

## Fear of falling

26 July, 2020

I can't watch people fall. Not without my gut clenching and believe me - with my gut, that's a lot of clench.

It amazes me that the pratfall was once such a mainstay of broad humor. It never appealed to me as funny to see someone face plant. The whole banana peel shtick does nothing for me. I've never understood the attraction of the Three Stooges or any of their progeny. And in their repertoire of pain-based yuckery, I find anything involving a fall to be particularly troubling.

I don't suppose a fear of falling makes me special. It's just that I've been trained by experience to dread any unplanned move in a downward direction. As a kid, I cracked my arm when I rode my bike through a high hedge only to discover too late the six-foot drop to concrete just beyond. My first adventure with cracked ribs involved a fall onto the exposed upright of a bunk bed in the Navy. As if that merited reprise, I cracked a few more when Daughter Two's horse-sized dog pulled the leash suddenly sideways and the curb stopped my fall intercostally.

Seems that in a lifetime of being adept at hurting myself accidentally, my most serious injuries typically came at the end of an argument with gravity. (Except for the skull fracture bestowed on me by a drunk driver; that was special.) My dislocated elbow resulted when I stepped on the only patch of ice within a country mile. I had an amazingly bruised posterior when I reached for a screw and rolled sideways off the roof. And of course, the Big One occurred when I got stupid using a ladder and burst Lumbar One.

The idea of falling instills a level of dread in me that I'm sure surpasses the norm but considering my history, I insist is quite reasonable. I don't like driving over bridges. Nor am I likely to go skydiving anytime soon. Nowadays I have Mary stand by when I use the ladder to change a light bulb in the workshop and even so, it makes me nervous.

So, no, I can't watch people fall without feeling their pain.

The squirting flower trick, though – now, THAT'S funny!

I'm a puzzle.