

# For Laughing Out Loud

By Tim Tice

Laughter is one of those reactions we all have when conversing with someone, simply because laughing makes you feel good. Laughter, although a natural response, is actually a complex set of reactions that involves many of the same skills that are required in problem solving.

Laughter is the physiological response to “humor”. Laughter actually happens when a gesture is created while at the same time a sound is produced. Don’t go there! Pending on how much we feel is funny, the laugh can be a giggle, snort or belly buster. These reactions are also related to the gender of the laughing person.

Not trying to go too deep on this subject, the main strength behind our laugh is how quickly we recognize the incongruity (strangeness) that is the underlying point in most humor. We have heard that so and so has a twisted sense of humor. That is only assumed if that individual is outside the normal comfort zone to the group in which he or she is involved.

It has been studied and found that the average adult laughs 17 times a day. “Not in our office, try 170 times.” Research shows that the purpose of laughter is related to making and strengthening human connections. “It occurs when people are comfortable with one another, when they feel open and free. And the more laughter [there is], the more bonding [occurs] within the group,” say cultural anthropologist Mahadev Apte. That’s a funny name.

In recognizing humor, the joke creates an inconsistency, the sentence appears to be not relevant; we automatically try to understand what is being stated, supposed, doesn’t say or imply. If we are successful in solving the riddle, to conclude the hidden message within the sentence or the underlying thought and bring what was in the background to the forefront, we see the surprise. That surprise is now realized not to be dangerous, so we laugh.

There are many reasons to laugh and keep laughing, but three have caught the attention while perusing the worldwide web.

- It makes your cheeks sore and side hurt:
- It strengthens your immune system:
- It increases your intellectual performance and boosts information retention:

Laughter has also been studied and considered a way for our minds to purge negative energy. Laughing at someone, an interest or a belief is considered a mockery, yet is this a form of purging the brain, keeping our self transparent from the situation?

Laughter in the workplace may be considered voodoo to the bottom line, but teams that produce extraordinary results may indicate that they actually enjoy working together, a result directly because of laughter.

A tense atmosphere at the workplace can have detrimental effects on the outcome or goal of the organization. If each employee is in a cautious mental position, all forms of interaction are confined, the box gets smaller and the business suffers.

Today’s business demands keep the level of intensity higher than ever. Doing more with less seems to be the norm than the exception. Maybe more laughter than less is a way we deal with the atmosphere created by the demand that work puts on us!

It has been studied and concluded that stress related compensation claims affect the bottom line costing some \$300 billion, (yes with a “B”) annually. Eight of the top ten prescription drugs marketed today are for stress related conditions. When it comes to articles about laughter, this is not a good point to conclude.

How funny would it be if we could put laughter in a pill and eliminate seven of those eight prescribed drugs? How many of us can get out of the shower and simply laugh at what we see in the mirror? That may be a great way to start our day! Each of us has something that we know inside our inner thoughts that is funny about ourselves. Sure we may dislike that idiosyncrasy, twitch or bothersome habit we possess, but worrying about it is only going to change you. Why not have some fun with it and

laugh at the person staring back at you in that mirror?

There is an adage, “Behind every joke, there is some truth”. This simple point is why we should be cognizant of someone, an interest or a belief that we make fun. Your tone resonates with the true intent, if the person meant for the joke to be unkind or playful mischief.

For yours truly, when a good uncontrollable laugh begins, it takes all the force of a sledge hammer to stop such; then its probable, the situation becomes even funnier. The eyes begin to water, the voice goes up an octave and nothing else is thought about. As one with a spiraled sense of humor, there is a time when you think of something funny at a time when funny should not be present. Oh, this makes the situation even funnier! Remember back when you may have been called to the carpet, or sitting in church, that something strikes the funny bone. I have had to excuse myself and leave the room to gain the composure that was fitting for the situation.

There is a lot to be said for a good old deep down belly buster of a laugh. There is a knack for quick-witted humor, the play on words that keeps the group rolling on the floor. Be silly from time to time, bring out that eight-year-old that is inside of each of us (keep him or her alive) and make someone laugh; you would be surprised on how it makes you feel. The best of everything that life has to offer! Mr. OpTIMist