

1 Idioms and Aphorisms from James J Walsh and others of the family and friends

2
3 Christmas 1980. This book, a gift from Mary Frances Walsh Discenza and Ken Discenza, is
4 filled with a collection of our family sayings and quips covering three or more
5 generations. It seems important that these be preserved for those who follow and may be
6 interested. James J. Walsh.

7
8 "Anything that is worth doing is worth doing well." A favorite motto of James J.
9 Walsh

10
11 "While you're resting, chop some wood Albert." A quotation from the original John
12 Flick, son of Peter Flick. Both the original immigrants to the United States from
13 Germany in 1830. Albert was the son of John and the rest he was called from was before
14 lunch after working in the fields since day dawned.

15
16 "A blind hog gets an acorn once in a while!" Favorite saying of Victoria Flick Walsh
17 as picked up from her mother Eleanor Flick. Another variant is "A blind squirrel finds
18 and acorn once in a while".

19
20 "Count that man favored who God gives only one gift but does it very well." James J.
21 Walsh or as may be better stated, "Count that man favored who God gives only one gift
22 but exploits and uses that one gift to its ultimate."

23
24 "About as different as a horse chestnut and a chestnut horse." Favorite saying of
25 James J. Walsh. "If you're not going anywhere, any road will do."

26
27 "The devil laughed loudest when they invented the automobile." Earnest R. Joly.
28 "Not true - he laughed even louder when they invented the so called birth control pill."
29 J. W.

30
31 "Keep your eye on the donut and not on the hole." Favorite of James J. Walsh: "As you
32 follow your life's pathways, and you play out every role, keep your eye on the donut,
33 forget about the hole" J. W.

34
35 "You're never lost if you're on the face of the earth!" Albert Flick Albert meant if
36 you didn't know where you were, but kept going, you'd eventually reach some place you
37 knew or some one you could ask. Never be afraid.

38
39 "When all fruits fail remember house." Favorite saying of Ella McGuire Flick and her
40 daughter Victoria Flick Walsh. "House" is a bitter edible berry that grows wild on the
41 side of the mountain. It is very hardy and survives under difficult conditions.
42 Although not very tasty it will sustain life. The sense of the saying is when your
43 hungry enough, anything tastes good. Note: Or is it "haws" a kind of berry bearing
44 tree?

45
46 "A man is a fool if he drinks before he's forty and a fool if he doesn't drink after
47 he's forty." Attributed to Dr. Lawrence F. Flick.

48
49 "A fool and his money are some party!" James J. Walsh. This is a variant of "A fool and
50 his money are soon parted."

51
52 "Two ax handles across the behind!" Favorite saying of Jay B. Littlefield in describing
53 someone with a very large posterior.

"There are just 3 ways I like roast beef- rare, medium, and well done!" Dr. Joseph Walsh.

"If you can't live in a castle, you can't live in a castle!" Mary Flick Hughes, mother of Maura Flick Walsh.

"God will take care of that." Saying of Dr. Lawrence F. Flick when working on some project for the sick and poor and meeting some obstacle for which he had no answer.

"In any group, class, or society you will find; those who could do something but won't; those who can't do something but want to; and those who can do something and will. The problem is to seek out and identify this last group." James J. Walsh.

When Tori Walsh Conti was a very little girl her daddy told her if she didn't behave, her daddy would take her back and exchange her for another Tori. She looked at her daddy very seriously, not taken back even a little bit and said "If you do they'll tell you, no more Tories." As she spoke she looked up at her daddy and wagged her index finger to add emphasis. (How right she was!)

Kathleen Walsh Littlefield when she felt some thing was over done or some one was putting on airs would describe the matter as..."a little too much of a muchness!"

My sister Kathleen, without doubt the most wonderful sister a boy could have, like her mother, was not much of a housekeeper, and had a little scorn for those who overdid this art. She used to say: "I can't stand those people who spend all day manicuring the sink."

Mary Francis Walsh, who had a succession of incompetent maids who came in to do the house cleaning described them as "coming for the day and rearranging the dust!"

"Measure twice, cut once!" James J. Walsh. Also from the old German carpenter.

"It all depends on the window you look out of!" James J. Walsh. This tried to convey that each of us have different interests, different environments and different needs. The opinion we might hold will depend on where we stand and what we are able to see and understand from this position. And what may benefit us most in a personal way.

"Do you think that's musical?" Dr. Lawrence F. Flick. Used when his children were guilty of making a vulgar noise that was socially unacceptable.

"I've had an elegant sufficiency - anything else would be superfluous!" Albert Flick and Dr. Lawrence F. Flick both used this expression when they had finished a very fine meal. It would seem it might have been a common expression in the older generation of Flick's.

"It's always better to leave the table just a little bit hungry." and "Every once in a while a man needs a stomach stretcher." Both favorite expression of Albert Flick.

"We'll eat the good apples first and we'll always have good apples." Albert Flick. This saying goes back to the early roots of America. In those days every family who could had a barrel of apples and potatoes stored in the cellar, gathered from the precious falls harvest. Some people ate the soft apples first and then as time progressed all the apples became soft; and there were never good apples. But if you ate the good apples first you always had good apples and didn't worry about the soft apples.

"A story or a narrative is just a collection of words that relate to a happening or event, but a poem is the reflection of a soul." James J. Walsh.

"Wait 'till I get my hat, Albert." Elizabeth Flick Sharp (sister of Albert Flick). Lizzie Flick was an unusual woman. She was Albert's oldest sister and the closest to him. As a girl she worked in the fields with him and he always said at the county fairs she could shuck more corn and mow more wheat than any man in the county. She married twice. One of her husbands worked for the Pennsylvania Railroad and prevented a disastrous train wreck. In reward he was given the Carnegie Medal and he and Lizzie were given lifetime passes good on any railroad in the United States. Albert was on his way to Texas and stopped at Altoona to visit Lizzie. She was a widow at the time. Albert's greeting was "come on Lizzie, I'm on my way to Texas, go with me!" Lizzie's answer, "wait till I get my hat" has become a family saying indicating we're always ready to travel! A variant of this saying is "Wait a minute Albert, I'll get my hat."

"Things are bad, then all of a sudden they get worse." James J. Walsh. Or, "Things were bad and then they got worse."

"A long illness and a quick death." James J. Walsh. Meaning? We nurse things along that we should abandon, then the bottom drops out and the whole thing quickly dies. Don't waste time on a dying horse.

"Never let the sun go down on your anger." Flick family saying.

"Every baby brings its own blessing." Ella Stone Flick (grandmother of Maura Hughes Walsh).

"No man ever wears a lovelier necktie than his own child's arms around his neck." Old Irish proverb. Favorite of James J. Walsh.

"I wouldn't give you a dime for a 'good loser!' Give me a 'poor loser' every time. They are only showing it's important to them to win and you can be sure they tried. But there is one thing worse...a poor winner." James J. Walsh.

"Never confuse conceit and confidence. Confidence is knowing in your heart you are good at something. Conceit is believing other people think you are good and acting as if you expect they think you are good." James J. Walsh.

"There is no shame in trying and failing, no matter how miserably. The shame is in not trying because we think we might fail." James J. Walsh. "When the going gets tough, let the tough ones get going."

"It's not how we start in the race that counts; it's how we finish. It's not how many times we fall down that counts, it's how many times we get up." James J. Walsh. Success is not so much a matter of abilities, but ability is important, it's more a result of how we handle adversity. Ability doesn't mean much if it wilts in the heart of adversity. J. J. W.

"When all the other factors are equal, or nearly equal, a man will buy the product sold by the man he likes and trusts best." Sales motto of James J. Walsh.

"The failure of education today is that we are loading up our students on facts, and fail to teach them how to think. If a student can think, he can find the facts." Dr.

James J. Walsh (N.Y.). (This was written by Dr. Walsh in 1915 and it would seem to hold true even today!)

"All fact is truth, but until we have all of the facts we don't have the whole truth."
Dr. James J. Walsh (N. Y.)

"It is more important to know where we can find knowledge than it is to have knowledge."
Dr. James J. Walsh (N. Y.)

One Sunday afternoon while we lived on Rodman Ave, Margaret Walsh Albert was assigned to go several blocks to the store to get a quart of ice cream for dessert. Margaret was about seven and quite frightened of a large dog that was penned in a yard on her route. When she returned we asked her if all went well. "Yes, she replied, I said an aspirations all the way up and back that the dog wouldn't be out. If the dog was out, the aspirations were for the souls in purgatory."

Every nice summer day Barbara Hansen, the 4 year old next door, thundered thru our front screen door, "Big Mary, can little Mary come out?"

A favorite with our family was always Rose Arble Luther. Her father, through whom Rose was related to my mother, was a very devout Catholic and spent most of his leisure time in prayer. However, he worked in the mines and was subject to a great deal of profanity that he just picked up with out being aware of it. Every Saturday he was at confession which puzzled my grandfather as between working all day and praying all night it wouldn't seem he'd have much of a chance to sin. One day Albert asked him, "Boss, for heaven sake what could you confess and how could they give you penance?" Luther's remark became a family fable when he replied, "I say a holy Mary, and a hail Mary that I'll never curse another God Damn word!"

My mother was the most even and sweet tempered person I ever knew. In this regard she was just like her father, after who she was named, Alberta Victoria. (Many people in the family called her Bertie.) Aunt Cecilia was a typical Flick. Kind, but strong in her opinions, and loved to argue. At one time my Grandfather moved the family from Carrolltown to Moundsville, West Virginia. He sent his wife and the younger children on ahead with the furniture and had John and Cecilia come the next day driving his matched team of coal black horses. Mother would never get drawn into an argument with Cecilia, because she knew she could never win. Right or wrong Cecilia never gave up. But there was one question Mother would never agree on or hold her peace. That was "What time the horses pulled into the barn?" Just for devilment when I was old enough to know better, I used to bait them. I'd ask, "Celie, what time did the horses come into the barn?" She always rose to the bait and gave a long speech extolling how the trip had only taken half a day and the horses pranced up the drive with their heads up, full of spirit." Mother could only stand so much of this and would eventually vow the horses dragged up the drive, heads down, dead tired, arriving just at dusk after an all day trip. This had all happened 40 years before when Mother was a small child and Aunt Cecilia couldn't have been more than 14. But until their deaths they argued the matter. When Cecilia was dying, I spent all the time I could with her. She was unconscious for a full three days and I had run out of prayers, just waiting for her last breath. She lay quiet, hardly breathing as she had those 3 days. In desperation I asked "Celie, what time did the horse come into the barn." She laughed.

"If a man has earned the respect of his competitors, the love of a good woman and the affection of his children, he is a success by any measure."

217 "The success a man may achieve in life is the product of the value of environment,
218 intelligence and desire." Walshes first law.
219
220 "Never confuse wealth with success. Some of the world's wealthiest men are the least
221 successful, and some of the world's poorest are it's most successful." James J. Walsh.
222 Ghandi had not a possession in the world but his loin cloth, yet he was completely
223 content with this possession; and so he had reached his financial goal and might be said
224 to be wealthy.
225
226 "We use the words 'intelligent', 'brainy', 'smart', 'clever', and etc. as if they meant
227 the same thing. They don't. It is interesting to reflect a time on their meanings."
228
229 "Never start a fight, but if forced into it, never back away. Never lose your temper in
230 a fight. The boy who loses his temper will lose the fight." Victoria Walshs' advice to
231 her son James.
232
233 "Never be cheap. Always pay your share!" Victoria Walshs' advice to her son James.
234
235 "By nature all women are monogamous; by nature all men are polygamists." Earnest N.
236 Joly.
237 This is a variant of the poem: Hogamus, higamous Man is polygamous. Higamus, hogamous
238 Woman is monogamous. This droll poem is included in the Oxford Dictionary of
239 Quotations where it is attributed to the famous psychologist and philosopher William
240 James
241
242 "Never kick a turd; all you'll do is make a stink!" (old Texas cowherder saying). J.
243 B. Littlefield.
244
245 Ella McGuire Flick, my maternal grandmother, had a whole bevy of favorite says. Some of
246 those I can remember are noted below: "Willful waste brings woeful want." "A stitch in
247 times saves mine." "Never put off 'till tomorrow what you can do today." "A penny
248 saved is a penny earned."
249
250 "An unfortunate aspect of a democracy where the will of the majority is taken for wisdom
251 is that by the time the majority has formed an opinion a condition or evil may have
252 existed for longer than desirable. But this very inertia on the part of the people is
253 an important safeguard in keeping our public servants from hasty or overt actions."
254 James J. Walsh.
255
256 A frequent expression of mine when some one acts as if they are not too intelligent is
257 to say, "He acts as if he's about 26 cents short of a quarter!" James J. Walsh.
258
259 "I'm just trying to fill the unforgiving minute with fifty cents worth of distance run."
260 Maura H. Walsh.
261
262 "The freedom of the press guaranteed by the first amendment, while absolutely necessary
263 for a free people, has turned the temple of democracy into a den of thieves and money
264 changers. It is possibly our most abused privilege and right." James J. Walsh.
265
266 On referring to how a workman performed his tasks. "He worked as if the dead fleas were
267 falling off him." Victoria Walsh.
268
269 On commenting on a person's poor appearance of health. "He (or she) looked as if they
270 were dead and dug up!" Victoria Walsh. Or a later version: "He looked so bad he

271 should go down to the undertakers and sit on the step." James J. Walsh.
272
273 On commenting on a stupid action. "If I (or he or she) had a brain I'd be dangerous."
274 Maura H. Walsh.
275
276 When Uncle Jay invited someone somewhere and they refused, he always said, "Well, we
277 saved our meat and manners both."
278
279 "One man with courage makes a majority." Edmund Burke.
280
281 "I may not agree with what you say; but I will fight to the death for your right to say
282 it." Voltaire.
283
284 My Mother used to often tell the story of a distant relative of her mother's, Ella
285 McGuire Flick who used to come and visit them. This man was quite elderly and had been
286 one of the early pioneer settlers in the mountains about St. Augustine. He bore the
287 unlikely name of "Giggy McGarvey". Giggy was fond of recanting to anyone who would
288 listen his adventures in his travels, both of which were quite extensive. He would end
289 every story with the proud boast, "I've been all over the United States and parts of
290 Ohio." Heaven knows what he meant, but his little boast came into the family; oft
291 repeated when someone touted their wide travels.
292
293 "What the eye doesn't see the heart doesn't pine for." Margaret Joly (Mary Francis
294 Walsh's mother).
295
296 "I could not love thee half so much, loved I not duty more." Elizabeth Barret Browning.
297 Favorite expression of Mary Francis Joly Walsh and James Walsh).
298
299 "No matter how inexpensive an item is it's not a bargain if you have no use for it."
300 James J. Walsh.
301
302 "Consider that person fortunate that God only grants one gift and the person is forced
303 to learn to use that gift exceedingly well. For perseverance on a single path and a
304 long life are the secret to success." J. J. W.
305
306 "The very ineptitude of the common man to govern is a valuable inertia in a democracy in
307 that it constrains the government from hasty or overt actions." James J. Walsh.
308
309 "October's child is born to woe and life's vicissitudes must know. But lay an infant on
310 her breast and hope will lull those woes to rest." Old Victorian saying, Author
311 unknown.
312
313 "Isn't it lucky they married one another - that way they only spoiled one marriage."
314 Both Catherine Cummings Walsh and her daughter in law Victoria Flick Walsh and countless
315 other Irish biddies, and also Kathleen Walsh, Victoria's daughter.
316
317 "I feel more like I do now than I did when I came in!" Edward A. Flick (son of Albert
318 Flick).
319
320 "There should be free money for them as know how to spend it!" Author unknown.
321
322 "Between the news commentators mouths and Gods ears there is much space."
323
324 "What a man don't see when he ain't got a gun!" Uncle Jay Littlefield

325
326 "Doesn't it fit right? Get a bigger hammer!" Old machine shop saying. Also called
327 Polish engineering.
328
329 "There is no expedient to which a man will not resort to avoid the real labor of
330 thinking." Sir Joshua Reynolds. (Ami Conti).
331
332 "Write it first; then write it right." James J. Walsh.
333 A similar idiom is "To write is to edit". James Littlefield
334
335 "Let's get this show on the road" Jay Littlefield
336
337 "You looked like the little boy the calf kicked" Jay Littlefield
338
339 "It was so hot that the corn started to pop. The horses thought it was snow and froze
340 to death" Jay Littlefield
341
342 "It was a tough row to hoe" Jay Littlefield
343
344 "Saving your mitt for Sunday?" when a ball was missed by the baseball player. Jay
345 Littlefield
346
347 "He was about as useful as a whip-socket on an automobile" Jay Littlefield. A whip-
348 socket is a device on a horse (or mule) drawn wagon/buggy to hold the whip which is used
349 to encourage the animal to go on. Since the automobile is a horse-less carriage, a
350 whip-socket would have no use at all.
351
352 "What is the question, Jim?" Aaron A Bechtel AAB was Jim's mentor/teacher when Jim was
353 a graduate student. AAB was a philosopher by training. His point was that in order to
354 arrive at an answer to a scientific or philosophical question (or any other) one must
355 first understand what is the question being asked.
356
357 "Answer the question, Jim!" Tom Rudd, M.D. TR was Jim's mentor/teacher when Jim was a
358 resident/fellow in Nuclear Medicine at the University of Washington. Here the
359 suggestion is, once the question has been understood, then proceed to answer the
360 question and not add extraneous material which is irrelevant to the question.
361
362 "Off in a cloud of heifer dust". Jay Littlefield. A heifer is a cow that has not had a
363 calf, usually under one year in age. A herd of cows and/or heifers can raise large
364 clouds of dust in a dry pasture. The expression means to go off in a great commotion on
365 a journey, large or small.
366
367 "A change is as good as a rest". Betty Clower B.C. was a teaching assistant with Aleda
368 Littlefield. The British variant is "A change is as good as a holiday".
369
370 "Oh, Mrs Walsh, with these new drapes (oft' pronounced "grapes"), this place is going to
371 look like a real Paris." Mary Bellamy (also called Colored Mary), maid/housekeeper of
372 Victoria Walsh, Kathleen Walsh Littlefield and Jim Walsh.
373
374 "If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
375 chances are you don't understand the situation". Margaret Walsh Albert, a humorous
376 variation from Kipling's poem "If".
377
378 "It sounds like you got your tongue wrapped around the axle". Wil B Nelp, M.D. to JLL

379 Dr. Nelp was Jim's professor in Nuclear Medicine training at the University of
380 Washington. This means to express something in a confused or complicated way so as to
381 lose the meaning in what is trying to be expressed. In other words, "Simplify", or the
382 KISS principle, "Keep is Simple, Stupid".