

FUNCTIONS OF HUMOR



PSYCHOLOGICAL: Acts as a major coping mechanism; relieves anxiety and tension, serves as outlet for hostility and anger, provides healthy escape from reality, and lightens heaviness related to critical illness, trauma, disfigurement, and death.

SOCIAL: Lessens the hierarchy between individuals, establishes rapport, and decreases social distance.

COMMUNICATION: Helps convey information; opens the door for communication by allowing one to bring up a secretly serious subject to see how it will be received while providing an 'out' such as "I was only joking;" aids in negotiation; defuses hostile conversations.

PHYSIOLOGY OF LAUGHTER

RESPIRATORY SYSTEM: Increases respiratory activity and oxygen exchange.

CARDIOVASCULAR SYSTEM: Stimulates heart rate and blood pressure followed by a relaxation phase; vasodilatation.

SYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM: Increases production of catecholamines resulting in increased levels of alertness and memory; enhances learning and creativity.

IMMUNE SYSTEM: Immunoglobulin A found in significantly increased levels of saliva with stimulation of humor and laughter; increased spontaneous lymphocyte blastogenesis, a natural killer cell activity.

MUSCLE SYSTEM: Stimulates muscles and relaxes muscle tension, often resulting in diminished pain.

BRAIN: Laughter stimulates both hemispheres at the same time, coordinating all the senses and producing a unique level of consciousness and a high level of brain processing.

DIGESTIVE TRACT: Internal organs massaged resulting in increased peristalsis, improved digestion.

TEARS (of laughter and grief): Provides exocrine response, carrying away toxins found in cells under stress.

What's So Funny About Stress?

©Karyn Buxman, RN, MSN, CSP, CPAE

*Over the next month, don't wait until you feel better to have fun—
Have fun and then you'll feel better.*

1. Create a "Play List" of at least 20 things you find fun to do (half under \$10)
2. Designate a humor buddy—call or email them
3. Watch a funny movie (start of collection of your favorites)
4. Start your own humor journal: begin with one amusing memory, add as you recall other stories.
5. Look through the newspaper/magazines for "bloopers" or funny headlines
6. Have a marshmallow fight (you can eat the left over ammunition)
7. Search for "laughing babies" on YouTube.com
8. Learn one joke—tell it to at least one other person
9. Listen to a favorite comedian (CD, tape, MP3, iTunes, YouTube)
10. Read something entertaining strictly for enjoyment
11. Create an "Incredible Explanation" list (I Can't Go to Work Today Because...)
12. Write a silly limerick or poem
13. Try humor visualization-- jest for yourself!
14. Clip cartoons that you can relate to (personalize them with names, places, etc)
15. Attend an Improv or Comedy Club session (or watch *Whose Line Is It Anyway?*)
16. Send a funny card (earn bonus points if for no special occasion)
17. Leave a humorous message on your own answering machine
18. Keep a humor file at your desk or bedside and refer to it daily
19. Try a humor meditation (recall a pleasant humorous experience, perhaps from childhood, recall as much detail as you can)
20. Lighten up your environment (cartoons/props/photos/toys/etc.)
21. Wear a funny hat, button, tie, socks (okay to be subtle—it's just for you!)
22. Eat fun food (Snickers bars, Ho Hos, Laffy Taffy, etc) or make your food *fun*
23. Become a student of humor (check out www.aath.org or www.WhatsSoFunnyAbout.com)
24. Write your own cartoon caption
25. Catastrophize your "icky" moments
26. Sing a silly song
27. Buy your very own humorous prop or toy
28. Share a "Most Embarrassing Moment" with someone else
29. Start your day with "laughter yoga" or "laughter-for-no-reason"
30. Have a good laugh-- at yourself
31. Write to Karyn@KarynBuxman.com with a progress report

Reading & Resources for *Your Spare Time!*

By Karyn Buxman, RN, MSN, CSP, CPAE

- Buxman, K. (2012) What's so funny about... business? Humor as a competitive edge. La Jolla: What's So Funny About... ? Publishing. (Available November 2012 Amazon & Kindle).
- Buxman, K. (2012). What's so funny about... diabetes? A creative approach to coping with your disease. La Jolla, CA: What's So Funny About...? Publishing. (Available on Amazon & Kindle).
- Buxman, K. (2012). What's so funny about... heart disease? A creative approach to coping with your condition. La Jolla, CA: What's So Funny About...? Publishing. (Available on Amazon & Kindle in September 2012).
- Culberson, R. (2012). Do it well. Make it fun. The key to success in life, death, and almost everything in between. Austin, TX: Greenleaf Book Group Press.
- Franzini, L (2012). Just kidding. Using humor effectively. New York:Rowman & Littlefield
- Godek, G. (2010). 1001 Ways to Be Romantic, 3rd edition. Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks.
- McGhee, P. (2010) Humor: The lighter path to resilience and health. Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse.
- Morrison, M. (2012). Using humor to maximize living. New York: Rowman & Littlefield

ORGANIZATIONS and RESOURCES

www.aath.org Association for Applied and Therapeutic Humor (AATH). For those who apply humor in their respective vocational capacities. Annual conference April 4-7, 2013 in San Diego with CEUs and graduate credit; articles; teleseminars/webinars and more.

www.KarynBuxman.com Articles, resources, blog posts, video clips, information, entertainment.

www.WhatsSoFunnyAbout.com Articles on strategic humor for health and business.

www.worldlaughtertour.com A plethora of information about therapeutic laughter (also known as laughter for no reason!).

www.Youtube.com Check out clips by Karyn Buxman, along with other humorous resources.

LyteBytes: To receive periodic email articles and tips, Text 22828 Message: Laughter

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And <http://www.facebook.com/KarynBuxmanSpeaks>

Amazed and Amused

From the book by Karyn Buxman, RN, CSP, CPAE

To think with an Amazed and Amused mind—

To love with an Amazed and Amused heart—

To live with an Amazed and Amused spirit—

This is my wish for you.

To see the joy and wonder amid the pain—

In a baby's first cry

or a loved one's last breath.

To buy your ticket and take the ride—

To ride the rollercoaster with the wind in your hair,

to walk through the haunted house with your heart in your throat.

To delight in a child's giggle—

a perfect cup of coffee ~ your favorite song on the radio ~

an unexpected windfall ~ a penny on the sidewalk (heads up, for good luck) ~

a falling star ~ a good joke ~ a smile from a stranger.

To speed-up, slow-down, or go-backwards—

Whatever is required at the moment

to keep yourself moving forward.

To grasp the game of life—

To play hard, win gracefully and lose honorably . . .

and get up to play again and again and again.

To embrace seeming negatives, trusting that they will turn out for the best—

To see the humor in life's absurdities.

To be able to laugh at yourself.

To have an attitude of gratitude and a forgiving spirit—

To cast off resentment and regret,

To practice acts of kindness . . . random or otherwise.

To live each day Amazed and Amused—

This is to achieve true success.

This is to attain lasting significance.

This is to experience genuine happiness.