

Humor Resources

SERIOUS BUSINESS

Keener shares his humor with young professionals

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By Anna Fry
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A sign on Walter Keener's office door says "Humor Resources." From Keener, that's what you get. Keener spoke Thursday evening about the importance of humor in the workplace at the Labette Community College Cardinal Cafe, an event sponsored by Parsons Young Professionals. He has spoken nationally and is human resources director at Power Flame. Keener told humorous personal anecdotes and used props to convey his message.

"We all have jobs that are stressful to varying degrees," he said. The important thing is how people handle that stress.

"Stress is very hazardous to us," Keener said.

Stress increases blood pressure, causes fatigue and releases adrenaline. It also saps creativity.

"If we can have humor, if we can tackle things with laughter, we can remain creative," Keener said.

Laughter helps the digestive and immune systems, decreases blood pressure and releases dopamine and endorphins.

"Those are two drugs that don't show up on the drug test," Keener said. "I like those."

Keener gave everyone clown noses to wear while they shared in small groups what stresses them. Most laughed.

"How in the world do you get through days without a clown nose?" Keener asked.

For his final analogy, Keener passed out little bottles of bubbles. After instructing everyone to blow bubbles, Keener told them to avoid the bubbles and not to let the bubbles touch the floor.

Like the bubbles, it is impossible to avoid troubles and stress in life, he said.

The second time people blew bubbles, Keener instructed them to pop them. Laughter followed.

"There are some things you just don't need to take seriously," he said.

While laughter is important, people should not relegate themselves to being class clowns or court jesters, Keener said. The bubbles that were out-of-reach represented the things people should strive for. Keener encouraged the crowd to find big things worth time and energy.

"That's what people will remember you for," he said.