

## the guy knew everyone

A few years ago, I heard the story about Fred Schmoltz. Unbelievably, he had a wager with a friend that there was no one in the world who didn't know him.

First, they went downtown to City Hall, and the mayor ran over to greet Fred. His friend was not too impressed, so they went to Columbia, South Carolina. When they walked into the capitol building, a state policeman said, "Good morning, Mr. Schmoltz. Would you like to see the governor?" And Fred and his friend were escorted into the governor's office where Fred and the governor exchanged small talk.



Fred's friend became a bit frustrated and decided to take Fred to Washington, D.C. They went into the White House, and right away they were taken in to see the President of the United States, although they didn't have an appointment. The president called Schmoltz by his first name.

Fred's friend was about to pay off on the wager when suddenly he had an idea. He got on the telephone and called his travel agent. Fred asked what he was doing. But his friend said, "No way. I'm not tipping you off. I will set the agenda, and you will know who we are going to see when we get there."

They went straightaway to Dulles International Airport and boarded a transatlantic flight. When they left the plane, Fred's friend got a taxi and told the driver the destination, cupping his hand over his mouth so Fred could not hear.

When they finally arrived at the Vatican, Fred's friend told the guard that Fred Schmoltz was here to see the pope. The guard picked up the telephone and spoke a few words, replaced the receiver, and came over to the two men, saying, "I'm sorry to keep you waiting; His Holiness will see you right away."

Fred's friend was absolutely dumbfounded, but Fred only wore a small sublime smile as the two of them were escorted to the pope's office.

As it turned out, the pope was just getting ready to address the huge crowd down below his balcony, and invited Fred Schmoltz to join him.

Fred's friend went down to join the throng of thousands of people below. When the pope and Fred Schmoltz appeared on the balcony, Fred's friend nudged an Italian guy standing next to him and said, "Look up there!"

(more)

The Italian peered up at the balcony, turned back to Fred's friend and said, "Who's that guy up there with Fred?"

I know what you're thinking: "What's the lesson in this for me?"

Not a thing I can think of, except ...



I hope it tickles your funny bone. That story, believe it or not, is listed in *The Hall of Famous Jokes*, and it is often told and written in various ways (some with language I shall not print here).

But here's the point I'm getting at: Laughter is strong medicine, drawing people together in ways that trigger healthy physical and emotional changes in the body. Health experts agree that laughter strengthens your immune system, boosts mood, dismisses pain, and protects you from the damaging effects of stress.

So lighten up and laugh a little today.

*He will yet fill your mouth with laughter, and your lips with shouting* (Job 8:21 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter