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"Don't get mad, get funny" ... Judy Carter, who is in Australia to promote and teach a comedy manual, says her techniques turn life's problems into comic material. Photo: Peter Lee

Comic's advice on life: roll with the punchlines

Lenny Ann Low

"Your life is a joke. Just look at your pay cheque."

Judy Carter, a comic for 24 years and the person Jerry Seinfeld and Cuba Gooding Jr turn to for coaching, believes people should treat everyday life like a stand-up comedian.

"What I teach is, when bad things happen, you make a humour choice," she said.

The author of two best-selling comedy manuals, Carter's workshops have helped more than 5000 aspiring comics and numerous comedy industry bigwigs.

She has opened for acts as diverse as Prince and Pat Boone, taught major American corporations to improve employee relations and shown cancer and HIV sufferers how to find humour in their lives.

Carter says her techniques,

"If a guy's talking to me and looking at my breasts, I say, 'Hey buddy, if they talk back you can have 'em'."

"The object isn't to make other people laugh. The object is to make you laugh."

"Women always get, 'Smile! You look prettier when you smile'. You want to punch people but try saying, 'Thank you, I'll look drop dead gorgeous when I get a promotion'."

terrorist events, she echoes Lenny Bruce's comic formula, "comedy is tragedy plus time".

"There's this woman in the States, Julia Sweeney, who got cancer and her brother died of cancer so she wrote comedy about it."

"She said, 'Why do we always get cancer of things you need? Why can't you get cancer in your fat?' Like, Julia, you've got cancer in your fat, we're going to have to

the US cries of victory to the result of "a Mike Tyson, Gary Coleman fight" - she stresses not all Americans are "gung-ho" about it.

"The anti-war protests were huge. Except in Los Angeles because you can't get anybody to march unless they think they'll lose weight doing it."

Although she came to Australia to snowboard, Carter has organised a workshop for local comics. And discovered a race of flirts

always drink."

powerful rather than victimised.

about, although, in light of recent

about the war in Iraq - she likens

constant call to procreate."