

## Usable Quotes: From Editor, Carol Pereyra, Going Bonkers Magazine

“Our readers especially enjoy our humor, cartoons and eclectic style. And while Going Bonkers articles address some serious mental health and emotional issues, our readers love and appreciate our “no-medical terminology,” easy-to-read and fun style.

“We take mental health and emotional issues and make them easy to understand. That’s difficult to do, but I think we’ve accomplished it”, says Pereyra, citing an article on borderline personality disorder, *I Hate You, Don’t Leave Me* that generated lots of appreciate reader mail.

“Many people are stressed-out. They are stressed about work, they are stressed about family, and they are even stressed about being stressed! The quickest cure,” says Carol Pereyra, “is to step-back, take a good look at the situation, get informed, and laugh.”

“I’m often asked if my formal training is in psychology. My stock answer is, *only if you can count reading nearly every self-help book ever written, and spending years in therapy dissecting and discussing every chapter!* My early career in accounting fell by the wayside as I passionately pursued my lifelong love of self-help and my natural curiosity about human behavior.”

“I am a huge believer in the power of vision – “if you can see it, you can achieve it”. I had a very clear picture in my mind of Going Bonkers many years before a single issue was ever printed. While I didn’t know its name, I knew exactly what the magazine would look like – the binding, the cartoon characters, the jokes, -- even down to where the page numbers would be on the page.”

“Going Bonkers readers are part of the \$11 billion dollar self-help market of *believers*. Believers are those who closely follow and participate in self-help trends, and whose issues and pains are not acutely life-threatening or socially dangerous. For this intelligent mega-group, the road to recovery [recovery from everyday life issues] often begins and ends with self-help, like that found in Going Bonkers Magazine.”

## Usable Q&A:

**Question** Tell us a bit about Going Bonkers. You have created a magazine which talks about diffusing stress with humor. How did you go about fusing stress and humor?

**Carol:** Going Bonkers Magazine is a self-help magazine with a sense of humor. You know.... humor is a wonderful stress-reducer. A good laugh relaxes tense muscles,

speeds more oxygen into your system and lowers your blood pressure. When you laugh, you find your stress melting away almost instantly. This concept isn't new. Americans were attracted to humor going way back. Most adults probably recall the stories of Norman Cousins, who was diagnosed with a serious illness and overcame it by laughter - by watching comedy shows. He discovered that ten minutes of genuine belly laughter would give him 2 hours of pain-free sleep. So the answer is...It wasn't difficult. Humor and stress are just a natural fit.

**Question** There are a lot of self-help books and guides out there, what makes yours different?

**Carol:** Well, Going Bonkers Magazine is not your ordinary self-help, mental-health magazine – by any stretch of the imagination. I think the ways we are different are 1) obviously the humor – keeping the tone light while presenting serious mental health issues is tricky, but we do it well. Secondly, Going Bonkers Magazine is the ultimate self-help guide. One customer worded in perfectly. They said that each issue of Going Bonkers is like having 20 self help books, delivered right to their front door. And went on to describe that it's like we've already edited out the boring parts and given them just the "meat" of what they want to know!"

**Question** Some of the articles, like “Control Freaks”, “Getting Off the ‘Yes’ Treadmill”, and “No Cry Discipline Solutions” are timeless topics. How does humor play a part in alleviating these problems?

**Carol:** Humor gives us a different perspective on our problems. If we can make light of a situation, it's no longer threatening to us. And when we find it's no longer threatening, we are more willing to explore it, and then we're able to go on and find creative ways to solve the problem. All of our articles are presented in an easy way. Our format is simple. We first present the topic, and then give the reader a step-by-step guide on how they can deal with it or overcome it. Bill Cosby is fond of saying, "If you can laugh at it, you can survive it. Going Bonkers shares that philosophy.

**Question** How do you determine topics for your articles?

**Carol:** From day one, as soon as the Going Bonkers website was up, readers told us what they wanted. We also spend a lot of time following reader trends on best-seller lists, and seeing what readers are interested in -- then we contact those authors, most of them are doctors and therapists, and we invite them to write an article, based on their area of expertise.

**Question** Obviously there is a fine line between using humor to curtail stress and improve life's problems and just making fun or lampooning. How do you achieve a helpful balance?

**Carol:** Some of our articles discuss very serious mental health issues, and of course, our first priority is to make the topic easy to understand. For instance, one article in the Winter 07 issue of Going Bonkers Magazine addressed living with someone who has borderline personality disorder. This is a serious mental health issue and can be very difficult to deal with. We titled it “I Hate You, Don’t Leave Me,” a cute title, kind of exaggerating the thinking of someone with borderline personality disorder. While we didn’t use any jokes or humor within the article itself, for such a serious topic, it was very easy to read and understand. That article created the most reader mail to date. We received many letters from people all over the country, thanking us, saying that they finally understood what was going on with their loved one.

**Question** How can people subscribe and how much does it cost?

**Carol:** The fastest way to subscribe is from our website at [www.GBonkers.com](http://www.GBonkers.com), but they can also purchase a copy of the magazine at Border Books, and various other bookstores, or online at Amazon.com. A 1-year subscription is \$24.95.

**Question** Final Piece of Advice

**Carol:** Laugh. Laugh at yourself. Laugh at situations. Laugh – even when it’s not funny. It's sometimes difficult to force a laugh in tense situations. But that's precisely when you need it most. So our best advice...just laugh.