

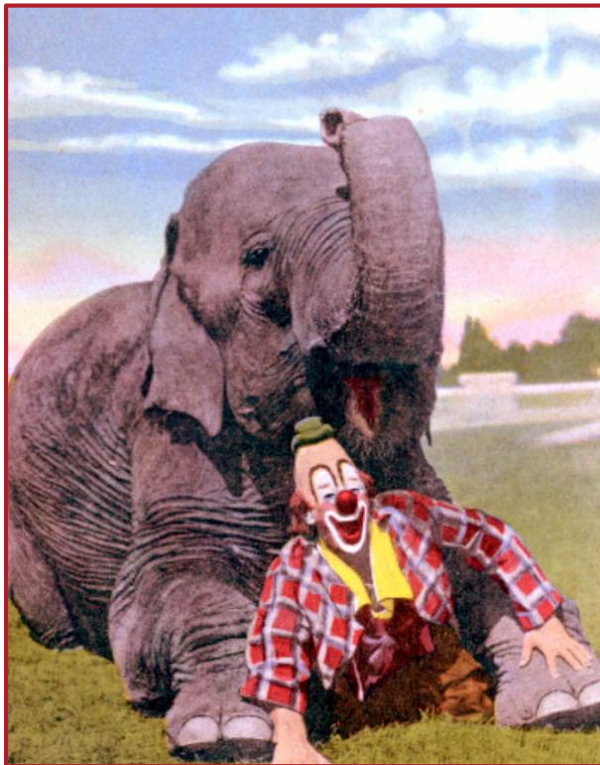
Elephants of the Circus

The Greatest Show on Earth, the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, will close in May of this year after 146 years of entertaining “children of all ages” across the United States.

Feld Entertainment, its operator, cited declining attendance and high operating costs.

The circus, known as Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Combined Shows, was started in 1919 when the Barnum & Bailey's *Greatest Show on Earth*, a circus created by P.T. Barnum and James Anthony Bailey, was merged with the Ringling Bros. *World's Greatest Shows*.

Elephants were always a major attraction to the circus, but in March 2015, Feld Entertainment announced it would stop using elephants in their shows, and that the 13 elephants that were part of their shows would be sent to the circus' Center for Elephant Conservation, which at that time housed more than 40 elephants.



Feld Entertainment said the action was not a result of the allegations by animal rights groups that had been deemed unproven by the court (noting that those groups were ordered to pay \$25.2 million in settlement for making false allegations), but rather due to the patchwork of local laws regarding whether elephants could be used in entertainment shows. The final performances with elephants occurred on May 1, 2016.

Author Marguerite Bro tells the story of a circus elephant and the lesson learned by a minister who took his little child to a circus.

The clowns were particularly good, and the last one of them was a little fellow wearing a very wonderful high hat. While he was bowing elaborately to a dignified woman, his hat fell off and an elephant sat on it.

The clown gestured wildly at the elephant, but the beast sat still. He waved and shouted again and again, but the elephant never budged. Angrily, the clown stepped behind the elephant and kicked with all his strength, and hopped away holding up a sore foot in his hands.

(more)

Then, frantic with anger, the little clown turned back to the elephant and tried to lift him off the hat. Defeated and in complete despair, the clown sat down and started to eat peanuts.

The elephant was interested in peanuts and got up, ambled over, and begged for one.

That was a powerful illustration for the minister. He realized that he had just witnessed a spiritual object lesson:

You can't accomplish anything for good or for God by crabbing and kicking at the world – or your spouse, child, neighbor or co-worker.

The principle involved is put another way by an old Southern saying: *You catch more flies with honey than you do with vinegar.*

First of all, I'm not sure why anyone wants to catch flies, unless it is to get rid of them. But the flies, of course, represent anything you want to achieve. The meaning of the saying, then, is that you will be more successful in life being sweeter – or nice – rather than being mean to people, not nice, and doing hurtful, dishonest things in life.

And it is a biblical principle:

Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers (Ephesians 4:19 NKJV).

– Beecher Hunter