One time I was kidnapped, and the kidnapper sent my parents a note. It said, “We want $5,000 or you will see your kid again.”

Thanks dear friend Phil. But life shouldn’t be this hard, should it!?