

To Insure Peak Scrivening

Gary Gulman's Joke Writing Tips
[#GulManTip #WriteNow](#)

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1) Record every set. The hard part: Listen to it and transcribe everything you want to say again. It's sometimes depressing but it gets you to do the hardest part which is to sit down and write. Usually you'll think of something to add or change. This works for me.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1080146484048347138>

2) Write out a favorite joke word for word 1 sentence at a time. After completing each sentence, analyze each word. Why does it work? How do the syllables of the words create rhythm? How do the sentences build to the punchline? What's the grammar of comedy?

You can do 2) at any stage but probably best early on in your career. If it sounds daunting to write out entire jokes you should know that the immortal Hunter S. Thompson transcribed The Great Gatsby word for w-o-r-d.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1080507341638955009>

3) Go through an old notebook/file. You will probably find a premise/sentence/phrase that you forgot. (I found a promising joke in a notebook from 2015 yesterday.) Rewrite your promising idea with the skill you've earned since you first wrote it down.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1080856031897489408>

4) Procrastinating? Open your notebook/laptop. Set a timer to your favorite number between 15 and 19 minutes. WRITE UNTIL THE TIMER GOES OFF. NO CHECKING YOUR PHONE! If you feel like it, and you usually will, keep writing. Inertia is powerful. It's hard to start doing something but once you start, inertia will help you keep going. If you are suffering from depression or anxiety, as a lot of us are, don't let these tips add to it. I couldn't follow any of these when I was sick. Now that I am healthy they're easy to follow. If you're sick, save these and work on getting better. Comedy can wait.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1081235672978112512>

5) Mark Twain said, and I'm paraphrasing, "The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and a lightning bug." You've been meaning to do this. Go through your jokes and add some lightning TODAY.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1081607821744095233>

6) Words with the sound "buh" "puh" and "kuh" esp. @ the beginning/end are funnier. No1 knows why. "Buick" is funnier than "Nissan". I learned this early. I assumed everyone knew. They don't. Take some soft punch-words and replace them with a b/p/k sound

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1081959839440482305>

7) Find a comic friend to call/meet and go over jokes/premises/ideas. Play "Is This Funny?" Be honest but gentle & DON'T JUST WAIT UNTIL ITS YOUR TURN! Tell them if you've heard similar bits! 2 people is best more is ok. It's one of the most fun and helpful exercises. Even if your partner just gives you more confidence in a new joke/idea, it is INVALUABLE. A lot of times they will suggest excellent tags (additions to the joke usually but not limited to the punchline) or different angles. It also gives you a safe place to say things out loud. You can generally disregard the first idea that pops into your head because it probably popped into many other heads too. Obvious punchlines are promiscuous. Don't be like the millionaire standup I heard about who used to run all his ideas and suddenly have to leave when it was his turn to listen and help.

Don't feel like you have to be ALL BUSINESS and write the whole time. The best part of comedy is the friendships. Sometimes you just need someone to whine about club to. But, put a time limit on that too.

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<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1082694434456780802>

8) When trying out new jokes you have to be PREPARED. Start with a few proven jokes to make sure the crowd is receptive and so you can get a gauge on the volume of the laughter. Make sure you have a good one loaded to follow the new one in case it dies

"Failing to prepare is preparing to fail." - Saint John Wooden UCLA Basketball Coach Philosopher Humanitarian.

"It's ok to fail! Fail a lot!!! But don't fail because you were being lazy." - Me

99% of the comedians I love are going over notes before they get on stage. That's not a coincidence.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/108268496157093880>

9) Cannibalize your act. Go through your joke inventory and relocate some jokes or pieces of jokes. Add them to jokes that are working to add some density to your act. You just need to take some time to find a connection.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1083040769911504897>

10) Get on stage! Writing a joke down is less than 50% of the process. You need to get on stage a ridiculous amount before you figure out how to write for Standup audiences. I chose 5/week (arbitrarily) as my MINIMUM when I began. I used to go when my friend [@randyvera](#) would take a break from singing. The audience did not listen to a single word I said. I would often tell a joke three times just to practice the rhythm and figure out how to use a microphone.

I'm not sure if it's clear but the subtext of all the tips should be "You can do this. You just have to put in work. I'm rooting for you." I wish I could give you a shortcut but I haven't found any yet and I'm 25 years in.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1083416526642970624>

11) Had a bad set? Go home and write. Had a great set? Go home and write. Bumped by Bob Saget? Go home and write. Few things can offset the feelings of helplessness in show business like engaging in one of the few things over which you have total control. I'm not saying don't hang out with your friends. You need to limit it though. There will be plenty of time to hang out when you're full time.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1083770064028008448>

12) Read Emerson's "Self Reliance" NOW! Already read it? READ IT AGAIN. There is gold within. It will be the least popular tip so far but it's actually the most valuable tip yet.

Free copy: https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Essays:_First_Series/Self-Reliance ... Donate to Wikipedia to thank me!

<https://emersoncentral.com/texts/essays-first-series/self-reliance/> backup link

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1084131713608024066>

13) I have this framed on a wall next to the bed. I interpret it as endorsed permission to fail. Go on stage tonight and do something you're afraid to do, that you're almost certain will fail. (Unless it's an important show.)

"Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try Again. Fail again. Fail better." - Samuel Beckett

EVER TRIED. EVER FAILED.
NO MATTER.
TRY AGAIN. FAIL AGAIN.
FAIL BETTER.

Samuel Beckett

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1084496520655892481>

14) Best insight I ever got came two shows in: Nearly all of your work will come from other comedians. Be a good coworker. Don't run the light. Be original. Be supportive. WRITE A LOT! BE KIND!

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1084857906728759296>

15) You know that joke you're sick of telling? Write/type it w/ space in between each sentence. Add some details, change a word or unpack an idea. To me, unless it's on a Special a joke isn't done. When the audience is mouthing the words with you it's done.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1085226129856884738>

16) Be the comedian you wanted to see. Think about the things that you wished someone made jokes about when you sat in the audience. Make a list of topics and ideas that you'd be EXCITED to see someone discuss. Become that comedian. You've got 30 years.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1085582828396601345>

17) You've been killing every night. You're not sure this is still a challenge. For the next few months ask to go on first. It's a great test of your act. The booker and host will love you for it.

When I started they called it "Taking the bullet"

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1085945169541779456>

18) Read books. Listen to Audio Books. You need a huge inventory of words to write interesting jokes. If you bombard your brain with words it will improve your writing. You'll also learn new ideas and insights to write about.
LOOK UP THE WORDS YOU DON'T KNOW.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1086322268203089925>

19) Use variety in your words. Don't keep using the same word. If you use a word that is crucial to your punchline you should try not to use it before then because it will diminish the impact. This is where listening to your sets is so helpful.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1086670075803901958>

20) Today, try to eliminate those verbal tics. The "and aaaahs" (I Call it Miller-ing) after the flat punchline, the "What else..." when you forget your next bit. The ahms, y'knows and stammers that muddy your rhythm. Again, record and LISTEN to your set!

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1087033155561902080>

21) I could never prove it but I believe that young Jews started walking a bit taller in 1995. I did. That was the year Adam Sandler released The Chanukah Song. Comedy is influential. Comedians are powerful. Just jokes???

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1087400332081201152>

22) You can learn by watching the other comics on your show. The great ones will teach and inspire and the bad ones' shortcomings are instructive. You can assess the crowd and note overused premises to avoid. Also you may be able to offer a peer a good idea.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1087758194636701699>

23) Timing. Some say it's "essential" others "useless". You can get by with lousy timing but you can soar with great timing. It can take thousands of shows to figure it out. EXPERIMENT every show to see what works best. Some day you'll just feel it.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1088119050004250630>

24) There are things you've become expert in because of passion. List them and write jokes about them. Writing informed by a vast knowledge in unusual subjects will lead to original compelling jokes. [@pattonoswalt](#) is King of this. Today, mine your obsessions.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1088482554162933763>

25) There is no shame in working a day job. Take notes. Caddyshack was inspired by writers' memories of working at a snooty golf club. The insight your experience will bring to a joke/sitcom/screenplay is priceless. Today write about a job.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1088844164761047044>

26) Today go through your joke inventory. Write/type it out. Identify or create logical connections between jokes and combine them. It can be easier to hold a crowd's attention when you stay on topic longer. Have a good show tonight! Shabbat Shalom!

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1089215308320202752>

27) You will be designing your set with a Producer. Most of them are excellent and can provide valuable insight. JP at Conan and Jessica at Colbert have been TREMENDOUS. Be polite and professional. Make a case for your preferences but don't be a pain in the ass.

This seems obvious but practice the set in front of as many crowds as possible, good and bad, until you're sick of it. Especially if it's your first time, you want to know it cold.

Video if possible so you can eliminate the physical habits that annoy you. See what you look like on tv so you can adjust to look like you want to. Make changes to tighten the set, squeezing in as many laughs as you can. Just clear changes with the Producer.

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<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1089572285588082688>

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1089572606121050112>

28) One thing to take the stress out of a TV set or any big show is to ignore the 8 Mile idea that you only get "one shot". NONSENSE!!! If you're nice and WRITE you'll get 60+ shots. It's an ultra-marathon. B Rabbit got a second shot later that month! PERSIST.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1089931017358589952>

29) Feel like "I'm too old. I've been doing it so long. I can't get any better."? George Carlin said he really figured it out in 1988. He was 51 and at the time he was GEORGE CARLIN!!! Don't stop pushing yourself. You owe it to your audience and yourself.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1090340526526672896>

30) Today, Remove your ear buds for an hour +. Take time to ruminant in your head and toss around ideas. If you can think out jokes while listening to music, I envy you. For a lot of us near silence is best. If you need the distraction for anxiety I get it.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1090668127564718080>

31) Day of Show: Bring a calming friend who hasn't appeared on the show you're doing so you can try to get them on in the future. If you're a napper plan one that won't make you groggy at show time. Run your set in your head or out loud many times. Exercise.

It's still very hard to get a TV Set. Don't think about what it can lead to. This is a milestone. It doesn't have to lead anywhere. The kid who watched standups on TV growing up would be blown away by you. Congratulations!

Watch me on Conan [@TeamCoco](#) tonight! When I tug on my ear lobe it's to say hi to Carol Burnett's grandmother. If it's your first time: Ask for your introduction cue cards signed by the host. They're a fun memento. Frame them with some or all of your appearance fee.

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<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1091037319887343616>

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1091042316893052928>

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1091058313624801280>

32) Today's tip is a challenge. February is the shortest month. I want you to write EVERY SINGLE DAY. You don't have to write all day. You do have to write every day or be marked incomplete. Put your head down. Look up on March 1 a stronger comic.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1091414338894684160>

33) Change your writing routine today. If you usually write on a laptop, write longhand and vice versa. If you write in small note pads write in a big notebook. I may be imagining it but I think using unrulled note books changed my writing years ago.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1091743265458655232>

34) Today, start by going over your writing from the past few days. Highlight or mark the parts you like and organize them so you can remember to try them on stage next chance you get. Review them before your show. Repeat this tip regularly. It's important!

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1092121705626116097>

35) If you're struggling to find an area to write about today, you can always find original jokes by examining your family. Identify the unique aspects of your family in writing. It's a rich vein you could mine through March and beyond.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1092470964074545152>

36) I've heard this attributed to both Leno and Seinfeld. "I never worried about agents or deals or auditions. All I worried about is: Am I getting funnier?" For the rest of February and March ignore the bullshit. Just get funnier. Godspeed.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/109283200053071879>

37) My favorite writer [@Kurt_Vonnegut](#) said he wrote for an audience of one, his sister Alice. I write for a 21 year old me. Today think about your ideal audience member. This should help you narrow your writing focus and help you find your voice.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1093193491390304262>

38) Today's Tip is about hack. Hacky comics were reviled when I was starting out. The Comedy Cellar comics used to hold a Hack Court. [@AndyKindler](#) wrote the Hack Handbook, a glossary of hackiness. Now hackiness is mostly tolerated. I will get some pushback and I will ignore it.

Want to stand out? Avoid hacky topics. You know what they are. Unless you're Pryor I don't have time for your angle. But so-and-so said "There's no hacky premise! It's what you blah blah blah." I disagree. No one's ever been accused of being too original.

Watch the comics before and after you. The topics that keep getting brought up, Tinder, TSA are most likely hacky. Instead of accusing theft, write on a less pedestrian topic.

You really have to be your own judge of these things. I don't feel comfortable being the arbiter of hackiness. Be strict with yourself. It will pay off later.

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<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1093563275130912769>

39) This weekend, spend two hours in an art museum. Notice how meticulous and precise the artists are with their paintings/sculptures. Consider the countless choices they made. Seeing masterpieces up close makes writing a joke seem far less daunting.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1093925709473607682>

40) This weekend do something new and/or ridiculous. Examples: Take a date on a hot air balloon ([@RyanHamilton](#)), fight anarchy at Trader Joe's (The Gul), be a Jew at a meeting of young Antisemites ([@alexededelman](#))

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1094283221846671362>

41) You know those quirky little things you do and think? Collect them in a file or on paper. Even if you're a story teller you can use these as details to add depth and distinction to your jokes.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1094648906691031041>

42) If you're still with the challenge, writing every day is now habit. Hopefully you've had a session where it flows. When you're in a flow DON'T STOP. Cancel appointments, stay up late, be late to lunch. The Muse is elusive. If you have her attention, WRITE.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1095039156080697344>

43) Proximity contributes to funniness. In general, a brother or sister is funnier to mention in your joke than a sister/brother in-law. Use aunt instead of a neighbor etc. Adjust your jokes to make the people closer relations. I don't know why this works.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1095500131917475840>

44) Headliners! Watch your opening acts at least the first night. When asked for it, be generous with guidance and encouragement. These comics are paid poorly and under appreciated. You can help them immensely with some small kindnesses like lunch.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1095784655024869376>

45) Don't worry about "burning" material on a special or album. Hoarding jokes may signal your brain that you're out of ideas. "You can't use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have." - Maya Angelou

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1096126757571346433>

46) Your most original, compelling ideas will come from inspiration which I see as a type of luck. If you've been writing every day you're starting to get luckier. The month is halfway done. Keep writing!

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1096459069391626240>

47) Limitations often breed creativity. Today, set in writing some restrictions for your act. ("I won't talk about _____. I'll only write jokes this month about _____.") It seems counterintuitive but it works.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1096825856297746432>

48) Hosting/MCing shows is a great way to become comfortable on stage and develop a valuable skill. Volunteer to MC shows and it will pay off in many ways. One great thing is that you can consult your notebook and then go back on and try a new bit.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1097237024170496002>

49) SPECIFIC is usually funnier than general terms or words. Go through your set today and find where you were general and change to a specific. There will be cases where general is still funnier. Use good judgement.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1097542451722702850>

50) Hopefully you're writing for longer periods now. You'll notice it takes time to warm up. After you warm up go back to the beginning of your session and make changes to the jokes there. I just learned this and it's very helpful.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1097903335330463745>

51) Get out of the house! There are too many distractions and temptations (mostly to nap) in your home. Go to a coffee shop or book store or library (my favorite) and write.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1098266726670786560>

52) You have a new joke. It seems too easy. Go online and type in some of the joke and see if someone has said something similar ANYWHERE. Ask your comedy obsessed friends if they have heard anyone do a similar bit.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1098630680437841921>

53) Listen to a recent recording - I know it's excruciating and it won't get much easier. Pause every sentence or two.

1) Can you say it in less words? 2) Can you add or change something to make it funnier? Press play and repeat.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1099015889947480064>

54) If you suffer from mental illness make sure comedy is helping you cope or feel better or get out of the house and be with people. If it's adding to your suffering, take a break and get healthy. Comedy can wait.

In addition to therapy and support groups and medication I have found being with friends and listening to [@THWofD](#) very helpful in coping with my depression and anxiety.

The [@sapinker](#) book "Enlightenment Now" has reduced my anxiety about our future significantly. I give it my highest recommendation.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1099370176179511297>

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1099370654841876481>

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1099389233989591040>

55) This one will meet with resistance. Many of us lean toward sloth but exercise, even just a long walk, fuels creativity. Try your best not to listen to music or podcasts. If you're ruminating on your act it counts as writing.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1099737114114121728>

56) Choose at least one thing to work on during every set. Work on a new joke, adding a physical component, a character or voice etc. every single time you take the stage. This helps at every level.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1100140929514696704>

57) As they say in AA “Compare and despair.” It’s human nature but it’s time better spent reading/writing. Be happy for the good guys/women/etc. Keep your head down and work. Some day it will be you.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1100455062009196544>

58) The most common advice I give new comedians is to “make it sound more conversational.” I’m not entirely certain how to go about that other than to make it a goal to sound less scripted. Yet another instance where listening to your set is helpful.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1100784420494213120>

59) Early on in your career it can be difficult to win over a crowd. It’s very helpful to open with your best joke (the shorter the better) and close with your second best.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1101158260206387200>

60) You will have countless setbacks if you stick with comedy. It’s ok to take a day or two to lick your wounds after a rejection. Then, ask yourself: Can I be working harder? If yes then it’s not a setback, it’s a message.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1101535831913828352>

61) Even if you’re not a topical comedian, try to stay informed. You don’t have to read the newspaper front to back every day but knowing what’s going on in the world will broaden your comedy palette and enhance live performance.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1101895605041930240>

62) Look for inspiration EVERYWHERE. Paintings, music, poetry, rap, novels, nonfiction, short stories, theater, philosophy etc. can all provide a spark for creativity. Cross-pollinate your work with broad influences and watch your creativity grow.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1102271316076441600>

63) Write it all down while the coffee is still telling you you’re mighty. Reread after you’ve turned back into Dr. Banner (yes he’s a genius but not as self confident in that condition.) That buzz is so valuable but needs editing.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1102617624565944321>

I said COFFEE (with all respect to my LDS friends) SPECIFICALLY because it’s an antidepressant and legal stimulant that raises energy and focus. “Write drunk edit sober” is bullshit that I don’t subscribe to.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1102710332651421697>

64) You have a joke on a topic you want to cover. It gets a good laugh but it’s pedestrian. Keep it! Use it as scaffolding to build a better joke by adding on-topic jokes to the original joke. Just remember to remove the scaffolding once the joke is great.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1102979223164239873>

65) Writing a new joke can be intimidating. Break it down. A good joke is just a collection of good sentences. Today, write a funny sentence. That’s it. It can be to an existing joke or set up or completely new.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1103374118248841231>

66) Thursday nights are perfect for trying out new jokes. Today, before trying it out on stage, say the joke out loud to play with and figure out the rhythm. You will probably change or drop some words. And, per tip 58, make sure it doesn’t sound too written.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1103704462600749057>

67) You should try to adhere to George Orwell's first rule for effective writing: "Never use a metaphor, simile, or other figure of speech which you are used to seeing in print." Take the time to create your own. It's part of the job.
<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1104064333242224645>

68) Don't "Give it up for your host!" or "Give yourselves a big hand!" or "How's everybody doing tonight?" etc. You could do another minute of jokes with the time you waste on this claptrap. Especially foolish if you only have 5 minutes.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1104429148192202753>

What about _____? NO!!!! Start your fucking act! I got less insolence as a high school sub. Do you want to get better at comedy or do you want to search for gimmicks?

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1104439471125159936>

69) "You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream." - C.S. Lewis (published The Lion, The Witch...after 50) Please don't use your age to keep you from starting standup or improving as one. You will just have to work harder than the kids.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1104830066280857600>

70) Today, put together a list of the most embarrassing moments in your life. Take one or two and write them out in detail. Next time you're in front of a warm crowd, work on telling the story.

This exercise should help you to be more vulnerable on stage. A lot of us feel this is a major component of the best contemporary standup comedy.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1105136402092703744>

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1105149636124254208>

71) "I hate my act!" This is usually a good sign. Don't despair. Use the frustration to motivate you to work in some new stuff tonight. Soon you'll have a new 20 minutes to be sick of.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1105530775414493186>

72) If you want to make a joke denser and deeper do some research on the topic. You will find insight and perspectives that you hadn't thought of. Spending an hour or two to add a minute to a good joke is a bargain.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1105859659062235139>

73) We all hate waking up early to do radio but you should do it and take it seriously, especially early in your career. It will be your biggest audience of the weekend BY FAR. Many comedians still build a fan base with radio. Do your best stuff!

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1106222330404061185>

74) I once spent a year asking veteran headliners advice on doing an hour. "I take them on a ride!" "You need to build slowly." "I sing a song!" Only one person gave me worthwhile advice. [@TomPapa](#) who said w/o sarcasm "You need A LOT OF JOKES."

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1106639190261989376>

75) Take acting classes. Don't go to a culty one and make sure you get to act every class. It will make you a better comic. "But _____ never took a class and blah blah blah." Please shut up.

Yes, you should definitely take an Improv class.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1106985417172287488>

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1107308000665104391>

76) I've heard so many stories of comedians performing in front of a handful of people with as much zeal as they did for a sold out show. Be that comedian!!! It's difficult but great training. It's ok to acknowledge the poor turnout but don't dwell on it.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1107304494650589184>

77) NEVER, under any circumstances, use a stock line. It undermines your entire set. Example: Someone arrives late to the show. The comic says: "Welcome, can I get you anything? Like a watch?" (vomiting emoji)
<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1107711782439845892>

78) "I've been absolutely terrified every moment of my life - and I've never let it keep me from doing a single thing I wanted to do." -Georgia O'Keeffe
A lot us get nervous before and even during shows. It may never go away, but the audience can't tell.
<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1108074583020703744>

79) When you start thinking of yourself as an artist it makes you work like one. So, tell yourself you're an artist today and believe it and everything that goes with it.
<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1108489167556829184>

80) Read this by my friend [@ChrisGethard](#)

MY PERSONAL OPINIONS REGARDING WHAT I DO

It is never the audience's fault. Never.

There is no type of comedy that sucks. Only shitty versions of it. All types are shitty sometimes.

It is weak to have points with no premise. It is cowardly to have premises but never have a point.

The best stand ups are the ones who can go into *any* environment and figure it out. Alt, club, college, festival, rock show, etc

Jokes aren't truly good unless they're universal.

Work for free until you don't have to work for free anymore. Then never work for free again.

Going up at a small/low key/new/loose show to try brand new shit is not work, it's workshopping. It's ok to do that for free.

If a comic before you tells the audience they suck, that comic is weak. Try starting your set like this afterwards: "Thank you guys for being here tonight. And thanks for giving me a little bit of your time." You will instantly feel their guards come down. They're just happy someone (specifically, a mediocre comedian) is not calling them dumb for being there.

You work for the audience, the audience does not work for you.

The hardest type of gig, by far, is opening for a band on an all music bill.

When you don't take enough time to live a real life, your jokes start to feel stale and thin. Sometimes the best joke writers demonstrate an insane amount of skill at writing and telling a joke, but the joke isn't about anything since they don't go and live life. (I have the opposite problem. Too much bouncing around life, not enough discipline in writing.)

Making jokes about the clothes you chose to wear on stage is cheap.

In New York, comedians can be too cutthroat. In Los Angeles, they can be too cocky. In the United Kingdom, they can be too sad.

When you go on the road, sign up for a frequent flier program and stick with that airline.

Sometimes you won't sell tickets on the road. They'll give away a ton of tickets (paper the room). Those shows can be fun because if you get them on your side, you know you've appealed to them more than the mozzarella sticks.

Never underestimate young people. If you feel like young audiences are too PC, there's something to be said for "Maybe you need to find a smarter way to make your point."

Comedians *are* allowed to say whatever they want. But comedians forget that the other side of that is that audiences *are* allowed to be offended.

Being a comedian is not a hard life and we need to stop claiming that it is. It's insulting to people who have actual hard lives. Working hard in an industry where success is unlikely and where your ego gets shredded is daunting, but it's not hard. Being a miner or an auto plant worker is hard. That's why it's an honor to make the working class laugh.

We need to give each other as artists some element of a magicians' code.

Go all-city, like the old school graffiti artists.

I have no interest in bad art with good politics, or good art with bad politics.

Being an artist is not an excuse to sleep all day and drink all night.

Try other forms of art sometimes too. In college I took a modern dance class as a joke, and was stunned to realize it was probably the first period that I had accelerated growth as a comedian.

If you want to live a life with no rules imposed via others, it's on you to install your own discipline into your routine.

No show is more important than any other show.

Imitate your heroes in your early days, but remember that the best type of imitation is emotional imitation. At its best, you won't imitate their writing style. You won't imitate how they behaved. You will imitate *how they made you feel*.

The true art of stand up comedy is learning how to burp into a microphone without anyone in the crowd hearing it.

Don't act like a comedian, act like yourself.

www.chrisgeth.com

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1108751114256769024>

<https://twitter.com/ChrisGethard/status/1108467137230917633>

<https://medium.com/@chrisgeth/my-personal-opinions-regarding-what-i-do-8070ae57f911>

81) On F---: Use or don't. I don't care. If you use F-in' as the penultimate word in a joke try it w/o once to see if it works. On a show with other comics limit F's so it still has impact when they use it. If you're opening for someone ask if it's ok.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1108752569982169090>

82) On "Savers": Don't keep a weak joke because you came up with a great saver for it. It's tacky. If you must then at least leave a generous tip for the club's staff for stifling their contempt during your treachery. "But Johnny Carson..." SHUT UP please.

Don't "That one was just for me!" or "You'll get that one on the way home!". They won't, they'll be too busy trying to rinse their brains of your lazy act.

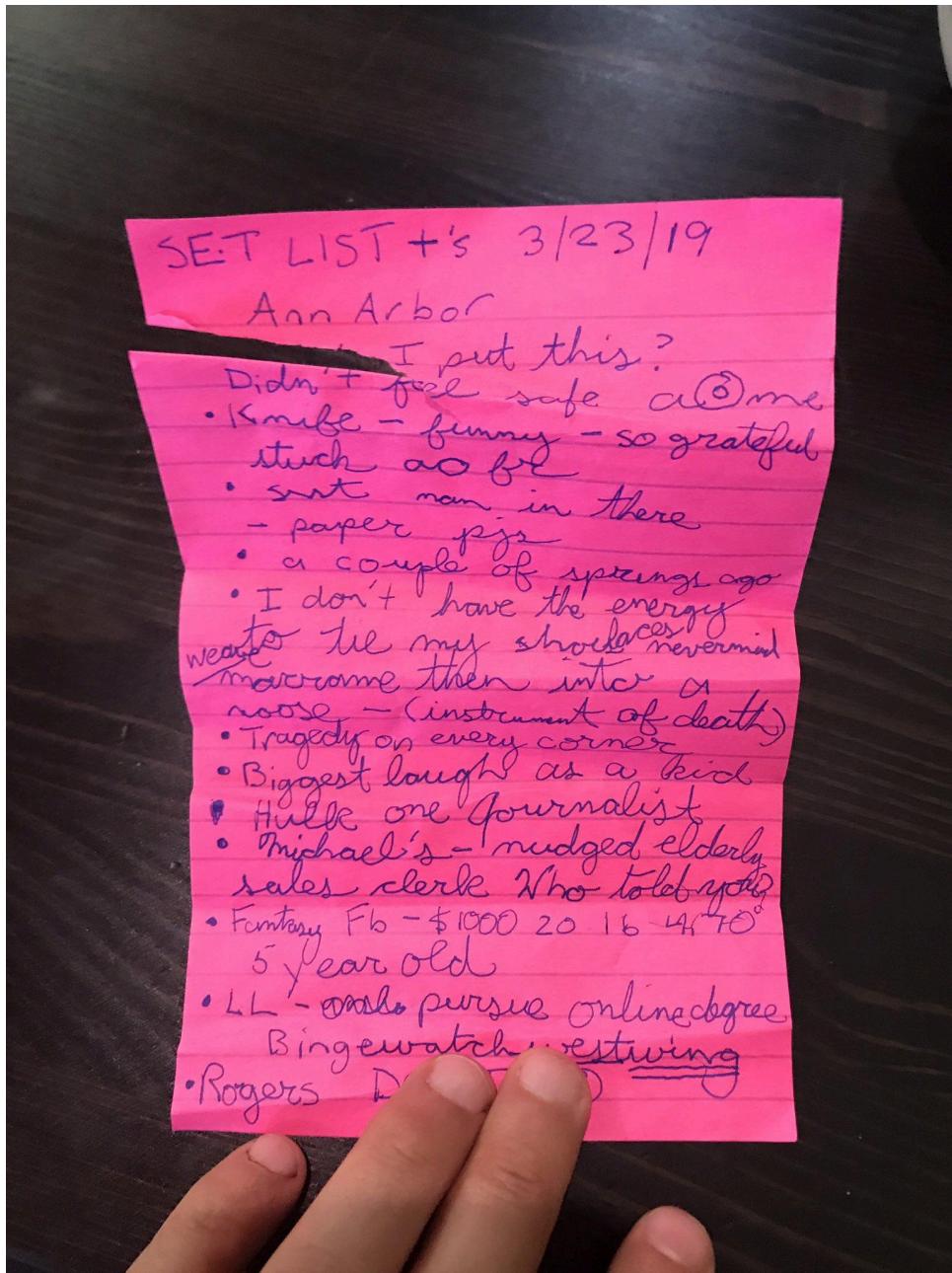
<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1109119526334017538>

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1109119730177191936>

83) Frustrated with a joke? 1) Keep writing. The next sentence could crack it OR 2) Write about something else for a while. Sometimes when you return the subconscious has solved it. It's frustrating but when you solve it, it's exhilarating.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1109484191014666242>

84) It's helpful to make a set list esp. for long shows. I write it on a napkin and put it next to a drink on the stool. It's mostly new jokes and new lines for old jokes. It's so aggravating to forget to do a new joke you've been honing. Glance sparingly.



<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1109841420796477440>

85) Feel too old? 50 years ago this month [@Kurt_Vonnegut](#) published this masterpiece (Slaughterhouse-Five). He was 47. That's like 65 today. He'd written 5 or 6 books before but reached only a small audience. It continues to heal and educate and inspire. PLEASE DON'T GIVE UP!

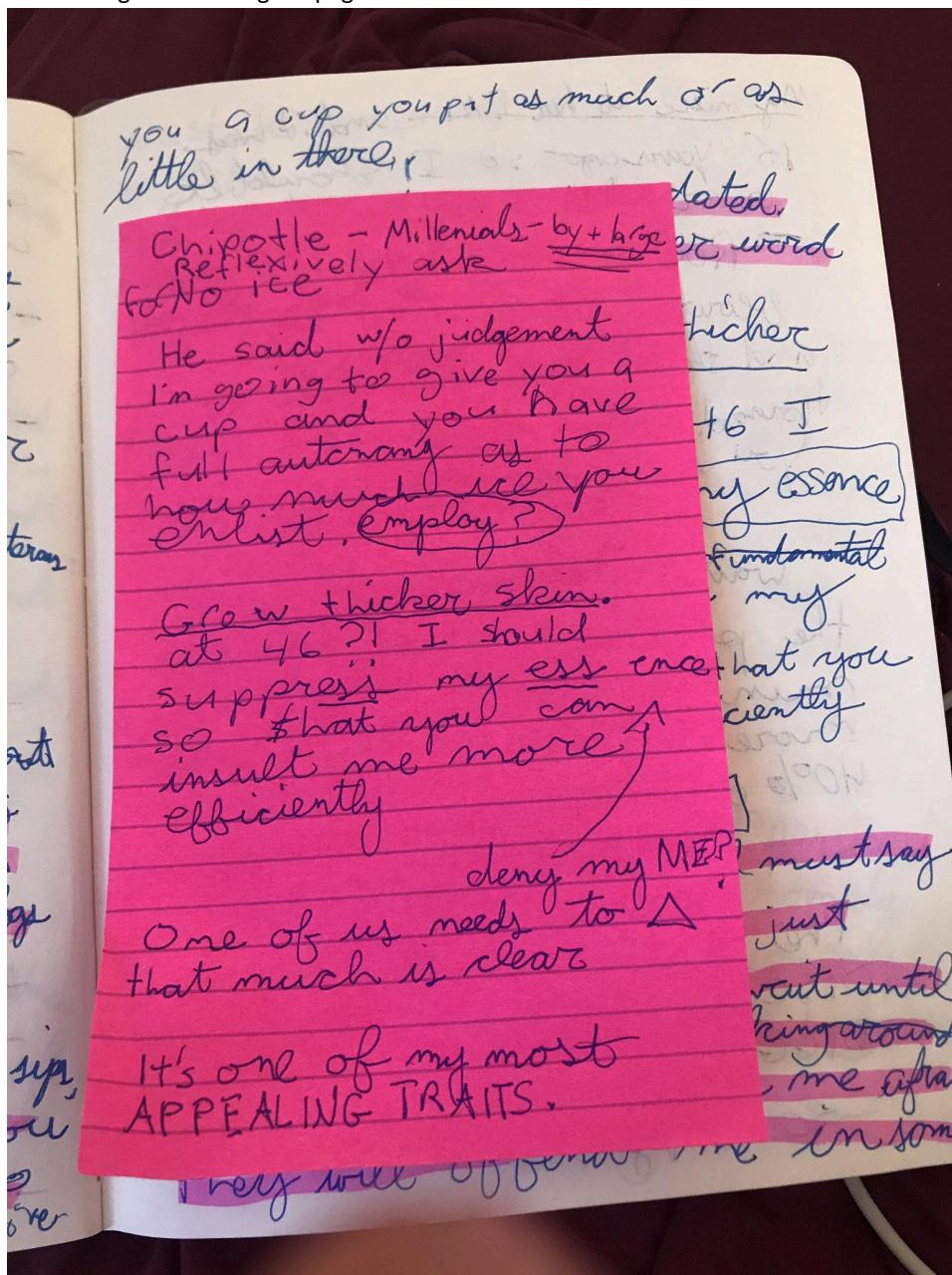
<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1110205745516158981>

86) LISTEN TO THIS! How Gary Gulman Wrote His Best Joke: Trader Joe's

<https://www.vulture.com/2019/03/gary-gulman-best-joke-good-one-comedy-podcast.html>

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1110206062907588608>

87) Here's a helpful organizing tip for notebook users. I can keep a premise together by adding ideas to the Post-It and sticking it to the original page.



<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1110644843041210368>

88) On Patience: It's better to be seen by the comedy "industry" 2 years too late than one second too early. It's hard to undo a bad first impression and you change and grow so much year to year the first ten years of your career.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1110945043689410561>

89) Your friend has brought you to open for them this weekend. If you are not trying out some new jokes in that prime spot, you are a fool. Don't over-indulge but take advantage of the weekend crowd to expand your act.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1111306098907193347>

90) You just had a great set. Instead of celebrating, use that hour or so after when the synapses are still firing and your confidence is soaring to voice record or write down the ideas that pop up during that especially fertile creative time.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1111667698411491328>

91) Organization Tip: When transcribing your sets, leave space in between each line so that you can make changes and edits later on that day.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1112024191719690241>

92) This week, notice where you do your best thinking. The shower? Running? Listening to music? Not listening to music? Driving? Walking? Make sure to put yourself in the places where you're doing your best thinking as frequently as possible.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1112381674258681857>

93) It's ok to "bomb". Taking risks is essential to becoming an original voice. You SHOULD bomb occasionally even frequently if you're taking risks and COMMITTING!!! Bomb taking risks, not with Tinder jokes.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1112745256402018304>

94) 99% of us are awful for our first few years. It's frustrating because we want to honor this art form we revere. Have FAITH that you'll improve if you [#WRITENow](#) and GET ON STAGE as often as possible. It is BIZARRE to learn a craft in public. We're carnies. PERSIST.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1113107564420648961>

95) Over the next several months take the time to become an expert in something new. Read a few books and a ton of articles. This exercise will give you a new topic and fresh beginner's enthusiasm and perspective to write from. It's also good for your brain.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1113573801369980928>

96) With any competitive field there are crabs trying to pull escapees back into the bucket. Be polite, I guess, but don't let cynics and the embittered get in your head. We need to pull each other up not drag each other back to Sidesplitters Tampa.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1113836484795281408>

97) For your first few years limit your crowd work. You need joke inventory and practice. There will be plenty of time to work on your wherayafroms. Many headliners don't like an MC or opener to do crowd work. It emboldens hecklers.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1114196960561463296>

98) In general, when the audience is laughing, stop talking. It's our insecurities that make us want to fill every moment with sound.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1114636531090763779>

99) Starting a punchline "Bitch..." is a guaranteed laugh. It is also a guarantee you will sound like 1000 other comedians. [#99Problems](#)

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1114917898345168897>

100) "When someone asks you if you're a god you say YES!" - Winston Zeddemore
Accept challenges zealously! It will help you expand your limits. If you fail, so what?! [@briankoppelman](#) told me this!

Today's tip 100 is dedicated to my friend and mentor [@briankoppelman](#) whose Vines were the inspiration for the [#GulManTip](#) Watch [@SHO_Billions](#) on Showtime!

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1115288663225786368>
<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1115287199862403073>

101) "Writing" on stage is a super-effective way to create. Listening to the set after to harvest the good lines is CRUCIAL. If the riff goes poorly, have a strong joke ready so you can fulfill your entertainment obligation.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1115647578505469952>

102) It will take between 3 (UNLIKELY) and 15 years (LIKELY) to feel like you know what you're doing. Write as if you only have 6 months.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1116005555682803713>

103) On the road this weekend? Open with a few jokes about the city. No traffic jokes or jokes that seem like they had to have been done 1000 times before. Don't spend a ton of time writing but make an effort.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1116412732046237697>

104) Hang out! Early on in your career if you're not on the show you can sometimes get a spot if someone is late or a no show and you ask NICELY. You also get to watch comedy and make friends and build comfort. If you don't get on, go home and write.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1116732094959378432>

105) Friday and some Saturday late shows can be BRUTAL. It helps to lower expectations and coordinate with staff on how to manage hecklers and rowdies. If you can be generous of spirit but fair to yourself it can be fun and valuable.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1117104993096458240>

106) READ and HEED! This essay by [@Kurt_Vonnegut](#) has gotten me through so many rough times. Print it and tack it up where you can see it when you need it. [#LIFEVEST](#) Thanks for gifting me this [@thenickgriffin](#)!

FOREWORD

I sometimes say in lectures that I suffer from "survivor's syndrome," but not because of the Battle of the Bulge or the firebombing of Dresden in World War II, man-made calamities during or after which I saw more corpses than you can shake a stick at. A young woman complained to me after my lecture about that war, evidently feeling incomplete, that she had never seen a dead person. I made a joke. I said to her, "Be patient."

I do feel lousy, however, about the many passionate and gifted artists I know or knew, writers, painters and composers, dancers and comedians, actors and actresses, singers and cartoonists, who died or are dying in obscurity, more often than not in poverty. To quote the humorist Kin Hubbard: "It's no disgrace to be poor, but it might as well be." Audiences failed these friends and acquaintances of mine. Audiences were too barbarous and inattentive to realize how good they were and to reward them with sustained applause and a living wage.

I am reminded of a cartoon of long ago which depicted war as a rouged, warty old whore. She says to a youth about seventeen years old, "Hello, Sonny. I knew your Dad." She could represent the arts instead of war, and the cartoon would make just as much sense to a lot of people. The creation of works of art that a sizeable audience may appreciate and even pay for isn't all that different from an attack by either side in World War I, in which thousands of brave, good-hearted young people left their trenches at dawn, and practically everybody wound up draped over barbwire, or drowning face down in water at the bottom of a shellhole.

Again: I suffer from "survivor's syndrome."

Anyone who survives a human wave attack against such daunting odds, whether in war or the arts, does so because of dumb luck. Agility and courage and character, or whatever, have nothing to do with how it all turns out. Gifted artists have to be what they are, have to do what they do the way they do it. Whether they earn a living and fame thereby is a matter of happening by chance upon breaks in the barbwire, unswept by machinegun fire.

So to speak.

Mark Twain, a better writer and human being than I am, marveled, when an old man like me, at the durability of his works' popularity. He thought this might be due to his willingness to moralize. It was lucky for him that moralizing paid off so handsomely. In any case, Mark Twain was simply born to moralize.

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I think I was, too. When I look back at my incredibly lucky career as a writer, it seems that there was never time to think. It was as though I were skiing down a steep and hazardous mountain slope. When I look back at the marks my skis made in the snow on the way down, I only now realize that I wrote again and again about people who behaved decently in an indecent society.

I received a letter from a sappy woman a while back. She knew I was sappy, too, which is to say a New Deal Democrat. She was pregnant. She wanted to know if it was a bad thing to bring an innocent little baby into a world as awful as this one is. I replied that what made living almost worthwhile for me were the saints I met. They could be anywhere. They were people who behaved decently in an indecent society.

Perhaps, you, dear reader, are or will become a saint for her child to meet. I thank you for your attention.

KURT VONNEGUT (JR.)
NOVEMBER 11, 1998

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NOVEMBER 11, 1998

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1117489290626224128>

107) Use the time on the way to the show to go over your set, especially new jokes. Figure out what you want to open/close with. I love my 45 minute subway to [@ComedyCellarUSA](#) for this. You can do it while driving. If driving with a comic, discuss together.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1117856632224931840>

108) When is it time to move to NY or LA? Are you the best comedian on nearly every show you do? Dissatisfied with stage time? Then start thinking about one of those cities or a bigger standup scene. Like most fields, you get better by being around better.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1118183780617945089>

109) How long to stick with a joke? If it's truly original and funny to you and/or especially personal, you should keep working on it until you figure it out. A more pedestrian joke? Give it 3 tries. My favorite joke took 19 years to solve.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1118543423567540230>

110) Make sure you're in this because you love comedy and NOT because you love show business.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1118900391943516165>

111) Zag.

Take the "road less traveled."

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1119268531470786560>

112) Holidays are rich topics with near universal recognition for audiences. This weekend write about holidays and personal stories about them. Just be careful not to do the ordinary takes or bite my "All I Want For Chanukah is Christmas". http://www.garygulman.com/?page_id=53

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1119626843475316736>

113) Be aware of the constraints your appearance may put on jokes. For example if you're really attractive it can be hard to convince the audience that you're having a hard time finding a date. Wearing expensive clothes will contradict claims of poverty.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1119999974345981952>

114) At Boston College, Professor John McAleer wrote on a short story I turned in: "You have a story telling ability you should zealously cultivate!" I was lucky to have a lot of John McAleers. Be that Professor for a new comedian you work with.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1120361093728231436>

115) It's been so long since I wrote what's another day? Open (notebook) or your joke file on (computer) and put in the date. Done? The hardest part is over. Write some thoughts, a set list, goals, ANYTHING. Keep writing until you can't, plus 15 minutes.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1120728377281871872>

116) Be mindful of how you talk to yourself. I have a habit of calling myself Schmuck or dummy. Trying to replace with [#TheGul](#) and The Incredible Gulk (winking emoji). You would never allow anyone to talk to you the way you talk to yourself some times.



<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1208421384499712000>

(Gary deleted tip 116 initially because it was misunderstood, then reposted it on Dec 21st, here are the explanatory tweets:)

Somehow I missed Tip #116. Early mistakes are coming back to haunt me. Today's tip will be 116 and tomorrow will be 357. I'm truly sorry.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1208418668838866944>

My bad tomorrow is actually 356 again. I think. I don't know what the hell I'm doing or how this went off the rails.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1208432560327593984>

I didn't miss #116 I deleted it because it was misunderstood. What I meant to say

116A) Forget about fairness. We're in a business where we need to have a benefit for the great Patrice O'Neal's family and fill in the hack is worth a hundred million dollars.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1208486840019361792>

117) Headliners, consider doing a meet and greet after your shows. The audience really appreciates it and it feels pretty good. Mine rarely take more than 45 minutes so it's not a huge time issue. Don't charge for pictures or autographs. That's super tacky.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1121439903311695874>

118) Last night [@iamcolinquinn](#) filmed another magnificent Special. Standup veterans, you can continue to do great work and reach greater heights if you write diligently and prepare like Colin Quinn. This weekend, PREPARE!

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1121811219260768257>

119) Today, try and add some laugh lines to the setups of some of your jokes. This will be fun, add denseness to your jokes and put some new energy in old jokes. Try and work them in tonight during your show.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1122167843288756225>

120) It's very helpful, especially early on, to perform in front of a large variety of audiences. It develops skills in adjusting on the fly and builds confidence in your ability to do well no matter the circumstances or survive even if it goes badly.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1122525008939687936>

121) It's nice to have a "lane" but you don't have to stay in it. George Carlin didn't. Joan Rivers didn't. Richard Pryor didn't. Early on they were very different. Try a new "lane" for a while. See how it feels. Experiment! Think big! Challenge yourself!

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1122887772916920320>

122) How I prepped my first Show 10/8/93: Collected all the jokes I wrote and timed them out. Chose my favorite 5 mins and did it. A year later I was using none of those jokes. Just get on stage that 1st time. You'll figure it out after. Have fun. Work hard.

Let me add that I was unwatchable for most of two years (and remain unwatchable to many) but I LOVED AND LIVED COMEDY. I was obsessed with jokes and words. That was helpful. Once you get on stage, the hardest part is over.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1123255117237690368>

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/112325666831630338>

123) Listen to early versions of the joke to see if you're using different emphasis, words or pace. Sometimes, adding laugh lines to a joke has diminished the punchline's impact. Some jokes work best early or later in a set so experiment with placement.

Sometimes you aren't telling it with the same energy and/or confidence you used to. Energy is easy to add. Confidence? I'll let you know when I get there. "Act as if" until YOU get there.

Today's tip addresses one of the more frustrating parts of standup. You have a good joke that has stopped working. I will give some ideas to remedy but I must stress once again that recording your sets is crucial for this kind of trouble shooting. If you don't record, START!

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1123612270641197061>

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1123614618465767426>

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1123606055257243648>

124) Sports is another subject with near universal recognition for audiences. Sports have been and continue to be a wellspring of content for me and many other comedians. Today, write about your experiences as a participant, fan, or hater of sports.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1123984240574644224>

125) Find the teachers! Nearly every working headliner has a breadth of knowledge and experience that would dwarf my collection of tips. Most love talking shop. Ask questions and this is tough: LISTEN to the answers.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1124346106639474688>

126) Some of my favorite comedians and I have found rich veins in analyzing ideas and experiences we found captivating when we were children. Make a list of your most enduring childhood thoughts and memories and write about them.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1124706246622359552>

127) "I'm not for everyone." is a valuable position to acknowledge and embrace. You can have great success by being appealing to the type of audiences you enjoy. I've heard it said that trying to please everyone is a certain path to failure and frustration.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1125058014715707392>

128) How do I build an audience? I have no idea. Luck, timing and hard work all come into play. You can only control the hard work so concern yourself with that. Do unique comedy and trust they will find you. Have faith. Believe. Persist.

My manager Maureen Taran promised me in 1998 "They will find you." I believed her. That helped a lot.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/112542412535365504>

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1125426914418671617>

129) Make the following investment in teaching yourself today: Buy [@SPressfield](#)'s The War of Art and [@J_CameronLive](#)'s The Artist's Way. If you take even one of them to heart you won't need much else.

#TeacherAppreciationDay

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1125786415248433152>

130) When you're building an act or writing a new hour it helps to keep an inventory handy. I think separating into:
1. Jokes that work 2. Jokes that need work 3. Jokes to try. Refer often so you ruminate over the Ideas. Put most effort into 2.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1126149020685086720>

131) Modern audiences expect mostly new material every time they come to see you. Before you accept a return to a city you should think about whether you can deliver. It's better to wait a year than risk diminishing interest through repetition. #PhdLevel

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1126511389458059265>

One last thought on this: It may take as much care and energy to maintain an audience as to build one. It's worth it. Good night everybody!

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/112667980278888576>

132) I think you can limit frustration and discouragement by writing just a page on a new premise before trying it out on stage. See if there's anything there before you spend a day on a new joke. But if you're truly excited by the new idea keep going!

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1126877392306356225>

133) Negativity and resentment are poisonous. If you're prone to it, you need to avoid your commiserators the same way an alcoholic has to part ways with their drinking buddies.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1127236187243143168>

134) In a writing drought? Meet up with or call people you feel funny around and are generous laughers. I got this advice from the brilliant [@kileynoodles](#) early on and it is good advice in and out of comedy. [#CallYourMom](#)
<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1127600980252659713>

135) Don't quit your day job until it's keeping you from taking quality road work. The routine, structure and stimulation from working part or full time will help you write and the life experience is priceless. Quitting to "write more"? You probably won't.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1127971294362984448>

136) I believe being VULNERABLE is vital to creating MEMORABLE comedy. For the 1st few years just getting on stage is vulnerable. As a pro it means sharing a part of yourself that makes you uncomfortable and just as important, COMMITTING to the joke.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1128338848654794753>

137) Making a living in this business is a bit of a long shot. Try not to let that deter you or become a barometer for your success. Whether you LOVE working at it and doing it is the only way to measure your success.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1128697413902925824>

138) Go to a music concert this weekend. A singer/musician works much harder than us. The physical exertion is extraordinary. Also, every word they say rhymes for two hours. Let it inspire you to perform harder and write more intensely.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1129100683582562306>

139) I've found adding some silliness or absurdism very rewarding over the years. It's fun to experiment with and often adds life to a joke in need of it. Also, it attracts a really cool audience. This weekend try adding some silliness to your jokes.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1129410254058545152>

140) Writing while severely depressed/anxious is running in deep sand in ski boots. Writing healthy this past year feels like running on the moon. If you're sick put all of your energy into getting healthy and write jokes and notes on your life when you can.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1129777167619874816>

141) Building on yesterdays tip, I encourage you to open up about any struggles with mental illness even if only offstage initially. Opening up onstage about my experiences changed my life and career. [#breakthestigma](#)

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1130150399367712773>

142) Veterans, mentoring young comedians is a very gratifying experience that is valuable to all parties. You teach and cement your knowledge while staying informed and inspired by current trends in comedy.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1130502762834386944>

143) Listen to strangers' conversations. (I tell myself it's not impolite if they're being super-loud.) I got "How Dottie is that?" when a supercilious woman named Jodi bragged "How Jodi is that?" "So Jodi" her friend replied.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1130871491422298112>

144) Having a tough time figuring out a joke? Try switching perspective. Tell the story from another person's point of view or even from an object or animal. You can even time travel and tell it from the perspective of a younger or older you.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1131226951279099904>

145) Don't fear antidepressants. I've taken them for 30 years. NONE have negatively affected my writing or performance AT ALL. 2018-19 has been my most creative time ever because of the strength of my mental health which is due mostly to meds and therapy.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1131599693526568966>

146) Treat your next Album/Special/TV Appearance like it's your first. PREPARE obsessively! Leave them not wanting to see more of you but NEEDING to see more of you because you COMMITTED fully to your performance.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1131957390105042946>

147) Optimism and pessimism are probably equally accurate predictors of your comedy future. I've tried both. Optimism is a more productive and fun philosophy to live under. It also makes you more pleasant to be around and that matters.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1132322049702146048>

148) What to do after you bomb: A) Don't panic! It's just 1 set. You'll do thousands more. B) Take a few minutes to address mistakes. C) Watch the other comedians to see if they handled it differently/better. (SOMETimes it's the crowd.)

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1132680127186374656>

149) With few exceptions ([@toddbarry](#)) everyone has bombed. If you never bomb there's something off. You're either not taking any risks or lying to yourself about the audience reaction. Bombing for the right reasons is part of the process.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1133034276772110338>

150) More benefits to listening to your set and reducing the ahms, uhs and y'knows: 1) You sound much better in interviews. 2) On stage it makes you sound more sure of yourself and contributes to the aesthetic quality of your act live and on albums/tv.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1133407567005270023>

151) A joke's position in a set may affect its success. Something really personal may need to go later after the audience knows you better. A 5 minute set may not give you enough time. If a bit you like doesn't work, adjust where you deploy it.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1133769601140121600>

152) I know how hard it is to listen to your sets but honestly it's the most valuable tip I've given. It's painful and the audience reaction sounds bad because of the audio mix. "But I hate the sound of my voice!" How much do you hate wasting your potential?

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1134161421166497792>

153) Understatement is a very effective joke technique that is not used as much as sarcasm which is less effective because of its ubiquity. Go through your jokes that need work and see if understatement can be applied.
Example: Re: Jewish People "We can be a rather cautious group which is understandable. We've been in a couple of pickles over the years."

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1134509323369865216>

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1134510900671475712>

154) When the alt-scene boomed in the 90's many veteran comics resisted it. Now the principles of it are mainstream and those veterans work much less. "If you don't like change, you're going to like irrelevance even less." -General Eric Shinseki

Evolve!

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1134909601936171008>

155) For beginners (0-4 years in) In Howard Stern's new book he says "You have to study and master technique before you can become an original." You can find all the joke formulas on line. They're the "scales" for jokes. Learn them, use them.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1135228139863326720>

156) If someone admonishes you by saying "No one has ever done that." You're on the right track. Keep going.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1135571000723156993>

157) Need new joke ideas? Be sensitive. If you're uncomfortable with that word, use "irritable" (or grow up). A lot of good comedy comes from reaction to injustice or discomfort large and small which requires being hyper-sensitive to those feelings.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1135948512028483585>

158) I can't remember who but a comedian said a good joke/comedian can occupy space in your mind. That stuck in mine. It makes for a great aim for your work and also tells you how influential we can be. Be responsible with this power! #BenParkerTip

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1136307149611687936>

159) Voices are an excellent way to add color and laughs to a story or joke and also display your versatility. Don't do the stock/stereotype voice or accent or a voice used by another comedian. Make up your own and practice it off stage if you can bare it.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1136660817439539200>

160) You have a new joke. There are at least 2 laughs in it including the ending. You don't tell one-liners. You're not auditioning for a TV set. You should be trying to add more laughs in between those laughs EVERY SINGLE time you do that joke on stage.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1137032659274731522>

161) When making a Special/Album, try to keep references timeless and limit the amount of popular names you use. Also, try to avoid current slang. I cringe hearing myself say f up my shit on my first album.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1137389849105829888>

162) I find so much motivation in the work habits of great athletes. Read bios and articles about them. The lengths they go to to improve will make you realize that writing in a notebook every day and getting on stage every night is easy and fun.

The discipline they employ and the sacrifices they make to stand out in the most competitive field can guide you in making choices and decisions in our very competitive field.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1137766095941771264>

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1137797207699140610>

163) Keep a journal! It gets you to write without any pressure to be funny or interesting. It will allow (you to) see how far you have come and gain perspective as you examine what used to be important to you. It will become a valuable resource I promise.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1138149424004259841>

164) 10 days until summer. Start thinking about goals for this 91 days or promises to make to yourself regarding effort and dedication. Keep the goals within your control, not reliant on gatekeepers. I'll share some ideas and my aims over the next week or so.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1138574453296771072>

165) Some goals: Write every day or 85/91 days for at least 15 minutes. Write for 100 or 200 hours. Get on stage 100 times. Send X # of emails/texts asking for stage time. Read 4 great books. Start a podcast. Write an outline and/or a chapter of a book.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1138837113280053248>

166) Some more ideas for goals: I've tried to stress the value of getting things right in your mind so you can write and perform at the highest level. So, this summer find a good therapist, meditate, exercise 3+ days a week, get sober or go to more meetings.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1139241560204292097>

167) A helpful "mantra" I've found to overcome a lot of the anxiety involved with the unknowns of this business is "I'll figure it out." Faith, even if it wavers constantly, that you will be able to make it through obstacles and setbacks is priceless.

While I have yet to try it, I feel like this can also be applied to life. :-)

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1139564509922807808>

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1139572115450093568>

168) Sometimes we need to vent. Pointing out the King's nudity is human nature but make sure to balance your karma by lauding people who inspire like [@ToddGlass](#) [@birbigs](#) [@dopequeenpheebs](#) [@JudahWorldChamp](#) [@emmyblotnick](#) [@ramy](#) [@robertkelly](#) [@Blacktress](#) Etc.

And [@NikkiGlaser](#) !!!!

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1139928925893799937>

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1139933428370087936>

169) "Nope, it's not good enough, scribble it out New pad, crinkle it up, and throw the shit out." - Eminem Be hyper-critical of your writing. Holding on to weak jokes keeps telling your brain that you can't do any better. You can. #NowCallYourDad!

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1140292665294147587>

170) Summer Goals:

"There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you." - Maya Angelou

This summer, write that story. You don't have to perform it or make it funny. It will inform your writing. It may open you up on and offstage.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1140644284733042688>

171) Summer Goal "We have to continually be jumping off cliffs and developing our wings on the way down." - [@Kurt_Vonnegut](#)

Maybe your goal is your first open mic. Keep this quote in mind now and throughout your journey. There's no blueprint. Take that leap of FAITH!

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1141006756488908802>

<https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/5603-we-have-to-continually-be-jumping-off-cliffs-and-developing>

172) Traveling for comedy can be hard on your mental health. Helpful for me: Promise yourself you'll exercise at least once. Spend some time with another comedian/friend during the day. Limit intake of drugs and alcohol (none if you can). Write G-dammit WRITE!

And when you check in to the hotel request a room that gets a lot of sunlight!! HUGE.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1141388789165821954>

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1141394944885739520>

173) On Travel: You want to get to the point where you are staying in nice hotels, performing in front of people who know who you are and most importantly not getting up at 6 am for radio. Carousing post-show will delay that significantly. Moderation!

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1141726933488689153>

174) I have never collaborated so extensively as I have with Director [@mbonfiglio2000](#) on my current Special: The Great Depresh. It has been a revelation how much better two minds have made it. Collaborate! One rule: you have to make each other laugh, HARD.

Even if you only have someone to review your sets and give a second opinion on what to keep collaborating is a valuable lever.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1142106642382819329>

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1142117391675142144>

175) Hopefully you started work on your summer goals yesterday. If not we can call today the first day of summer. Share your goal to hold yourself accountable. I'm going to do 90+ sets this summer and prepare 3 TV sets. "It's gonna be a good summah!"

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1142491389642649600>

176) Shot my 4th Special last night. When you shoot a Special it's best to apply consistent effort over a year or more to get it right. You can cram for a late night set but a Special is more like the SAT's. Prepare! Thank you

[@mbonfiglio2000](#) [@JuddApatow](#) And [@HBO](#)

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1142854500253913095>

177) Though not what it once was, TV is still a great way to add fans/followers. So, especially early on, make sure you're spending A LOT more time on your act than you are trying to build your online following. I try to keep social media under an hour a day.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1143276211860197376>

178) On Swearing: Swear or don't swear. I do think if the impact of a swear in a joke is not significant, keep digging for something stronger. Also it may help when a joke is new to add a swear to spice it up. Later, try it without the swear.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1143579641937969152>

179) It's not necessary to "Suffer for your art". Sounds romantic but it's a tired cliche'. You won't sacrifice any creativity by getting well. When I was sick I wrote 5 minutes in 2.5 years. Healthy, I wrote 2 hours in 10 months. Let your art suffer for you. Get well.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1143965435517272064>

180) On Travel: Enroll in TSA and/or Clear to expedite your entry at the airport. The time you will save and the stress you will eliminate is worth the initial time and money outlay. You'll reduce the likelihood of missing a flight and of writing a hacky TSA bit.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1144283763142094848>

181) From the late Carrie Fisher "...If you're living with this (mental) illness and functioning at all, it's something to be proud of, not ashamed of. They should issue medals along with the steady stream of medications one has to ingest." Pat yourself on the back.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1144745774045159424>

182) Sometime today, unless it's too painful because of anxiety, sit in some boredom. While washing dishes, folding laundry, walking around etc., unplug from distractions and daydream or ruminate over your act. Keep a pen and paper handy but don't touch your phone.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1145003548234702849>

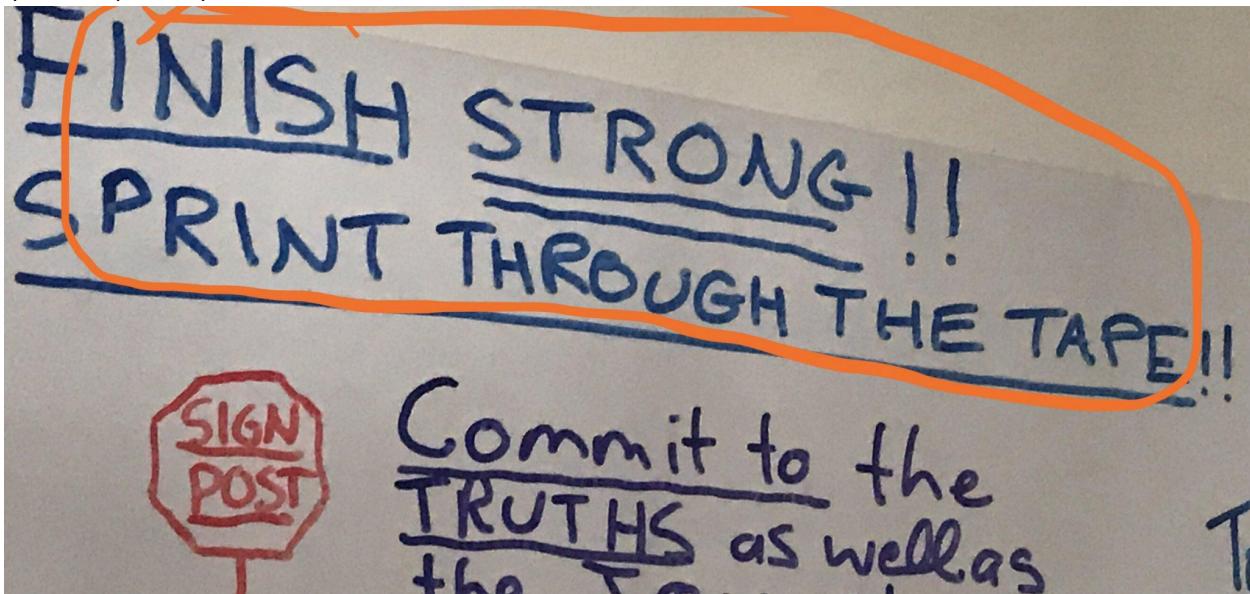
183) Start an ambitious project. Share your goal with people who will encourage and support you. Before you know it, you'll be **HALFWAY DONE**. Time passes whether you're working on your goal or not. You might as well chip away every day. [#EndOfSemester](#)

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1145358464497139712>

184) You may not always believe in yourself, especially if you suffer from mental illness. It's important to have at least one person around who sees your potential. They can be your eyes and ears when you're in the cloud of self-doubt. Reach out to them today!

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1145722300496515072>

185) I tend to get distracted near the end of a project or maybe I let up to keep myself from being too invested in the results. Either way it's not helpful. Writing this reminder on my white board 2 months before I filmed my Special helped keep me focused to the end.



<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1146091346907881472>

186) "Practice ANY art...no matter how well or badly, NOT TO GET MONEY AND FAME, but to experience becoming, to find out what's inside you, TO MAKE YOUR SOUL GROW. Seriously! I mean starting RIGHT NOW, do art and DO IT FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIVES!" - [@Kurt_Vonnegut](#)

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1146447208776179712>

(full quote)

"... Practice any art, music, singing, dancing, acting, drawing, painting, sculpting, poetry, fiction, essays, reportage, no matter how well or badly, not to get money and fame, but to experience becoming, to find out what's inside you, to make your soul grow.

Seriously! I mean starting right now, do art and do it for the rest of your lives. Draw a funny or nice picture of Ms. Lockwood, and give it to her. Dance home after school, and sing in the shower and on and on. Make a face in your mashed potatoes. Pretend you're Count Dracula.

Here's an assignment for tonight, and I hope Ms. Lockwood will flunk you if you don't do it: Write a six line poem, about anything, but rhymed. No fair tennis without a net. Make it as good as you possibly can. But don't tell anybody what you're doing. Don't show it or recite it to anybody, not even your girlfriend or parents or whatever, or Ms. Lockwood. OK?

Tear it up into teeny-weeny pieces, and discard them into widely separated trash recepticals [sic]. You will find that you have already been gloriously rewarded for your poem. You have experienced becoming, learned a lot more about what's inside you, and you have made your soul grow."

<https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/1241768-practice-any-art-music-singing-dancing-acting>

187) You have a great excuse to take today off. Everyone will understand. Don't give in. Keep your streak going or start one with the extra free time you have today. Write a little bit. You'll feel good about it and you'll enjoy the rest of the day more. I promise.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1146816731769384962>

188) Judge the worth of a joke based on the response from ideal crowds. Get in front of those crowds by opening for acts and performing in clubs that have cultivated ideal audiences. I would have abandoned my most popular jokes if I judged by the average club crowd.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1147237102666625024>

189) "Be bold and mighty forces will come to your aid." COMMIT to the unusual and the ultra-original. You'll attract the right audience and enthusiastic allies. Good artists love to reach out and help hard working contemporaries who are trying something different.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1147599345342197762>

https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Basil_King

190) Be ready. If a booker wants a 5 minute set, have a video of you ready to send immediately. If an agent asks if you have a movie/tv idea, have a script or a synopsis ready to send. It's the intersection of preparation and opportunity where a lot of fun occurs.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1147936518331387906>

191) Early on (0-5+ years) you really need to prioritize stage time of ALL KINDS. The reps will scrape off that amateurism, that neediness, that stilted delivery. Even the greatest material can't surmount the glaring green of inexperience.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1148267613631504385>

192) Over the next week, keep track of how you're spending your time. Reduce/eliminate time killer habits. Winning a hand of solitaire will never feel as good as finding an ending for a joke. "If you're killing time, you're murdering opportunity." -Thing I read

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1148638335252008960>

193) 25 years in, I'm having my most creative run ever. I've written 2 plus hours in 18 months. There are several factors but I think reading more than ever, 100+ books in that time, is important...or a complete coincidence. Either way it's heaven. [#ReadNow](#)

Some authors I've been LOVING during this time Kurt Vonnegut, Philip Roth, Toni Morrison, Mark Twain, Zora Neale Hurston, Maya Angelou (best listened to), Ta-Nehisi Coates, Gladwell, Michael Lewis, Halberstam, Ralph Ellison, James Baldwin, Emerson, Camus

And also: [@ChrisGethard](#) Books, [@peteholmes](#), [@rgay](#), and [@tommytomlinson](#) (Elephant in the Room is a masterpiece) and my favorite Non-Fiction work EVER: Adrian Nicole LeBlanc's "Random Family" also Bryan Stevenson's "Just Mercy"

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1148973189885829123>

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1148981304047919104>

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1148985814279446528>

194) Take your comedy seriously right up until you take the stage. Then have the most fun you can. Let go and have faith that serious preparation will see you through. I don't always do that but I'm at my best when I do.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1149355465320669185>

BONUS TIP: There are only a handful of comedians as good as [@thenickgriffin](#). No one is better. Watch his Special at <https://amazon.com/Nick-Griffin-Cheer-Up/dp/B07PMNSW8Y/ref=sr> then Thank me.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1149437568829853701>

195) From Steve Martin's "Born Standing Up": "Any line or idea with even a vague feeling of familiarity or provenance had to be expunged. There could be nothing that made the audience feel they weren't seeing something utterly new." We should aspire to this.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1149704837602381824>

196) Write outside whenever you can. I miss the frequency with which I could write outside at the Starbucks across from the New Beverly Cinema with [@daveanthony](#). I have no proof but I think writing outside energizes.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1150072259865976832>

197) I fight anxiety with this:

1) Low Level: Breathe in for a count of 4. Hold for a count of 7. Breathe out for a count of 8.

2) Higher levels: Clonozepam

3) Highest: Consult my Dr. (Psychiatrist) DON'T WHITE KNUCKLE IT! [#BreatheNow](#)

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1150428877266792454>

198) It's not a competition. Your colleague's success can only broaden the reach of our art form and make yours more likely. Don't concern yourself with being better than anyone. That's not conducive to creativity. Just try to be DIFFERENT from everyone.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1150798427854426113>

199) I try to avoid jokes that reinforce stereotypes about Jews. It's lazy and banal and I'm ashamed of the times I've done it. The worst thing about it is it lets bigots off the hook. They can say "See! Even he admits it!", which sickens me.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1151170918523244551>

200) I stuck with it partially because a lot of very generous comedians were kind. They complimented a joke or gave me work opening for them or passed along my name to show biz folk. For my Birthday today do that for another comedian. You'll feel great.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1151539784214618113>

201) "Perfect is the enemy of good." - Voltaire

Ruminate on your jokes obsessively, but don't wait until they're flawless to try them. After, make improvements. Later, recognize when you've reached the point of diminishing returns and let go. You've got more to say.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1151891604308922369>

202) List your standup weaknesses. Be honest. (Among 100+ others I need to weed out numerous performance flaws) Write them down and take a pic and consult that pic before every show. Work on at least one of those weaknesses every show.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1152243952134868992>

203) Gratitude is a powerful fuel. Consciously reviewing my luck overpowers my fears and insecurities. I always include the unique creative outlet of standup comedy and the extraordinary friendships that it has generated in my audit. List 5 things you're grateful for.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1152622082536235009>

204) Years ago I went off my meds because I couldn't afford them. I was too proud to borrow money. Don't do that. It's dangerous. Ask a friend/family member. If it ever comes to that and you have my phone # (meaning we're friends) reach out PLEASE.

[@robertkelly](#) NOT YOU!

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1152965434251141125>

205) It's not helpful to dwell on where you should be "by now". Instead, think about where you were a year ago or more. If you cringe at what you were doing on stage that's great! If there hasn't been much change, you need to make a fearless inventory of your approach.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1153352070881337344>

206) About a month into the summer. Go over the goals you set. Note progress and reward yourself. If you're lagging, figure out why. If you didn't set/start a goal there's still almost 8 weeks left which is so much time to do something special. Forgive yourself.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1153690195079962625>

207) I collect positive comments made by peers and thoughtful audience members. When my depression addled brain tells me I'm mediocre I can look at the nice thing that, for instance, [@NikkiGlaser](#) said to me this year. I trust her more than my Depresh.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1154056554087407621>

208) I've quit comedy twice. I kept jotting down ideas and when the itch to perform came back I returned with renewed vigor. No shame in quitting if you must, but leave the door open. When you come back you'll be welcomed. Be a lifer.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1154436784132153346>

209) "...look at a stonecutter hammering away at his rock ...a hundred times w/o as much as a crack...Yet at the 101st blow it will split in two, and I know it was not that blow that did it, but all that had gone before." -Jacob Riis Pound that rock this weekend!

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1154806006305775617>

210) Early on those esoteric jokes that a handful of "weirdos" laugh uncontrollably at and the rest of the audience stares at you? Over the years there will be thousands of these "weirdos" who will thank you for being "odd" by showing up to see you live again and again.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1155143174349905920>

211) "The world makes way for the man who knows where he is going." – Emerson
Where are YOU going? Define your MISSION. BE SPECIFIC. It will guide how you spend your time. Pardon the 19th century chauvinism.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1155509851667275776>

212) Invest in some quality note pads with a cover. No Legal pads! Unless you're annoyingly fastidious you lose the first 3 pages at least. Get a box of pens that you look forward to using, hopefully not those writer's cramp inflictors by Bic. I use:



<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1155870331384545297>

213) "It is important to remember the inconsequence of one's talent and hard work and the incredible and unmatched sway of luck and fate." - Ta-Nehisi Coates

Don't take all the credit for "success". More importantly, don't beat yourself up for not "making it"!

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1156234135603699712>

214) A young comic, hungry for stage time, hustling to get better, can't help but resent the veteran who goes on with the same act for years, wasting valuable stage time. Don't be that veteran. Keep writing and keep current. You owe it to standup comedy and yourself.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1156593054549196801>

Bonus Tip: Listen to this fun podcast I did teaching a Pastor how to add some humor@to his sermons.

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/how-to-be-funny/id1469631127?i=1000445672882>

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1156605493663666179>

215) I try my best not to return to a venue without at least a new hour not on any album or Special. I think if you return with less than 20-30 new minutes you will diminish any draw you have but worse you'll feel lousy. These are not laws but helpful guidelines I hope.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1156962219520921600>

216) I moved to NYC from LA in 2006 because I couldn't get on stage even 25% as frequently, despite a slew of major tv credits. If you want to reach your potential and you can't get on stage 300 times a year you should seriously consider moving somewhere that you can.

Let me just add that if this is a hobby, this is super fun and rewarding and it may be a sign of good mental health that you don't need to do it every night. I still think you should try hard to improve because that's healthy for the brain too.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1157315541922648065>

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1157320270929104896>

217) "All art is autobiographical. The pearl is the oyster's autobiography." - Federico Fellini

Purposefully mine your personal history for your act. Your life is a wellspring. DIG DEEP.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1157676638953332736>

218) At nearly every age I've felt too old. I look back at journals when I was 23 and I was lamenting my "late start". I was a child. If you're alive you're young enough.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1158109340877950976>

219) When I first started, we were all terrified of being hacky. We'd let each other know if a new bit had already been done or was from a hacky formula or topic. It helped ensure originality. Dehack your act with your friends. Be gentle.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1158413972200144897>

220) Try not to take too much work just for the money. I believe there's a karmic price to pay for prostituting your talent. There's enough stress in writing without adding money woes. So, keep a low overhead. Of course if desperation motivates you, enjoy!

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1158777245349142530>

221) The time during my show business career when I wasn't on a tv show or filming a movie (my career) was a great time to singlemindedly work on my standup.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1159217098599649280>

222) You don't have to do the really vulnerable stuff in front of the rowdy or small or tough audiences. You'll risk losing confidence in your most important work. Or, kill for twenty minutes with easier jokes and then ease into the tough stuff.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1159488531972141056>

223) Train yourself to ignore the obvious punchline. We rely on surprise to make people laugh so generally, use the 3rd+ idea that comes to you. No heckler should be able to yell out your punchline. If it's too esoteric you can always pull back next show.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1159861534547423233>

224) Be RELENTLESS in every way. In your pursuit of stage time. In your joke writing. In editing. In finding the right word. In pursuing writing/performing jobs. In improving. RELENTLESS.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1160213294399053825>

225) Is it time to stop using the "I know what you're thinking..." formula to open your sets? I say yes. Nobody in the audience thinks that 2 celebrities you sort of look like had a baby. You could use that time working on a more original joke.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1160579012705603585>

226) I started in Boston in 1993. If you really hustled and were willing to occasionally drive 4 hours round trip, you could get on stage every night. This was invaluable. If you can manage it, find or create your Boston.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1160938383599964161>

227) I get a lot of DMs asking for specific advice. I don't have time to respond to all of them but I can lend you some maxims to reduce anxiety. I used to write on the cover of every notebook: 1)"Don't worry. WORK." 2) "I'll figure it out."

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1161303802605166592>

228) Assuming a Persona/Character onstage?

Once again [@Kurt_Vonnegut](#) says it perfectly:

"We are what we pretend to be, so we must be very careful what we pretend to be." - Mother Night

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1161666921466683392>

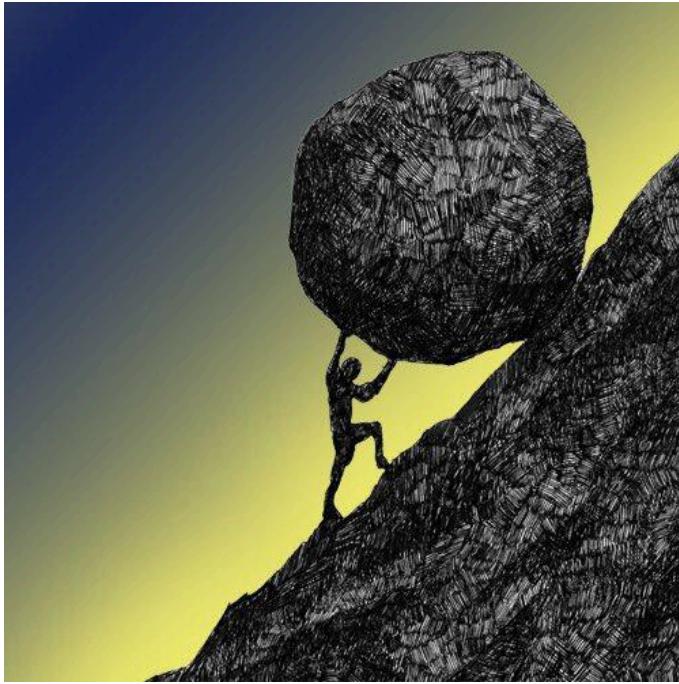
229) If it's on a T-shirt it's dead. We stand out by writing things the fashion people and advertisers and other hacks/amateurs can't think of.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1162025359744872448>

230) Make a new comedy friend this weekend. Tell someone who's act you admire that you admire their act. Maybe don't use the word admire. This probably will not work with celebrities or jerks and certainly will not work with celebrity jerks.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1162389216485085184>

231) Have you tried to make that friend yet? I promise you this Sisyphean journey becomes much more manageable if you have someone to discuss the Boulder with.



Read “The Myth of Sisyphus” by Albert Camus. Then thank me.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1162751238435463171>

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1162768661553324032>

232) You bombed? It's just ONE set. I've spent too many mornings letting last night's show dictate my mood. You're not as bad as your worst set. You're not as good as your best. Over time you'll be closer to your best set. It's just ONE set. Back to work.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1163126662504026113>

233) When I started in 1993 there were probably 50 New England comics doing the “gay voice” another 25 doing “Indian voice”. If you don't want to stop doing these voices because they're bigoted, stop because it makes you a HACK!

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1163470518076477440>

234) For months at a time I like to make comedy my hobby the way sports cards were when I was a kid. I read humor books and biographies of standups and comedic actors and watch comedy docs and films. It's fun in small bursts and brings inspiration and knowledge.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1163861814821695489>

235) I can't prove this of course but I believe having my dogs contributed to my recovery from depression. I had to walk them regularly which is decent exercise and also dog park culture forced me to talk to people. Think about getting a pet. Cats are great too.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1164228040941068288>

236) I made a “Vision Board” in '09. I put The Late Show w/ David Letterman, Conan, This American Life, and an HBO Standup Special on it. They've all happened for me. Corny? Maybe. Maybe coincidence, maybe subconscious reinforcement? Regardless, very fun to make.



<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1164555747251953664>

237) If you need to come out to music, make sure your act can live up to the promise. I see comedians come out to booming high energy songs and their act is not nearly as compelling. I call them CSI: Miamis.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1164926541987536903>

238) More than one show in a night? If there's enough time between shows, listen to the new jokes that worked so you can adjust or replicate the earlier version next show. Write while the synapses are still firing. Celebrate the new joke on the way home.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1165286695543169024>

Let me make this clear. Today's tip is GOLD.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1165297858288979968>

239) When you work with a great comedian you've never seen before, your first reaction may be envy, then usually despair. Make your third reaction spreading the word about this person. Your fourth? Write more.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1165663792539324417>

240) My Depresh has been in Remish for over a year now but I remain ever vigilant. Exercise 5+ times/week, eat right, take my meds, see friends, see therapist weekly, write and perform every day. Depression is a RELENTLESS ENEMY. Don't let up.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1166021916357996544>

241) Many of your favorite writers include the same themes/subjects/objects/interests repeatedly in their work. Don't be afraid to return again and again to your passions and obsessions to explore and expound.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1166387654453338114>

242) In 2018 I struggled during an early iteration of The Great Depresh. The club manager showed me negative comment cards, one of which said: "DON'T TALK ABOUT DEPRESSION!!!" Don't ever let one audience decide the fate of a joke or your path.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1166772882313293825>

243) Think about group therapy for coping with mental illness. With few exceptions non-sufferers don't understand our day to day struggle. I attend a free support group in NYC every week and it has helped me for years. It's similar to AA, people who get it.

I found mine by googling depression support groups.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1167099995629281282>

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1167122086587981824>

244) "If it was gonna happen it would have happened by now." - Me talking to me dozens of times over the years

Are you doing standup? Are you having fun? Are you looking forward to your next show? Then it's happened. Money, fame, mostly beyond our control.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1167456551273209856>

245) It's easier to live by "Words to Live By" if you are reminded of them frequently.

My front door:

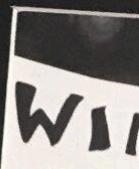
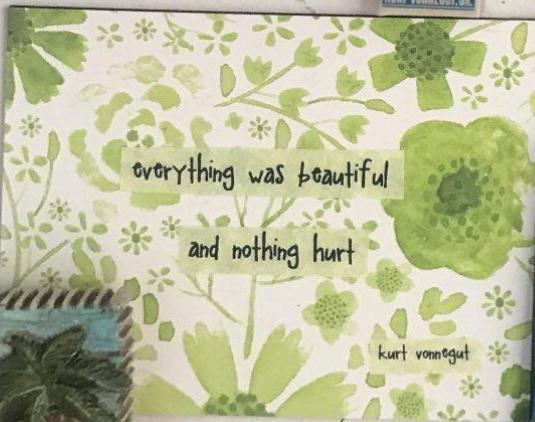
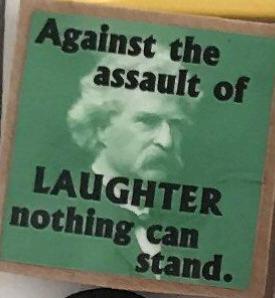
The best way to cheer yourself up is to try to cheer somebody else up.

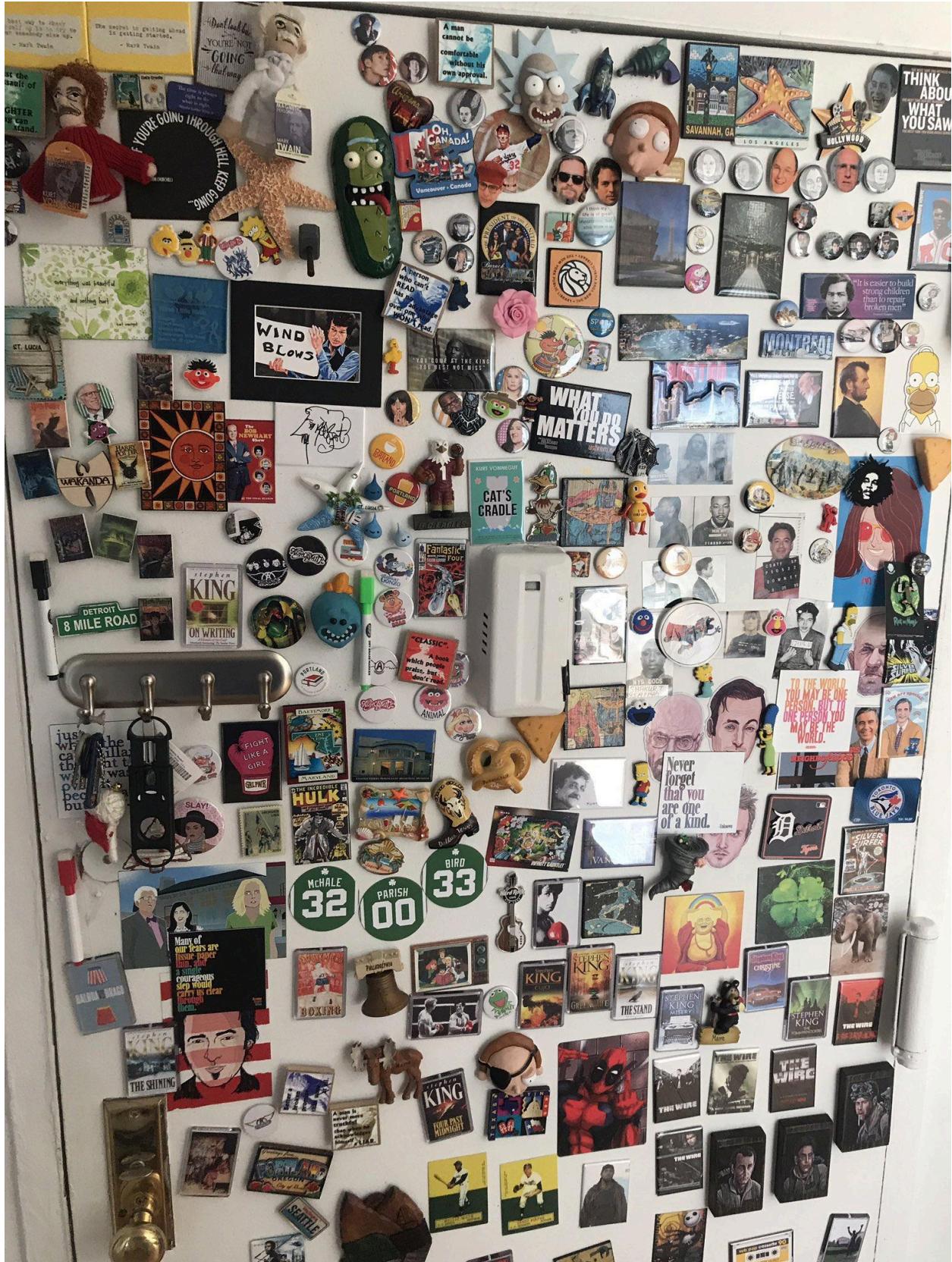
- Mark Twain

The secret to getting ahead is getting started.

- Mark Twain

Don't look back
YOU'RE NOT
GOING
that way





<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1167846785412415489>

246) Callbacks (a joke that refers to one told earlier in the set) really work and they are a fun and impactful way to end a joke or a set. Just make sure it's not contrived and that you're not being lazy about finding a better ending. [#ImBatman](#) is a Callback I closed my first Tonight Show with on 10/18/99. Killed. BTW, much like [@jayleno](#) I never touch my Tonight Show Money.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1168196236404559873>

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1168201262040539136>

247) 2 years into comedy a legendary Boston comic gave me a list of "You can't say you killed ifs".

The lesson I took to heart:

HOW you get the laugh is as important as the laugh.

Tip 247A) is what I remember from the list. Take it/Leave It/AmendIt

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1168575491340734464>

You can't say I killed if you use:

1. Hacky impressions ('94 it was Nicholson and DeNiro which was my act)
2. Shit jokes
3. Gay Voice
4. Stock lines.
5. Airplane jokes.
6. Song parody.
7. F-in in the punchline He felt these "tricks" made it too easy.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1168576659383083008>

248) Offer to close long shows. Ask for the time remaining or extra as a bonus for doing this challenging spot. It's a great test of your skills and will be appreciated by bookers. I'm forever grateful to [@TheComedyStudio](#) for giving me the last spot 1000 X's

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1168958283878686722>

249) I gave up watching College Football on Saturdays because on the road it's the best day to write. You can listen to what worked on Friday and integrate it into your act in front of the best crowd of the week. What will you give up to reach your goals?

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1169283349015420930>

250) "I just made the decision that I was going to try comedy, and if it didn't work, then I knew it didn't work. Then I would go back and do whatever. But at least I wouldn't torture myself the rest of my life, wondering whatever would have happened." - [@BobNewhart](#)

"I think you should be a child for as long as you can. I have been successful for 74 years being able to do that. Don't rush into adulthood, it isn't all that much fun." - [@BobNewhart](#)

Use the child's perspective, energy, and passion to create.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1169650218545111040>

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1169650382194249730>

251) On the road one thing that helps me stay sane and out of bed is making early breakfast plans Friday/Saturday with a friend or the other comics. I tell myself I can go back to bed after but 99% of the time I don't. Thanks for breaky [@JPosnanski](#)!

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1169997505544761344>

252) Some nights you may realize you don't have as much material as you thought. Don't panic! It's great news if it motivates you to write. I always start by trying to expand on what already works. Then take your joke fragments and premises and hammer away.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1170368786492547072>

253) You're making a living at standup. You didn't even have to write every day or get on stage every night to get there. Aren't you at all curious about how good you could be? If so, go all out for the rest of 2019. Put your head down and see what happens.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1170800218834685952>

254) Summer is over soon. Go over your goals from Tip 175 to see how you're doing. Start thinking about how you want to end 2019. Don't coast to 12/31. Sprint through the finish and set yourself up to break through in 2020.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/117119790573985792>

255) I've found confidence to be elusive throughout my life. I have learned to rely on friends like [@briankoppelman](#), [@chrisfluming](#) and [@mbonfiglio2000](#) to give objective criticism of my work. In doubt? Call on and TRUST the opinion of your life team.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1171540448839700481>

256) "Fake it 'til you make it." is gross. Rhyming does not make something wisdom. "Whoever smelt it dealt it." is another LIE. Work hard and be positive until you reach your personal definition of success which should not be money or fame. THEN keep going.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1171819687346409472>

257) It may be the audiences it may be the bookers or it may be the industry that's holding us back. It's probably all three. ;-)

Unfortunately we have no control over them. Your notebook and your calendar are within your control. Focus on them for now.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1172170008069332993>

258) Whenever possible on the road you and your Opener should watch each other's sets and take notes. Discuss in between shows and at meals paid for by the closer. Collaboration is good for your act and your mood.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1172573294400278534>

259) When I first quit smoking in 2010 I would buy myself something every Saturday with the money I saved. Reward yourself for a great set or for writing 10 days in a row or for not melting down while bombing. Rewards help.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1172941465649111041>

260) Some comics say (though not this eloquently) "No premise is inherently hacky." Maybe, but you aren't going to distinguish yourself in a pack of thousands of hungry comedians by writing TSA and Tinder bits.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1173273692266205190>

261) "It's not that I'm so smart, it's just that I stay with problems longer." - Albert Einstein

Don't give up on a joke you believe in! My joke about State Abbreviations <https://youtu.be/dLECCmKnrys> was first in my notebook in the 90's.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1173633859797299201>

262) Watch the comedians the other comedians watch. In Boston it was Don Gavin and Patrice. In LA it was among others [@ToddGlass](#) [@mariabamfoo](#) [@AndyKindler](#). In NYC it's [@attell](#) [@tedalexandro](#) [@aparnapkin](#) [@JessicaKirson](#) [@robertkelly](#)

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1173980720924176384>

263) Vary your vocal intonation. Especially over a 1 hour plus set, an audience can lose its steam if the material is delivered without much variety. Of course, you can ignore this if you answer yes to the following question: Am I [@StevenWright](#)?

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1174341937681354752>

264) By excluding hacky premises from your act, you will free up time on and off stage to work on original and innovative jokes. (I know, "There are no hacky premises!" Tell that to your peers rolling their eyes behind your back while you're middling.)

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1174808486896553984>

265) On Crowd work: It's fun to do and really blows an audience away. However, it can make it really hard to get them into written jokes after you've done great stuff extemporaneously. Early on in your career I think it's best to deploy it sparingly.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1175111690033098752>

266) I find pre-show rituals very helpful in focusing and relieving anxiety. Among other things, I say a prayer of gratitude before taking the stage. When I do a TV set, as the host intros me I turn to the curtain person and ask "Can you get me out of this?"

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1175485597604933633>

267) Last day of Summer. RT if you wrote every day and/or reached any of your Summer Goals. Keeping to a routine in the Summer is the toughest so REWARD yourself! Write your 4th Quarter goals out by end of today. Be BOLD!

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1175813870079758336>

268) This is what I think it takes to improve steadily:

"Believe that you are the baddest ass in town and that you suck. It keeps you honest." - Bruce Springsteen

Happy Bruce Springsteen's Birthday! (image in ADDENDUM)

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1176175371940581378>

269) I usually start a joke by trying to write a funny or interesting sentence. It takes away the intimidation of writing an entire joke. Just play around with a few versions of your sentence and maybe say them out loud to get the feel for which is best.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1176555742544850944>

270) Whenever you have a showcase or audition or tv appearance, spend whatever you have to to look right. Arrive early and prepared and if your hands shake when you're excited get a prescription for a beta blocker. I use propanolol. Watch [@TeamCoco](#) TONIGHT!

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1176903348433256449>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RDDhHlxYZE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4f6OfkITReA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F9b2Tfm5QjM>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YZWpyWF1RHc>

271) I wish kids could learn to shoot a basketball on 8 foot hoops. Similarly, I wish new comics could learn on nurturing audiences. You can't but you CAN concentrate on delivery and preparation without worrying about laughs. Just shoot with good form!

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1177265171774894085>

272) I watched [@mariabamfoo](#), [@pattonoswalt](#) and [@JuddApatow](#) Wednesday night and they were even funnier than when I saw them for the first time 20+ years ago. If you maintain high standards and work diligently you can do great work indefinitely. Don't let up!

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1177643053546229760>

273) A wise woman I met at a meet slash greet taught me about "H-A-L-T".

When my mood feels off I ask myself "Am I H-ungrY, A-ngrY, L-onely, or T-ired?"

Then I try to do whatever I can to address it. I've added "Have I exercised and meditated today?"
<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1177985334438555650>

274) Early on I used to ask older comics to watch my set. They would give tips, (one was put the stand behind you after you take the mic out) or tags or encouragement. It was invaluable. I still sometimes ask a friend to watch if I'm working on new jokes.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1178360799401824256>

275) Try standup at least once. Getting laughs from strangers is the most exhilarating thing I've ever done and I've dunked hundreds of basketballs. Write down your funny ideas for a few months and then find an open mic. If you already do it be GRATEFUL.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1178690383536168965>

276) Promotion is really the only "work" in standup. Best advice I got regarding promotion was they are paying you for the promotion not the standup. It's a fair deal considering I often perform for free. Give it your energy and be professional.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1179068222273937408>

277) I found early on in writing [#TheGreatDepresh @HBO](#) that I could alleviate the stress of mounting an ambitious project by defining success as "Helping the depressed feel less alone." Design a mission that is independent of grand outside forces like TV.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1179435173953331200>

278) I remember in an interview [@BrianReganComic](#) (who I consider the GOAT) said he tried to write away from the areas he became known for. I think that's one of the secrets to staying fresh and maintaining a high level of creativity. [#ReganTip](#)?

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1179836616296292352>

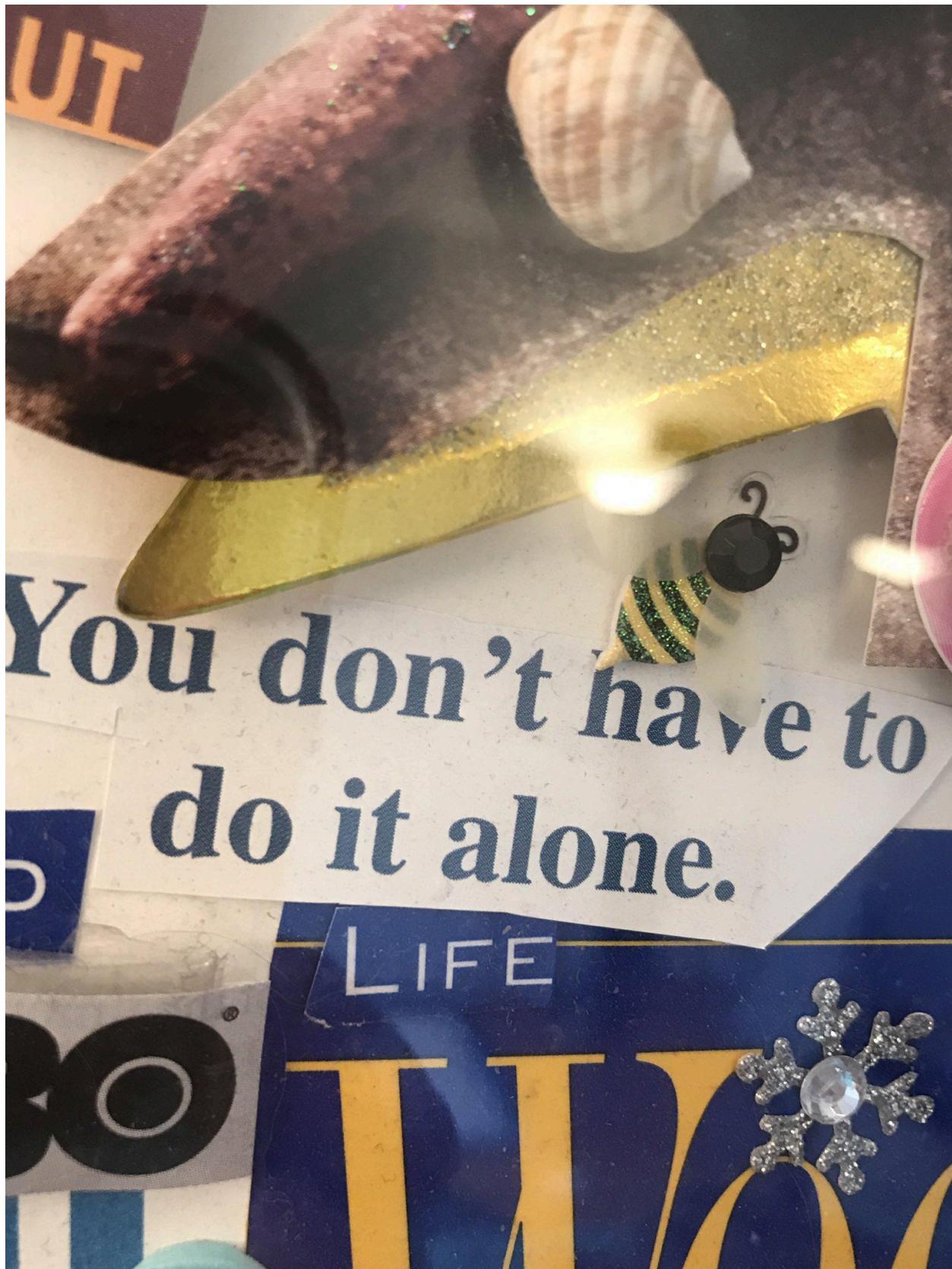
279) I'm not a fan of "claptrap". If your joke only elicits applause, it's not a joke, it's a slogan. It doesn't mean the joke isn't on the right path. It means some things about the joke should be adjusted. Back to the lab.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1180147497752240130>

280) I think in order to become other people's favorite comedian you have to strive to be your own favorite comedian. This means enjoying your topics, your takes, your presentation. Am I my favorite? Close, I'm right behind [@ToddGlass](#) and [@BrianReganComic](#)

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1180502886159147008>

281) It was clear in [#TheGreatDepresh](#) that recovery is easiest when it's a group effort. So is comedy. Surround yourself with positive, supportive partners. I am grateful for the dozens of people in my life who lifted me up. You don't have to do it alone.



<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1180870651684499456>

282) I have no strict opinion on whether you should swear in your act. I used to swear two or three times a show but I found that when I stopped using any swear words the audience greatly appreciated it, so if you're not swearing a lot maybe consider it?

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1181268194893410305>

283) There are things you love but haven't done in years. Do one of them this week. The enthusiasm and fresh perspective may inspire some interesting writing. Even if it doesn't, you're reunited with a loved one. Enjoy!



<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1181619506168377344>

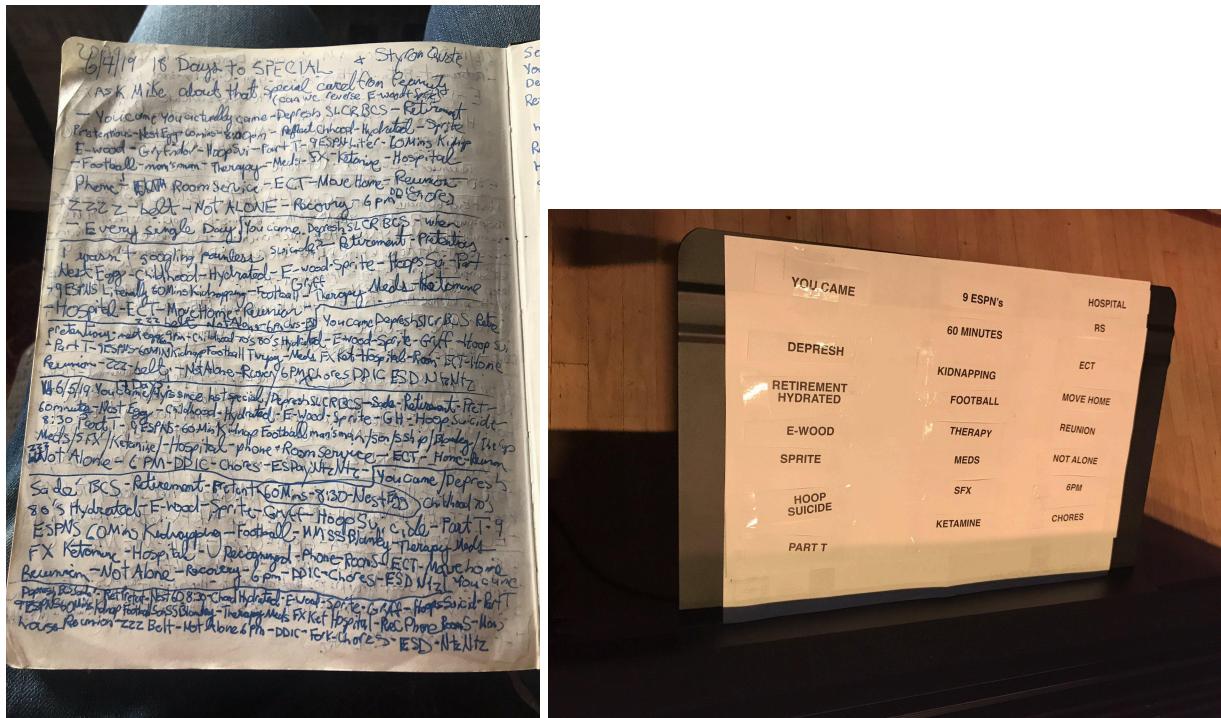
284) Close friend [@joelistcomedy](#) reminded me of advice I gave him: "Just press play on a [recorded] set...once you're listening...you are writing...it's easier to press play than...to start writing in a notebook. I still start every writing session this way."

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1181962447672037377>

285) Xplore unusual angles in a joke. Xample: Xamine things from the POV of a child or an Xpert. My man Jimmy P and I still laugh over his “Martian response to HS (football emoji) practice: Why are the hard-heads (players) taking orders from the small soft-heads (coach)?”

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1182322980854095874>

286) In memorizing a precise order of jokes for a long set, I found it helpful to write the set list as quickly as I could over and over again. While I did have a set list placed in an inconspicuous spot front of stage, I didn’t need it by show night.



<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1182702216173543426>

287) I've heard people advise comedians “Stay in your lane!” Solid advice, if your aim is to stagnate and not challenge your limits. If you want to evolve as an artist and human then ignore that nonsense. Try. Fail. Try again. Grow.

Two men who didn't stay in their lane:



<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1183047183895093253>

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1183050080510713856>

288) When I believe “I am exactly where I am SUPPOSED to be.” then I am at peace and I am productive. Thinking about what, who or where I should be mostly brought anxiety, regret and despair. Take a deep breath and say “I’m exactly where I’m supposed to be.”

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1183411848617611265>

289) When you're on a showcase watch the person right before you at least. You can ruin your whole set if you repeat their attitude or pace or content. Audiences won't laugh at you if they JUST saw you. Consider it part of your preparation.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1183768608767434760>

290) Some crowds are actually too hot to be a good test of your material. Put in some restrictions to make it harder. Examples: Use all new material, no swearing, improv additions to old jokes. Sometimes I dig myself a hole to see if I can win them back.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1184130838511935488>

291) "I wanted to be as good as anything I read from my favorite writers. I wanna write on that level in this space (hip hop). The lyrics matter." - Mos Def

Apply this philosophy to joke writing. You will stand out. I promise.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1184489629841526784>

292) What they don't always tell you about helping other comedians move ahead is that it feels really good. Recommending a comedian who then gets passed at a club or gets their first TV spot is invigorating. Try it!

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1184851629717250048>

293) I used to respond to failure and rejection by spending days in bed. Some setbacks completely derailed me. A healthier approach to a setback is to ask yourself: "How is this helpful?" In most cases it was that the No gave me more time to improve.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1185234559299776513>

294) There are jokes that haven't worked for us early on because we didn't have the right audience. This weekend revisit some jokes you believe in now that you have more receptive audiences. "But ____ said the audience is always right!" ____ is WRONG.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1185620635852034048>

295) I keep a file all year long labeled "For Boston" where I add specific jokes for my yearly show. Your knowledge of your city lets you make original jokes other comics can't. Audiences appreciate it and it helps build a new hour to perform there each time.



<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1185944037007618049>

296) For many years there were joke ideas I didn't try because A) I wasn't certain they were funny and B) If nobody laughed, I would be embarrassed by the idea. I know NOW there are few better indicators that you're onto something special than A) and B)

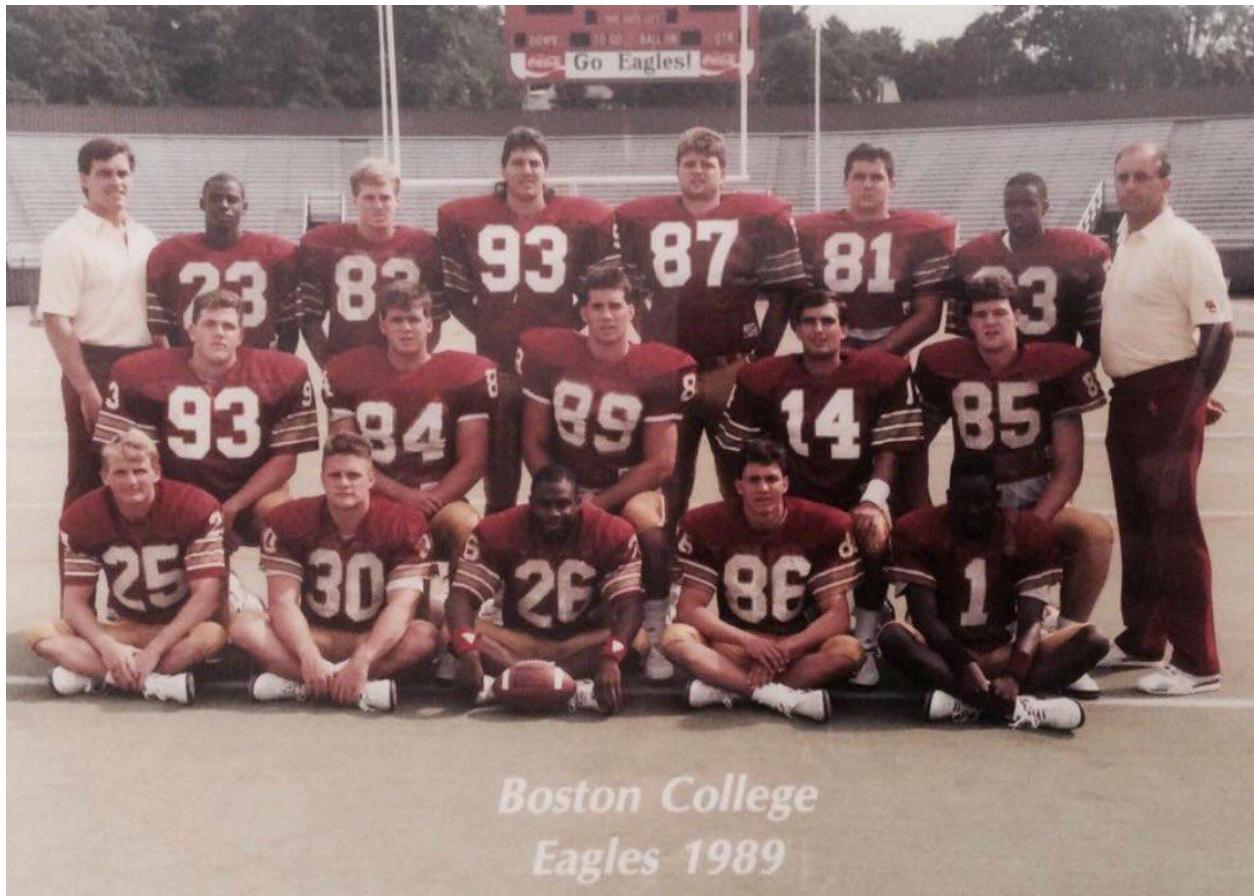
<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1186335234012471297>

297) One of the miracles of comedy is that you can get redemption for suffering, small and large, by making something funny with it. WHEN YOU ARE READY, try to write something funny about your mistakes, setbacks or even tragedies.



<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1186691783830450178>

298) Skim your life for the unusual events and activities that you can't believe you were a part of or that people can't believe you were a part of. Then write about it! Back row #93 MULLET



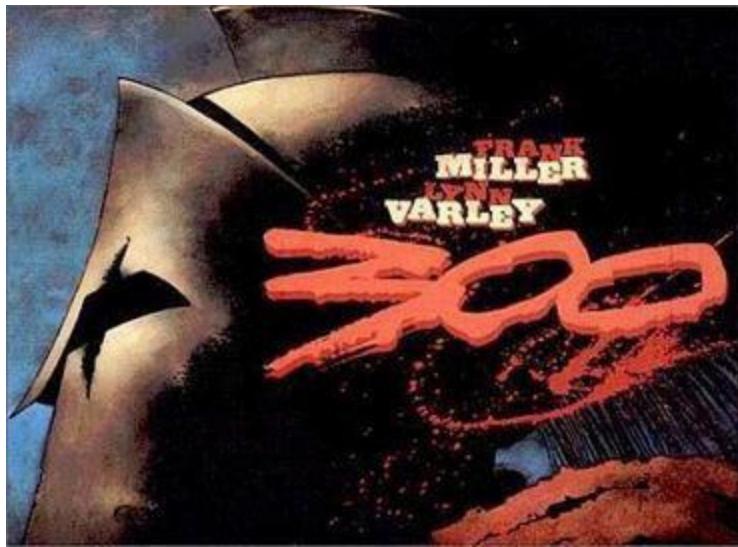
<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1187034909208174600>

299) Headliners, this weekend if you make your bonus or get more (money emoji, \$\$) than expected, how about throwing an extra few hundred to the opener and/or the MC? It's tough earning a living from the undercard. We won't forget who looked out for us (and who didn't).



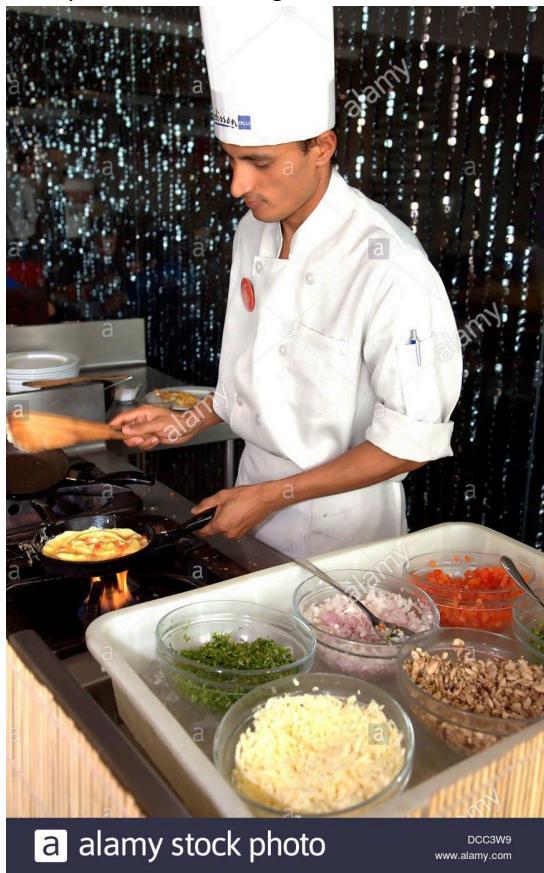
<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1187389162506326016>

300) Pass your knowledge of comedy and comedy business on to newer/younger comedians. Explaining your craft, process and philosophy will reinforce your personal understanding and remind you to practice it now. Also it will strengthen comedy overall.



<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1187758233831772163>

301) Collect joke fragments and 1-liners (unless you tell 1 liners) in a file/folder. Friend and super comic [@ComedianTomRyan](#) calls it “The Parts Store”. Review the collection regularly to see if anything is useful in another bit or you have something to add.



<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1188152867728871424>

302) Hunt for topics where your opinions GENUINELY differ from those of your peers.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1188479800278683649>

303) If you are spending weeknight unpaid or low paid sets doing only your best jokes that you know work then you are phoning it in. Force yourself to try some completely new jokes or premises. I feel better bombing with new than killing with tried and true.



<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1188840765453193216>

304) Maintain the highest quality in everything you put your name on. If you can't give a project your focus or enthusiasm then politely pass. It is invaluable to have audiences and bookers who rely on you for great work. Don't squander it.



<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1189218742624030726>

305) You will hardly ever feel like writing. Frequently you will be glad you're writing shortly after you start writing. You will almost always feel better after you've written.

“Inspiration is for amateurs, the rest of us just show up and get to work.”

— CHUCK CLOSE

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1189592213799538689>

306) We don't have many Universally Shared Experiences anymore but Halloween is a fun one to make jokes with. For 4 weeks I have had a ball talking about the Evolution of Jack (or Jill) Of The Lantern Carving. Happy Halloween! (<https://stoneykins.com>)



<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1189924053076860928>

307) A good reason not to skip a day of writing/performing is that it makes it much easier to rationalize skipping 2 or 3 days or a week or more.



<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1190286877804376066>

308) Be there for your comedy friends. We have a bizarre lifestyle even the greatest therapist cannot grasp. Opening up about fears and frustrations as well as your hopes and victories with a simpatico colleague is invaluable, especially while on the road.



<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1190677167421743104>

309) There's a bias towards performing our newest, freshest jokes. Resist the temptation to do them for auditions or showcases or tv appearances. You should do the jokes you are most confident in and have gotten the most reps with. Let the new stuff ripen.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1191034174418890760>

310) When it comes to solving the puzzles that are our jokes, draw on EVERY AREA of knowledge, expertise and talent. It's so gratifying to use a fact, a lesson, or a memory from elementary school, high school or elsewhere to fill in the joke.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1191401579380985857>

311) Some of your best ideas will come to you in the shower. There's science behind why it happens. Get a shower notepad if you have trouble remembering your ideas. Don't listen to music. Listen to your thoughts. Ruminate on tonight's set or a new joke.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1191771031721172993>

312) I never learned a thing about comedy while I was talking. Ask the veterans questions and then put your mouth away. Thanks for your wisdom coming up: [@dongavincomedy](#) [#PaulDAngelo](#) [@TonyVcomic](#) [@kileynoodles](#)

[#TeddyBergeron](#) [@TheComedyStudio](#)'s Rick Jenkins

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1192117844391141376>

313) Try teaching or informing the audience about something through some of your jokes. We love to learn while being entertained and vice versa. You have knowledge? Put it in your act! Just make sure it's funny.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1192477095718522880>

314) Print this out and hang it where you will see it frequently. Memorize it and heed it.

Sean Fitzgerald gave me a copy in 1993 that I still have in Peabody. [@jennifitz1974](#)! I think LeBron (James) has it tattooed on him.

The Man In The Arena

"It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better.

The credit belongs to the man in the arena,
whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood,
who strives valiantly...who knows the great enthusiasms,
the great devotions, who spends himself in a worthy cause,
who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high
achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails,
at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place
shall never be with those cold and timid souls who
have never known neither victory nor defeat."

- Teddy Roosevelt

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1192849417524539394>

315) If you live in a cold climate spend whatever you have to for warm gear. It's so hard to go do spots, get to the gym, visit friends, if you're in agony every time you go outside. Borrow if you have to. Don't be proud! If you can, donate an old coat.



<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1193205646914658304>

316) When you think you're as good as you can get, take an inventory of where you have cut corners and make a promise that you will eliminate those shortcuts for the rest of the year. You will get even better.



<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1193565148788776960>

317) Many times the crowd hasn't settled down when you take the stage. The best way to settle them down is to talk slowly and quietly until they are quiet. Yelling at them to quiet down will make you into a substitute teacher. Slow and low.



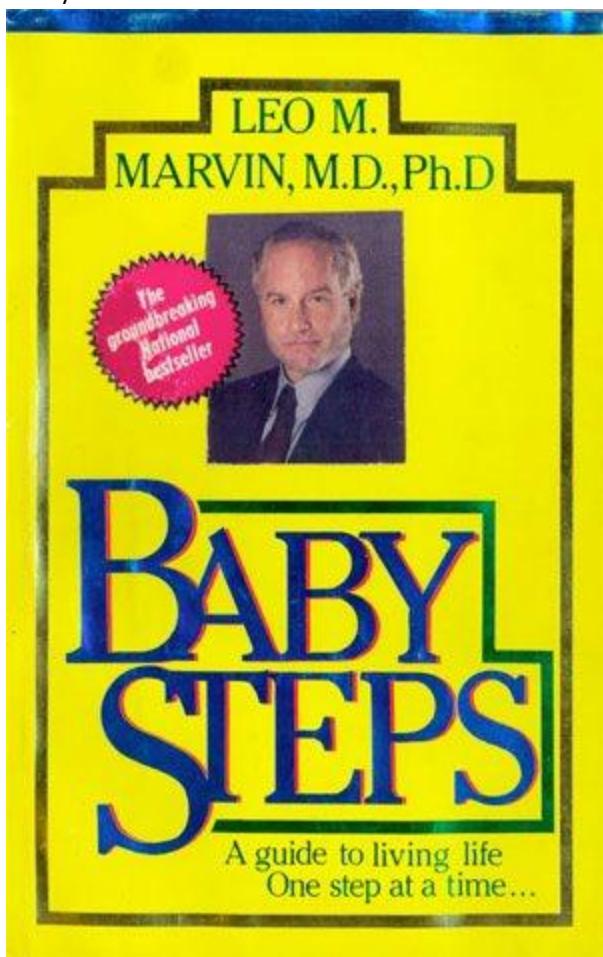
<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1193925750409375748>

318) I love to start a show by making fun of something on the stage. Choose something that isn't obvious to every comic. Audience will immediately know they're with a pro and it'll give you confidence, like making your first jump shot. Vid by [@SammyKoppelman](#)
<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1194294558865137666>

319) PLEASE, don't disqualify yourself from pursuing this because you have nerves or stage fright. I do too. A lot of us get anxious before every TV set some before every live show. It's ok. Good jokes will make up for any imperfections in your performances.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1194650441713438720>

320) Aim for gradual improvement. It may "click" for you one night like in movies and tv shows about standup but for most of us it clicks over months and years and then clicks again and again. Joke by joke. Show by show. Year after year.



<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1195028762355798016>

321) I find endless motivation from the life and work and words of Georgia O'Keefe, born today in 1887.

"To create one's world in any of the arts takes courage."

Use the energy that comes with feeling brave to reach higher this weekend. Take some risks!



<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1195385873795362816>

322) The best compliment from another comic about a joke is: "I never could've thought of that!" When you have an idea with the potential for that compliment then you MUST relentlessly hone it. Those jokes will make you.
[@Shawcroft](#) [#MitchHedberg](#)



TAIWERICA.NET

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1195757469177393152>

323) Our families often mean well but they can be undermining and take the wind out of our sails because they don't get it. If that's the case be judicious in what you share with them and whether you let them see you perform.



"You don't make us laugh. Why don't you start by making us laugh." - My Mother

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1196104896921120772>

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1196106364457803781>

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1196111481999429635>

324) When I was really struggling to get out of bed every morning I made a deal with myself:

Get out of bed for a half hour. If you want to back to bed after you can. I didn't go back to bed once. 10 minutes will probably work.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1196468556864643072>

325) Before I did my 1st open mic 10/11/93, I went to two open mics in Boston to watch. You should watch at least a few to quell your fears and make it real. You'll see people that make you say "I can do that!" Some will make you feel you can't. You can!

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1196850745091526658>

326) When my anxiety was really bad I found it helpful to listen to Audio books (free on Libby and Overdrive apps) as soon as I woke up. It distracted me from my anxious and depressive rumination and also made me feel like I was doing something productive.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1197234549224345600>

327) Going home for Thanksgiving? Take copious notes! Your family is unique. Being reminded of the dynamics and adding new memories will be great resources for your act. "Family isn't a word. It's a sentence."



<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1197549928198950912>

328) Avoid the expectation managers and the levelers and the “Don’t-get-your-hopes-uppers”. Or set boundaries and explain to them politely over Thanksgiving that you prefer people charge your batteries (or an analogy of your choice).

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1197961899415085056>

329) For holiday gifts ask for these books: “Sick in the Head” by [@JuddApatow](#), “The War of Art” by [@Spressfield](#), “The Artist’s Way” by [@J_CameronLive](#) and “Poking a Dead Frog” by Mike Sacks. What would you add to the Essentials?

New York Times bestseller

SICK IN THE HEAD

"An amazing read, full of insights."
—The New Yorker



"Anyone remotely interested in comedy or humanity should own this book."
—Will Ferrell

JUDD APATOW

Conversations About Life and Comedy
Includes new interviews!

A COURSE IN DISCOVERING AND RECOVERING YOUR CREATIVE SELF

25th
ANNIVERSARY
EDITION

the ARTIST'S WAY

A Spiritual Path
to Higher Creativity

"*The Artist's Way* brings much insight, gently helping you see what is holding you back, and showing you how to move forward."

—ELIZABETH GILBERT,
author of *Big Magic*

National bestselling author

JULIA CAMERON

FOREWORD BY NATALIE GOLDBERG

the WAR of ART

Break Through the Blocks
and Win Your
Inner Creative Battles

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STEVEN PRESSFIELD
"A vital gem...a kick in the ass." —Esquire

New York Times Bestseller

Poking a Dead Frog

CONVERSATIONS WITH TODAY'S
TOP COMEDY WRITERS



Mike Sacks

Author of *And Here's the Kicker*

330) If you're hyper-sensitive like me it helps to ask people you're working on projects with to sandwich all criticism between effusive praise. Director [@mbonfiglio2000](#) is an expert at this. My ideal coach would be Mr. Rogers.
<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1198647612146106369>

331) There are great stories from our lives that we're not able to translate into standup. Don't throw them out. Collect those stories in a file for radio and TV and other interview situations.
<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1199021218827063298>

332) Do not fixate on that one person with the stone face in the crowd. It is distracting and is just reinforcing insecurities. Instead, find those people who are getting you and let their reaction in. Those are the ones who matter. They'll be back.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1199362216245547009>

333) Learn the Rule of 3! Any list should have 3 items, 2 that set a pattern and the last should break the pattern in a funny way. Example: "Whether they be:

(looking at Flanders) Christian,
(looking at Krusty) Jew, or.....
(looking at Apu) ...Miscellaneous."

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1199732744500191235>

Also, admire the patience it took for me to hold on to this tip for 332 days! I've known it for 26 years!

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1199736267203854336>

334) I remember when I was really sick with the Depresh my friend [@KeithMercurio1](#) told me to write down 5 things I was grateful for every morning. I believe along with a dozen other things that it contributed to my recovery. Try it!

Gratitude list

9/28/17

Awake at 9:15
Healthy
Dogs alive
Going to write today
Nice weather

9/29/17

Sandy ok
Seeing ~~J~~
Got grooming appt
Seeing ~~J~~ and family today
Services

9/30/17

Healthy



<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1200094377735073792>

335) This weekend is a good time to figure out your resolutions for 2020 (next year -pm). Determining what you will need to get off to a good start is crucial to the success of the res. Get whatever items will make your plan work.
<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1200552080047529985>

336) What the F-, F- you and Go F- yourself are not your punchline. They're used by 1000 other comics who didn't put in the work. They get big laughs of course, but they're borrowed laughs. Keep writing to replace them. Swear all you want just be original.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1200812421683798016>

337) When taking a break set a timer for 15-30 minutes. Don't turn on the tv or go online. I find it best to walk and get coffee if I need it. The breaks should allow you to refresh and let your subconscious do some work. I usually get ideas on break.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1201214137721864192>

338) The very wise [@JonnyDonahoe](#) said you only need 1,000 true fans. That's very doable. They will come see your new show. So, bring a new hour, do a meet slash greet, and answer your fan mail (I'm working on it!) and they will be back maybe with a friend.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1201540323064848384>

339) Overtip the staff at the Comedy Clubs you work. It's probably good business but more importantly it's GOOD. Especially this time of year.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1201957720892616706>

340) Volunteer! Especially, if you don't have a day job. There are so many opportunities to help. You will do good and have something new to write about. In NYC we have <http://NewYorkCares.Org>. One Year we decorated an elementary school for Halloween.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1202280266171060225>

341) A. Write out an autobiography of a significant 4 or 5 year period of your life. Be specific and detailed. B. Identify components that you can use for your act. C. Write it into your act. D. Repeat B and C. [#Gold](#)
<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1202644472183611397>

342) Someday, you may be able to choose the perfect words in the moment on stage. Then all you have to do is listen to the audio, and transcribe. You still should PERFECT the words in writing/type. Word by word. Sentence by sentence. Perform. Repeat.

to the server as well as the person
on the phone.

7/26/19 Starbucks Christopher

Chipotle - ~~the~~ best value.
2nd best Margarita

Snowflake - ^{precipi} ~~a~~
Trump is not Hitler but who do you
think Hitler would vote for
^{in 2020?} and where would Trump stand on
hiding Jews in 1936

- Chipotle - the earnestness of
Mormon Missionaries but ~~they~~ have
neck tattoos

343) My brother/friend/hero interviewed [@JeffGarlin](#) and it is a MASTERCLASS IN COMEDY AND STANDUP. Listen to it NOW. Humility, Confidence, JOY.

I've never told you to listen to an interview. Trust me.

[@briankoppelman](#)

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-moment-with-brian-koppelman/id814550071?i=1000458515555>

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1203405348981358592>

344) Whenever you get frustrated, it helps to think about all the things you ever struggled to learn and now do without even thinking. If you persist, performing comedy will become one of those things.



 depositphotos

Image ID: 287684198 | www.depositphotos.com

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1203717438166175744>

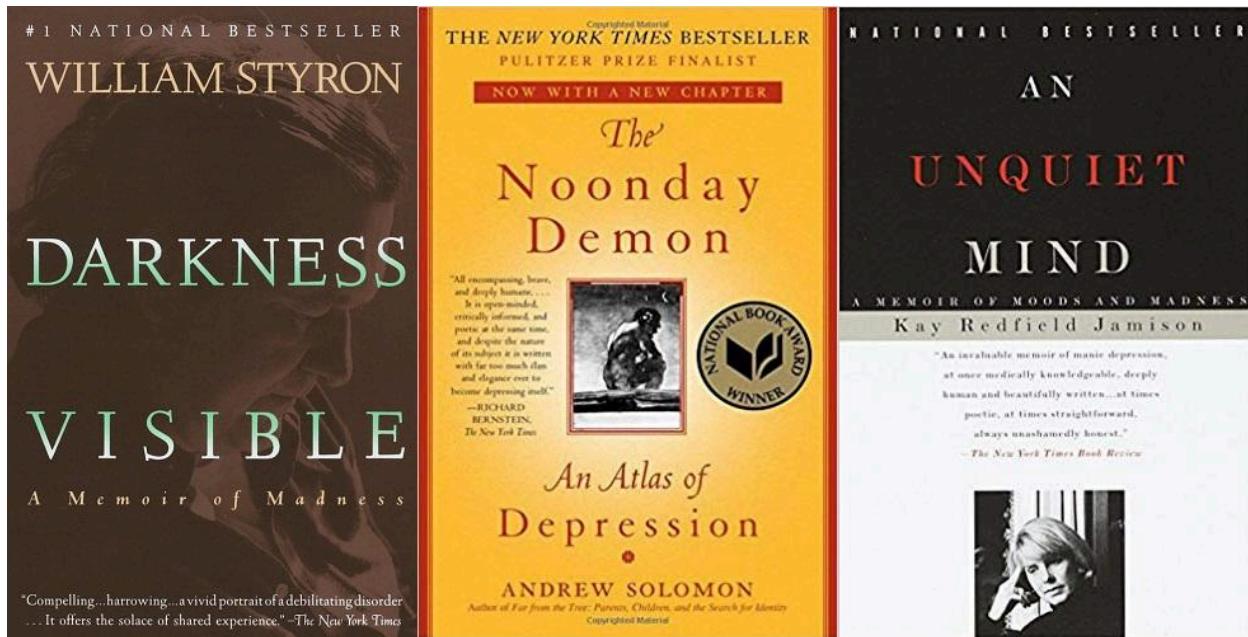
345) The following books helped me to understand depression and mental illness and feel less alone: 1) Darkness Visible -William Styron

2) Noonday Demon - [@andrewsolomon](#)

3) An Unquiet Mind- Kay Redfield Jamison

Buy them, gift them, discuss them.

More recs?



<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1204091278696296448>

346) "Saying nothing... sometimes says the most." - Emily Dickinson

You don't have to fill every second with words. A person comfortable with silence on stage is telling the audience they're in good hands.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1204475131084587008>

347) A worn out ball was the sign of a kid who worked hard. Now it's empty pens, full notebooks or keyboards that look like below. They'll call you obsessed but it's putting in that ridiculous level of effort that will produce great work. Get there.



<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1204823321658961928>

348) On the road it's important to exercise to maintain/lighten your mood.

- A) Ask where the gym is when you check in.
- B) Change into exercise clothes as soon as you get in the room.

C) Go exercise for 10 plus minutes.

D) Nap if you still feel like it.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1205180896309067776>

349) For too long I accepted low grade depression/anxiety because I didn't have the energy/hope to fight for more. Since 2017, through meds, exercise, therapy, meditation, nutrition and relationships, I've not just survived I've THRIVED. So can you. And this:



<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1205522525851201536>

350) You probably shouldn't NEED alcohol or drugs to do standup. It's a perilous path that few have navigated successfully. Maybe address it in a resolution.



<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1205898935035998209>

351) If you're brave enough to work New Year's Eve remember this will be a rowdy crowd that unless you're super famous aren't there to see you. They pay well and that's to reimburse you for your dignity. Prepare accordingly.



<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1206245909132124165>

352) Once I decided I would be a comedian instead of a CPA (2 yrs after college) I started a string of day jobs. Choose day jobs carefully. They shouldn't be taxing mentally and shouldn't require travel. My favorite was High School Substitute.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1206623312887140352>

353) Be careful who you share your dreams and goals with. Share them with people who will say "F--- YEAH!" not "Well...if...but". Most of us have enough of the second one in our head already.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1206990385186312193>

354) When you have to go up first on a show you have to be prepared. Get your first laugh quickly and pick up your energy if not your pace. Treat it like you're auditioning. You ARE auditioning...for better spots in the lineup.
<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1207369832481599488>

355) Reach out to someone you started comedy with but have not spoken with in a long time. As you reconnect and reminisce you'll see how far you've come and remember where the heart of this absurd game is. Perfect time of year for it.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1207698185491243008>

356) Don't compromise your beliefs to get a laugh. I've done it and I cringe at the memory. You didn't get into this to suppress your identity. Have faith that you'll think of something more honest.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1208091610363252737>

357) Writing on CONSECUTIVE days is important. 2 hours/day > 8 hours twice/week. I have read again and again that if you can write every day at the same time you can engage your subconscious faster. Writing from the subconscious is how "genius" happens.



 alamy stock photo

C13EXF
www.alamy.com

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1208799893055250432>

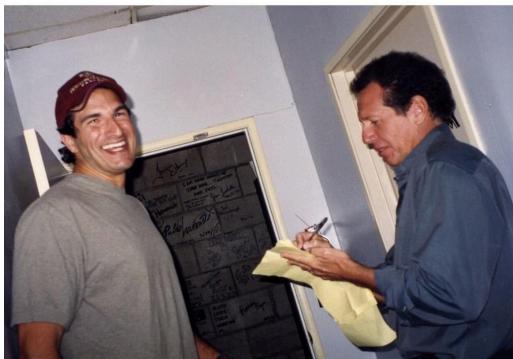
358) I have recently started audio recording all notes sessions (for projects) and next time I pitch jokes with a friend I will record that too. It's very helpful. You will be surprised at what you forgot when you listen back. Ask permission first.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1209145123285680135>

359) Meet your heroes! Almost without exception meeting my heroes has been energizing and joyful. Worst case, you will learn how not to act when you're in their position. Best case you'll stay over Chris Elliot's house with [@mbonfiglio2000](#).



 **comedyandmagicclub**
The Comedy and Magic Club



136 likes

comedyandmagicclub Gary & Garry.
Looking through the archives today and found this photo of Gary Gulman and the late great Garry Shandling. Two brilliant writers comparing notes before going on stage. If you haven't already go and watch Gary Gulman's latest special 'The Great Depresh' on HBO executive produced by Judd Apatow.

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1209508832340332544>

360) Spending holidays with kids? Pay attention to them. Listen to them. Take note and embrace their curiosity and enthusiasm within your writing. (Also avoid the “kids these days” writing. It’s lazy.) Merry Christmas from your 2nd favorite long haired Jew.



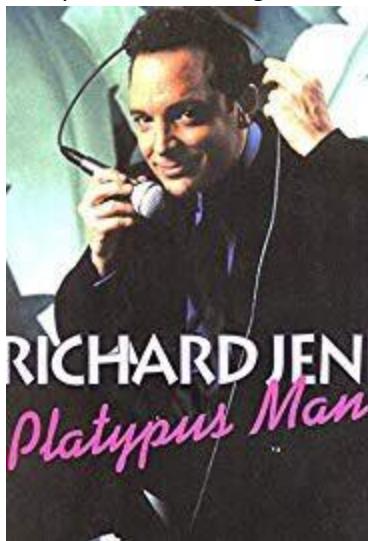
<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1209881159997558787>

361) It seems like every great hoop player had the keys to the gym growing up. Getting to do hour long sets is the keys to the standup gym. It's the single most important factor in improving every aspect of your act. PREPARE ZEALOUSLY.



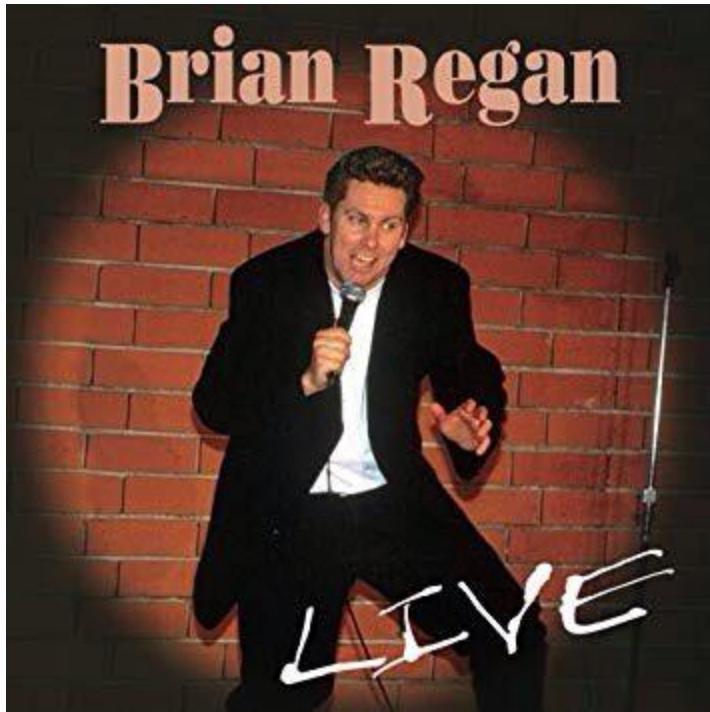
<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1210233722924081157>

362) The late great Richard Jeni said “you try to put as many laughs as close together as possible.” To me, that’s standup comedy. This weekend make your 5 minute showcase set as dense with laughter as possible. Take lines from your other bits. Tighten.



<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1210616639479267328>

363) Avoid writing jokes about places comedians spend a lot of time at: hotels, airports, airplanes, subways, dating apps, casinos. “But I have a fresh take on hotel room keys!” Unless you’re [@BrianReganComic](#), I stopped listening.



<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1210961326660567041>

364)

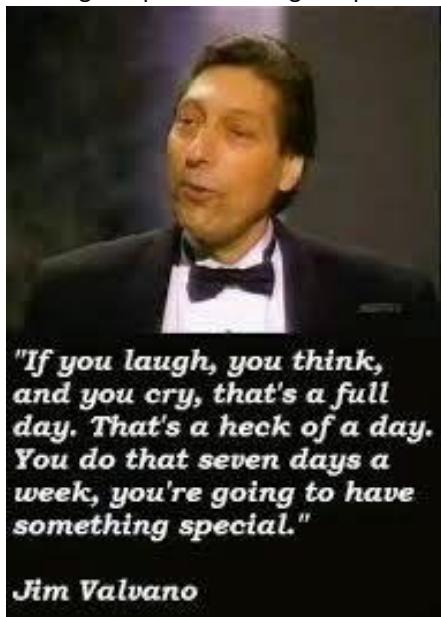
2010: Near bankruptcy and alone (in a farm house!) after fiancée left.

2011: Sold house, huge loss. Moved in w/ 3 roommates.

2015-17: Psych Ward twice. Moved back in with mother for a year.

2018- JOY.

"Don't give up. Don't ever give up."



<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1211320483502800896>

365) To sum up:

Write EVERY DAY.

Get on stage every night.

Record EVERY set AND LISTEN TO IT!

Be original.

READ!!!

Be vigilant about your mental health.

READ!!!

BE KIND.

BE THE COMEDIAN YOU WANTED TO SEE.

[#PenultimaTip #Sisyphus12/30/19](#)



<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1211690850545283072>

366)

Finish what you start.

Keep your promises.

Forgive yourself when you don't.

The greatest teacher, failure is. - Yoda

Thank you and GOOD NIGHT!



<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1212045412061892609>

ADDENDUM

<https://jamesaltucher.com/podcast/gary-gulman-breaks-down-the-best-joke>

I started it in 1996. The first lines were about continually finding that most of the states start with the same letter.
Didn't add contractor til almost 20 years later. <https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1082727652270792705>

I get two questions more than any other:

- 1) Q: Any tips for organizing? A: NO!
- 2) Q: How do I get started? A: Write some jokes! Perform them at an open mic!

<https://twitter.com/GaryGulman/status/1098277299827421184>

I use this: [Voice Recorder & Audio Editor by TapMedia Ltd](#)

"I usually take a walk after breakfast, write for three hours, have lunch and read in the afternoon. Demons don't like fresh air - they prefer it if you stay in bed with cold feet; for a person who is as chaotic as me, who struggles to be in control, it is an absolute necessity to follow these rules and routines. If I let myself go, nothing will get done."
- Ingmar Bergman

Roy Wood Jr's long ass thread

<https://twitter.com/roywoodjr/status/1124941767005167616>

If you're not a performer scroll past this long ass thread

I made the decision this year to work less on new material & instead study the art of performance. Especially performers out side the world of comedy. Music, book readings, Broadway. Even the way boxers walk to the ring. The purpose of the exercise is to see the ways other performers present their art to see if there are places where I could push myself or explore more performatively. When to be still, when to explode. When to use all of the stage when to use none.

A fun exercise is to watch a performance on mute. Without the audio you'll absorb it differently.

This is what I'm out to analyze about myself. And hopefully find new ways I can grow as a performer in terms of the visual and sensory engagement parts of stand-up comedy.

Before I can really tackle writing my next hour of comedy I first have to identify places where I can grow performatively. Only then can you start creating material that pushes those newly found performative boundaries. Another place to see performers push themselves is from artists who haven't made it yet. An Off-Broadway play or a rapper who ain't got a deal. No one tries harder at baseball than someone in Triple-A. They're SO close.

Chastity Washington is going to be a problem. Haven't seen anything like this in 20 yrs of comedy. The ferocity, the franticness, It was nonStop. And like many black comics from Chicago, the material is layered in honesty & heart that you can only get from living in the Midwest.

You forget in performance to maintain the hunger. It's part of it. Chastity Washington reminded me of 'Rocky 3' where Mickey is convincing Rocky that Clubber Lang will beat his ass.

Chastity Washington made me contemplate if I will have a future as a stand-up comedian. Period. She is coming for all ya'lls money and all your gigs. If not here there's another one coming. You're either bettering yourself or you're passing time until you're replaced. Fin.

who put this together? Patrick Mallah [@patrickmallah](#)