

# RAZIA'S LIFE SKILLS

WAS I LEK

## ASK THE EXPERT

### How to nail stand-up



**Emily Attack, actor, comedian and author of *Are We There Yet?***

Find a writer (or a very willing friend!). Even though it's your content and writing, you need someone to help you piece it together. Your routine needs a narrative and a shape, and you need someone to bounce off. Make a list of topics that you want to talk about, observations that you have picked up along the way. Naturally, you'll end up talking about all the funny events that have happened to you.

Tell the truth. Sometimes it's good to exaggerate things to create even funnier stories, but stick to your own personal experiences or what you and your friends feel about something. For example, I talk a lot about bottomless brunches. For some reason, bottomless brunch stories get such a laugh.

Choose relatable topics like stubbing your toe. That's immediately funny – if you talk about how awful



it is stubbing your toe when you've just been given really bad news, for example. Everyone can relate to that. The other important tip is don't oversell. There's nothing worse than someone trying to be really funny. Let the joke fall out of you rather than doing a dropline. Tell it naturally and the joke will find itself.

Realise that the audience are on your side and they have all paid to come and see you. You are not reciting *Macbeth*, so it's OK if you ad-lib and

improvise. People will just laugh if you make a minor mistake. Most of the time, nobody in the audience wants you to fall flat on your arse. Imagine that the audience are your mates. People like to be involved. If you instantly make friends with them, you'll feel relaxed and that you're all in it together.

*'Are We There Yet?: To Indignity... And Beyond' by Emily Attack (£16.99, Orion Publishing) is out now*

## WORK WISDOM

### Navigating a romantic relationship at work



**Jo Hemmings, behavioural psychologist**

It is never easy but it is doable, providing you're on the same level. There is no reason to leave your job, especially if you are both enjoying it, but be aware that if the relationship does break down, you'll have to encounter your ex-partner in close proximity – so this is something to mull over when you're considering a workplace relationship.

Think about your company culture and whether people would accept it or not.

Personally, I believe it is better to be honest; if you don't reveal your relationship, it will encourage gossip and suspicion very quickly. Once in the open, you adopt more productive, professional behaviour because you're not skirting around the issue.

Do go the extra mile to ensure you're highly professional at work by making boundaries between your personal and work life. It sounds old-fashioned, but consider how you conduct yourself on the job. Don't have in-jokes, private conversations or public displays of affection. No one wants to see two colleagues exchanging saliva by the water cooler!

Quote me



**'We have every right to be powerful in whatever form of sexuality we choose to have. And no one is allowed to take that away from you.'**  
Sharon Stone