



*"Good dialogue is not speech. It is the illusion of speech."
-- David Mamet*

Page to Stage



Page to the Stage: Emotional Point of View

Most comedians focus on **words**.

Great comedians focus on **how they feel about the words**.

The audience doesn't just laugh at the **idea of the joke** — they laugh at your **reaction to the idea**.

In other words:



Comedy = Structure + Emotional Point of View

Structure triggers the laugh.

Emotion makes the audience *care*.

The Core Concept

Before performing a joke, ask three questions:

1. What is the target?

Who or what is being made fun of?

2. What is my emotional point of view?

Anger? Confusion? Superiority? Cynicism? Shock?

3 How do I physically or vocally express that emotion?

Tone, pause, facial expression, body language.

Sometimes the emotion begins **before the joke even starts**. Sometimes the Emotion and the laugh is in the **PAUSE**.

Keith Alberstat

 **Sarcastic Humor - Comedian Keith Alberstadt**



The 5-Minute Emotional Voice Diagnostic

Every comedian has a **default emotional point of view**.
It's how you instinctively react to the world.

Most comedians fall naturally into one of a few emotional modes.



We're going to find out **which one feels most natural to you.**

Step 1 — Create a Scenario

Take this scenario:

“Your flight just got cancelled.”

Respond **as a joke or comment** from different emotional viewpoints.

Step 2 — Try These Emotional Perspectives

Write **one line for each emotion.**

The Angry Perspective (Bill Burr energy)

“What kind of airline cancels a flight after we’re already on the plane?
Did the pilot just remember he left the stove on?”

Emotion: frustration with the world.

The Superiority Perspective (Jeselnik energy)

“My flight got cancelled...”

Emotion: smug confidence.

The Self-Aware Perspective (Taylor Tomlinson energy)

“My flight got cancelled...”

Emotion: vulnerable honesty.

The Deadpan Perspective (Steven Wright energy)



“My flight got cancelled.

Emotion: philosophical confusion.

🔥 The Cynical Perspective (Joan Rivers energy)

“My flight got cancelled.

Emotion: biting sarcasm.

Step 3 — Ask This Question

Ask Yourself:

Which one came out the easiest?

That’s usually their **natural comedic voice**.

Step 4 — Explain the Insight

Most comedians naturally gravitate toward one emotional lane:

Emotional Voice	Typical Comedians
Angry truth teller	Bill Burr
Dark superiority	Jeselnik
Self-aware vulnerability	Taylor Tomlinson
Quiet absurdist	Steven Wright
Sharp sarcasm	Joan Rivers



You can use all of them.

But one will feel **most authentic**.

Why the Joke Falls Flat

When a joke feels flat, it's usually because:

The emotion isn't clear.

If the audience doesn't know:

- who you're making fun of
- how you feel about it

...the joke lacks energy.

Comedian Examples

Bill Burr — Righteous Anger



Emotional POV: Frustrated outrage.

Bill Burr sounds like a guy who has been **holding something in for years** and finally snaps.

The joke structure may be simple, but the **emotion amplifies the laugh**.

Typical targets:

- Society
- Relationships
- Hypocrisy
- His own irrational thinking

Example dynamic:

Setup: calm observation

Emotion builds → frustration → explosion

Punchline delivered with **anger or disbelief**

Audience laughs because they recognize the **emotional truth**.

Anthony Jeselnik — Cold Superiority



▶ Anthony Jeselnik - Funniest Dark Jokes Compilation

Emotional POV: Calm sociopathy.

Jeselnik performs as if he is **smarter than everyone in the room** and knows something disturbing.

The joke is delivered with **absolute emotional control**.

Structure often:

Expectation → dark twist.

But the laugh lands because of the **emotionless delivery**.

His face says:

"Yes... I meant that."

That contrast makes the punchline explode.

Taylor Tomlinson — Self-Aware Anxiety

▶ Religious Trauma Joke Compilation | Taylor Tomlinson



Emotional POV: Vulnerable honesty.

Taylor's humor feels like a **confession session**.

The audience laughs because they recognize the **human struggle** she's describing.

Her tone says:

"I'm aware of how ridiculous I am."

Structure often:

Self-analysis → realization → punchline.

Emotion:

Embarrassment, self-awareness, confusion.



Steven Wright — Existential Confusion



📺 STEVEN WRIGHT - COMPLETE Works - stereo HQ - (pt.1 of 5)

Emotional POV: Quiet philosophical confusion.

Steven Wright delivers jokes like someone who just **noticed something strange about the universe**.

Emotion: mild bewilderment.

Example structure:

Observation → absurd implication.

The humor comes from the sense that:

Reality itself is slightly broken.



The Page to Stage Translation

Written jokes are **neutral**.

Performance adds the **emotional engine**.

Example one-liner:

"I bought some powdered water... but I don't know what to add."

On the page: clever idea.

On stage: the comedian decides:

- Are they confused?
- Are they serious?
- Are they irritated with science?

That emotional choice determines how the laugh lands.



Exercise - Emotional Framing

Give them this framework.

Step 1 — Write a simple one-liner

Example:

"I tried meditation."

Step 2 — Identify the target

Who told you to try meditation?

Therapist?

Parents?

Yourself?



Is this your continued journey choosing the wrong solutions to your problems?

Step 3 — Choose the emotion

Anger
Confusion
Pride
Embarrassment
Cynicism

Step 4 — Perform the joke with that emotion

Focus on:

- facial expression
- tone
- pauses
- body language

Advanced Concept

Sometimes the **emotion starts before the joke begins.**

Example:

Bill Burr walks on stage looking irritated.

The audience already senses the emotion.

Then he says:

"I'm not saying women are wrong..."

The laugh begins **before the punchline** because the audience feels the **emotional tension**.



Ask Yourself:

When writing a joke ask:

How do I feel about this?

Not just:

What is funny about this?

The joke comes from the **idea**.

*The laugh comes from the **emotion**.*

Clip 1 — Bill Burr (Angry Perspective)

What to point out to students

Ask them to notice **before the first punchline**:

Things Burr is doing:

- pacing the stage
- facial tension
- rising vocal intensity
- building frustration

The joke is not just the words.

The joke is **how angry his emotional approach**.

Think about how much tension that is created when Burr escalates the emotion.

“This drives me insane and nobody else notices.”

That emotional conviction **fuels the laugh**.



Clip 2 — Anthony Jeselnik (Cold Superiority)

[Anthony Jeselnik – Dark Joke Compilation](#)

What to point out

Jeselnik does the opposite of Burr.

Notice:

- almost no movement
- very controlled delivery
- slight smirk
- long pauses

Explain to students:

Jeselnik's emotional POV is **"I am calmly mischievous."**

His jokes are structurally dark, but they work because:

his emotion rarely breaks.

The audience laughs at the **commitment to the character.**

Clip 3 — Anthony Jeselnik (Structure + Emotion)

[Anthony Jeselnik – I Make a Lot of Jokes About Death](#)

Did you see the clear:

Setup → misdirection → dark reveal



What emotion is he playing?

Answer:

calm sociopathy

The joke would not work if he delivered it like:

- Bill Burr (rage)
- Taylor Tomlinson (self-reflection)

The **emotion must match the perspective.**

Emotion determines the joke's personality.

Same joke idea.

Different emotion.

Different comedian.

Exercise

The Target + Emotion Exercise

Take this Premise and Write it from the Emotional POV of Different Comedians

“I tried meditation.”

Step 1 — Identify the target

Possible targets:

- their brain
- society
- therapy culture
- their parents



- themselves

Step 2 — Choose the emotional POV

Anger
Confusion
Pride
Frustration
Cynicism

Step 3 — Write the joke

Examples:

Internal Self-Rage (Burr)

*“I tried meditation... and apparently the goal is to sit quietly with my thoughts.
Why would I do that to myself?”*

Self-aware (Tomlinson)

*“I tried meditation.
Turns out my inner child also has anxiety.”*

Deadpan (Steven Wright)

*“I tried meditation...
now I worry more slowly.”*

Same premise.

Different emotional point of view.



Exercise

Emotion Before Words



“Walk on stage and say nothing.”

But give them a secret instruction:

- annoyed
- terrified
- smug
- confused

They walk out with that emotion.

Then they say a simple line:

“So I tried therapy.”

The class immediately feels:

- anger
- anxiety
- arrogance
- vulnerability

Explain:

The joke began before the words.

Bonus Exercise

The 5 Emotion Drill

Give them this one-liner:

“I bought a self-help book.”

Perform it five ways:



- 1 angry
- 2 smug
- 3 embarrassed
- 4 confused
- 5 exhausted

Emotion changes the laugh and can also change where your brain goes for the punchline.

Key Lesson

When you write a joke, you're writing the **rough draft**. Even if it feels finished.

But when you perform it:

You're performing **how you feel about the idea**.

That emotional perspective is what brings the joke **from the page... to the stage**.

If you'd like, I can also give you one more thing that will **elevate this class instantly**:



Final Point

The joke structure triggers the laugh.

Your emotional perspective **makes the audience feel the joke**.

That's the difference between:

writing jokes

and

bringing them to life on stage.



So when you write your jokes:

- Say them out loud
- Stand up and say them again
- Imagine there is an audience in front of you and they are responding to your statements and say them again.

Get personal 1 on 1 Coaching with Jerry just follow [this link](#) to learn more!

