

Bad Day

Most people have bad days, and some even realize that they have just “had enough” at one time or another. Jennifer was a lot like everyone else in this respect except for one thing. Jennifer knows the very day she decided she had had enough. It was April the sixteenth. No, it wasn't because she had just filed her taxes, and maybe it wasn't even because she had a flat tire that morning on her way to work. Nevertheless that was the day that everything changed.

Jennifer was normally a pretty tolerant person and didn't let things get the best of her very often. She had all the normal aggravations of life and had just spent the last two days dealing with the yearly one known as “filing taxes.” Of course every year she put it off until the last minute and every year she told herself how she wasn't going to ever do that again. Still, true to form, the previous night she had driven down town to drop her envelope off at one of those places that would postmark it right then so she wouldn't risk having the IRS after her.

Perhaps that trip late at night was where she picked up the nail in her tire. If so, she might have the IRS to thank for the new found ability that she developed the next day in the middle of rush hour traffic. Of course she never quite accepted the possibility that she had the IRS to thank for rescuing her from a lifetime of aggravations. It just didn't seem right to be thanking the IRS for much of anything.

Wednesday morning had started about like every other work day. Jennifer was late getting up as usual. This of course did nothing for her attitude as she rushed to get the tangles out of her hair and try to make herself presentable enough to venture out into the world. The situation worsened when she knocked a crown loose while brushing her teeth. Fortunately she was able to temporarily push it back into place, but this certainly wasn't helping her attitude. She had always hated that it was a gold crown and wanted to replace it with a porcelain one, but having to go to the dentist right now was not very appealing.

On her way through the kitchen she grabbed a cup of coffee left over from the day before. Of course the flavor of re-warmed coffee wasn't very good but she hoped it would help open her eyes. Snatching her coat she raced into the garage catching the coat on the door and ripping the pocket. Yes, this was just another normal day.

Traffic always seems to be worse when you are already running late. It is probably a universal constant that keeps the galaxy from spinning wildly out of control. If people running late got a break in traffic the universe as we know it might simply break down into unrecoverable chaos. Jennifer just figured it served her right and always vowed to get up earlier the next day. Of course she never did.

Jennifer had not gotten very far when she realized this day was going to be just a little worse than normally rotten. As she turned the car to head for the freeway it was clear that something was not right. The thump thump thump was her next clue. Jennifer looked up, cursed the god of tires and pulled into the parking lot of a business. She knew what she was going to see before she got out and struggled to make herself unbuckle the seat belt and open the door to survey the damage. Sure enough, it was a flat tire.

As Jennifer stood there she just wished the flat tire would fix itself. The very thought of trying to change it herself was ultimately unappealing. A quick survey of the business where she was parked revealed that no help would be happening along any time soon. They didn't open until 10 am and it was only 7:30. Again she cursed the god of tires and looked back at that hopeless piece of rubber that was making her life even more miserable than it already was. If that wasn't bad enough she was still exhausted from the previous night's late trip and really just

wanted to go home and crawl back into bed. The very thought was almost too much and she just couldn't stifle a big yawn.

The yawn felt great, at least until she let her jaw slip sideways and it popped loudly just in front of her right ear. When her jaw popped it aggravated the loose crown and made it hurt. She always hated it when her jaw popped, but now with the tooth problem it had become just another normally miserable part of her life that she would have to do better at avoiding whenever possible. She rubbed the area and it felt a little better. Then she decided she might as well get the jack and get started. First, she took one last look at that excuse for a tire and that's when everything changed.

She tried looking away and then back again, but it was still the same. Then she walked around and looked at all the other tires finally coming back to where she started. The tire just wasn't flat any more. It had been flat, and now it simply was not. Unable to resist the impulse she even kicked the tire. Sure enough, it wasn't flat. At first she tried telling herself it hadn't been flat, but she knew better. The funny way the car handled, the thump thump thump and that flat bottomed tire she saw just moments ago had been very real. Yet, now this was also real. This was a perfectly good tire.

Not being one to look a gift horse in the mouth, at least not too long, she looked up and thanked the god of tires and got back into her car. Of course with the way this day had been going she half expected a dead battery when she turned the ignition switch, but such was not the case. The car started and she was once again on her way to work, but now she was even later than she had been before the little tire excursion.

When she reached work she parked the car in one of the last rows and walked hurriedly toward the entrance. She was wishing that she hadn't gotten such a late start. She hadn't been at this new job too long and knew that being late wasn't going to look good. However, she was still tired and yawned and again absent mindedly allowed her jaw to slip and pop which further aggravated the tooth with the loose crown. She massaged the area to alleviate the pain as she walked through the front door.

She noticed that amazingly she wasn't late. It certainly didn't seem possible but somehow she had gotten to work earlier than normal in spite of starting later and the incident with the flat, or not flat, tire. The rest of her day was relatively normal except for the coffee stain on her new skirt, but that just made it match all the rest of them in her closet at home.

When Jennifer got home that night she flipped on the TV to catch the news. She would have listened to the news on the car radio, but it had broken down years ago and she never had the money to do anything about it. As the TV came on she was surprised to see the network anchorman talking because it was a good ten minutes before the normal news broadcast. Jennifer realized that sort of thing was never a good sign.

The anchorman was talking about a terrorist bomb and about the terrible devastation that had been caused. Jennifer assumed that there had been another bombing in the Middle East just as the anchorman said, "FEMA has been activated and a command post has been set up ten miles from the epicenter in Denver. We repeat, what is believed to have been a tactical nuclear weapon has been detonated in Denver, Colorado. The extent of the devastation is unknown. Aerial pictures indicate approximately a ten square block area has suffered complete destruction. An announcement from the President is expected momentarily..."

Jennifer thought this couldn't be happening. Not again. Not something as bad as this. Her bad day didn't seem so important any more. Yet in spite of everything she couldn't stop the yawn that was overtaking her. She had her eyes glued to the television and forgot about trying to

keep her jaw from popping. It popped and the instant it did the TV seemed to change stations. At least that was what she thought had happened. She reached for the remote and scanned through all the channels but all she saw was game shows and old network re-runs. There was no news broadcast about the bombing of Denver. She couldn't imagine how they would suddenly not be broadcasting about such a thing, but there was nothing to be found on any channel. Then she started thinking about the rest of her day.

She had a flat tire that wasn't flat, she was late to work without being late, and now there was the bombing of Denver that didn't seem to have happened at all. Was she hallucinating? No, she was pretty sure that wasn't it. Then she realized that every time something un-happened it was just after she yawned and her jaw popped. Jennifer thought that sounded pretty crazy, but still...

Picking up the newspaper she had brought in with her, Jennifer looked at the front page and purposely yawned and let her jaw pop. Nope. Nothing changed. All the headlines were just the same. Then she noticed one headline. It was about a father of three getting killed in a hit-and-run accident. She felt badly for the family of the dead man. She wished things like this didn't happen, and then she yawned again. Pop. The headline about the hit and run accident was gone. Could it be that simple? Could she just wish for things to be different and yawn and pop her jaw to make her wish come true? It certainly seemed like that was what was happening.

Over the next few days Jennifer tried a number of experiments. She found that she really enjoyed un-doing problems at work. She also spent a few hours each evening un-doing things that she read in the newspaper or saw on the TV news. Then on Saturday as she was relaxing after several hours of un-doing she remembered that annoying crown that she was going to have to get fixed. But wait! Why not just un-do it? Of course, she could have the crown changed to porcelain. No, wait! Why not just turn it back into a whole good tooth? Of course.

Jennifer wished for her gold crowned tooth to un-do itself back into a normal whole real tooth then she yawned and popped her jaw. Grabbing the mirror she looked quickly into her mouth. Yes! No gold crown just a normal tooth. Jennifer pictured how easy the rest of her life was going to be. She pictured how wealthy and famous she would be. While she was thinking about the future exploits she had in mind she heard a special announcement coming over the TV.

"We repeat, Americana flight 312 from Detroit has apparently crashed just after take off and we are awaiting further word from our reporters near the scene..."

"Well, I guess we ought to do something about that." Jennifer said to the TV. She wished the plane back into the air and everyone safe then she yawned and popped her jaw. About that time the camera view switched to the crash scene where you could see that several buildings had been hit and were burning.

"No! What's wrong?" Jennifer wished again, yawned and popped. She watched the TV as the camera view switched to an overhead view from a circling helicopter.

"It is believed that there were 232 passengers on this particular flight..." the newsman reported.

Jennifer tried all night to un-do the crash but nothing worked, and she realized that somehow she had lost the ability to un-do history. What she didn't know was that fixing her gold crown had been her downfall. The nerve impulses from the irritated tooth had been shocking her pineal gland into action. No one really knows what this gland is for, but Jennifer had stumbled upon its use by accident. Then she stuffed the genie back into the bottle, never to be seen again.

