

The funNny page: Laugh about it now

by Dan Digmann

I don't joke every time I have a numbness mishap. But I've had nearly nine years worth of experiences to show me that laughter often helps to turn the tables on an embarrassing moment.

Like the time when for no reason at all—well, other than not being able to feel it in my hands—I dropped my pen at work while I was reviewing a press proof with my designer.

Looking at the pen on the floor, I instantly remembered the punch-line to a joke I'd heard years ago:

A woman at a campground walked by an outhouse with its door flung open. She looked in and saw a man standing inside throwing \$10 and \$20 bills down the hole. She stopped and asked the man, "Why are you throwing \$10 and \$20 bills down the hole of the outhouse?" The man looked up and told her, "I accidentally dropped a quarter down there, and I just wanted to make it worth my effort to climb down and get it."

... Sooo I purposely took the proof, my dictionary, and two other pens on the table and swept them onto the floor. I told the designer that I wanted to



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make it worth my effort to lean over and pick up my pen. She laughed hysterically, and, well, so did I.

This was the most recent of incidents where the lack of sensation in my extremities has led to a lifetime of laughs. I still smile when I think about the time:

- I was at the movies and shoved a handful of air into my mouth because I couldn't feel that I hadn't actually grabbed popcorn from the bucket.

- I went to the doctor with a live bat in my shoe that I didn't know about because my feet were numb.

- I thought I was shaking someone's hand and looked down to notice I only was shaking his thumb.

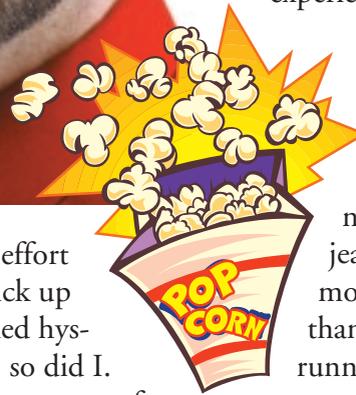
- I blew my nose before I noticed that I had dropped the Kleenex.

Each incident wasn't funny at the moment; some situations like these never are and never will be. But nearly nine years of experiences have helped me embrace the adage, "Someday, we'll look back on this and laugh."

My wife, Jennifer, expressed her jealousy that I own more pairs of shoes than she does. I buy new running shoes every four months because I drag my left foot so much I quickly wear a hole in the toe.

As ever, I try laughing sooner rather than later.

Dan Digmann is a leader of the MS self-help group in Alma, Mich., and is assistant director of publications at Central Michigan University.



Numbness of the face, body or extremities is one of the most common symptoms of MS. The numbness may be mild or very severe. To learn more about numbness and how to manage it, visit nationalMSSociety.org/numbness or call your chapter at 1-800-344-4867.