

# LIFE'S SADNESS STAYS OFF-STAGE

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It's the big question for comedians: What do you do when life isn't funny anymore?

Stand-up comic Josh Sneed found out last year after his 59-year-old father died of cancer on the same day he was scheduled to perform for the NBC show, *Last Comic Standing*.

"It's like opposite ends of the spectrum," he said. "You are expected to make people laugh and they have no idea that you're the saddest you've ever been in your life."

What he found is that telling jokes is pretty good medicine.

"I needed it. The shows are what I needed," Sneed said. "Even if you just forget about [things] for those 45 minutes or an hour that you're on stage, that's huge that you're not just sitting around being sad."

The Cincinnati funny man will bring his routine to town tomorrow for an 8:30 p.m. performance at Lourdes College in Sylvania.

Sneed, 31, got his start in an unlikely place: doing information systems work for Procter & Gamble. He was someone who always aspired to be on *Saturday Night Live*; the IT department's idea of a funny joke was telling people they had an I.D. Ten-T error (or, written another way, ID10T). It was destined not to work.

"I can assure you that there is nothing funny about being an IT guy, which is probably why I decided to do comedy," he said.

When Sneed decided to give stand-up a try, he didn't take any chances and invited 75 friends to watch.

"My first time on stage went a lot better than my fourth time on stage because I stacked the audience, which I recommend," he said.

That's a lot harder now that he's playing bigger gigs with what he describes as PG/PG-13-rated material based on observations of everyday life. He's been featured in a Comedy Central special, which will be rebroadcast today at 12:30 p.m., and he finished second last year in the network's *Stand-Up Showdown*. He said he is scheduled to appear on Comedy Central again Sunday when the top 20 comedians of this year's contest are revealed, beginning at noon.

Sneed's audio album "Unacceptable" was released in September and he now has a weekly podcast at [www.thedetentionshow.com](http://www.thedetentionshow.com).

The bittersweet part is that his career was really taking off at the same time his father was battling cancer. When his father was moved to hospice just days before Sneed was scheduled to take his routine to *Last Comic Standing*, the comic didn't want to go.

"One of the last things my dad was able to say to me was, 'You have to go. This is what you've been working for. There's nothing you can do here,'" he said.

He ended up taking the stage even though his father died earlier that day. (To make matters worse, the footage was cut from the show before it ever aired, he said.)

"I'm a firm believer in everything happens for a reason," Sneed continued. "That little bit of joy ... assisted in carrying my family through the hardest [time] in any of our lives up to that point. It was just something to take our mind off of it, just a little bit of good news to kind of ease the pain."

Josh Sneed will perform tomorrow at Lourdes College in Sylvania. The show will begin at 8:30 p.m. in the Ebeid Student Center in McAlear Hall. Tickets are \$10. Students, faculty, staff, and alumni can receive two free tickets

with a valid Lourdes College ID card. Information: 419-824-3999 or [www.joshsneed.com](http://www.joshsneed.com).

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