# Laugh It Off

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About a month ago, in a rare fit of productivity, I started emptying closets and drawers and mercilessly started discarding old clothes and books and sundries and I discovered a letter I had written to my unborn son two days before he showed up on the scene.

I had forgotten about it. It was meant to be given to him on his wedding day or graduation day, or some pivotal moment in his life. When I read it, I was amazed by its prophetic tone. In it, I wished several things for him, but one of the main things I wished, and now know unequivocally to be the difference between the ability to deal with life's blows or succumb to them, is a sense of humour.



People who know how to laugh and make others laugh in the face of extreme pain and fear are some of the bravest and healthiest people I know. It's no coincidence that my best friends all share this trait. I cannot tell you how many times they have laughed with me and, yes, at me, when I have been feeling my worst and it never fails to help. Recently I was lamenting to a close friend about how events in Bangladesh are so worrisome—besides my fears for family and friends, and the country in general, I have a project in development over there that now has to be postponed as a result. I expressed this to her and she said calmly, "don't worry about it until the coup is over".

"Yes! I won't worry until after the coup."

We paused and then both burst into laughter. It was patently absurd and infinitely Bengali that we refer to coups as mundane events that are more a bother than anything else. But how else is one to deal with the constant threat of unrest and instability and disruption, why, with a rueful smile and acceptance, of course! And only good humour helps with that.

Another time, a friend and I were sitting on the beach, in of all places, the New Jersey Shore, the home of the spray on tan. We were both going through divorces and feeling about as low as two