

FROM NEGOTIATIONS IN THE BOARD ROOM TO BAR ROOM, LAUGHTER PLAYS A KEY ROLE IN BRIDGING THE GAP, AND LIGHTENING THINGS UP A BIT. And in this day and age, we could use more laughs. How many companies rank laughter high on their list of skill requirements? Which global moguls utilize a CLO – Chief Laugh Officer – as part of their business-killer platform?



by Catherine Lawrence

survival OF THE FUNNIEST

LIFE MOVES PRETTY FAST. IF YOU DON'T STOP AND LOOK AROUND ONCE IN A WHILE, YOU COULD MISS IT – YES, WE KNOW, FERRIS. But if you don't stop, chill and enjoy the fruits of your labour the consequences could be heart-stopping instead of knee-slapping. Bust the stress, smirk at deadlines, do what it takes ... but heed our advice and listen to the Laughter Coach we're bringing to our team this season. Through seven issues in 2010, our CLO is going to tickle your funny bone, help you trade your stress for laughter and show you the path to "enlighten-up-will-ya."



One hundred deep belly laughs is the aerobic equivalent of 10 minutes on the rowing machine according to Dr. William Fry, a pioneer of laughter research at Stanford University. And a lot more fun!

Are you laughing enough? Do you want more laughter in your life?

Stop what you are doing right now.

Put your hands on your abs. I said abs! Your abs.

Now, start to laugh for no reason at all.

Work those laugh muscles! Yes, that's right – laugh now. Out loud. Keep going.

How do you feel? More energized? A little buzz?

A great deal has been written about the mental and physical health benefits of laughter. Many experts agree that laughter is good for the body. It reduces pain, increases the heart rate, releases endorphins, helps breathing, exercises the abdominal muscles, boosts the immune system, stimulates the brain (your "funny bone" is actually located in the right frontal lobe of the brain) and massages the intestines.

Laughter is cheap medicine. One of the founders of the therapeutic humour movement, Norman Cousins, wrote *The Anatomy of an Illness* in 1979. He was diagnosed with a crippling neurological disorder and during one of his many hospital visits was asked to provide a urine

EMPLOYEES ALSO REPORTED HIGHER JOB SATISFACTION WHEN THEY WORKED FOR SOMEONE WHO WAS MORE HUMOUR-ORIENTED AND USED HUMOUR EFFECTIVELY AND APPROPRIATELY.

-Dr. Melissa B. Wanzer,
Canisius College, Buffalo, N.Y.



12 STEPS TO BECOMING A LAUGHAHOLIC

1. Laugh now
2. Repeat step one.
3. Keep a laughter journal – look at your laugh life. What makes you laugh, who makes you laugh, and how much do you laugh?
4. Surround yourself with people who make you laugh. Make someone laugh every day. Make a stranger laugh once each week.
5. Laugh at yourself – often.
6. Make a survival kit. Include a clown nose, a rubber chicken, the arrow-through-the-head gag to start. When things get tough, use it.
7. Play Twister.
8. Start a laughter club.
9. Watch what makes children laugh. Laugh with them.
10. Examine your workplace. Are you suppressing your
- urge to laugh? Wear a costume to work.
11. Read funny books. Rent funny movies. Go to comedy clubs. You pick.
12. Repeat steps 1 through 12.



THE REAL BENEFITS OF LAUGHTER

Has a positive benefit on mental functions

Increases antibodies in saliva that combats upper respiratory infections

Decreases serum cortisol, thus providing an antidote for harmful effects of stress

Improves ventilation, thus helping reduce chronic respiratory conditions

Reduces blood pressure and heart rate

Helps move nutrients and oxygen to body tissues

Liberates interleukin-2 and other immune-boosters

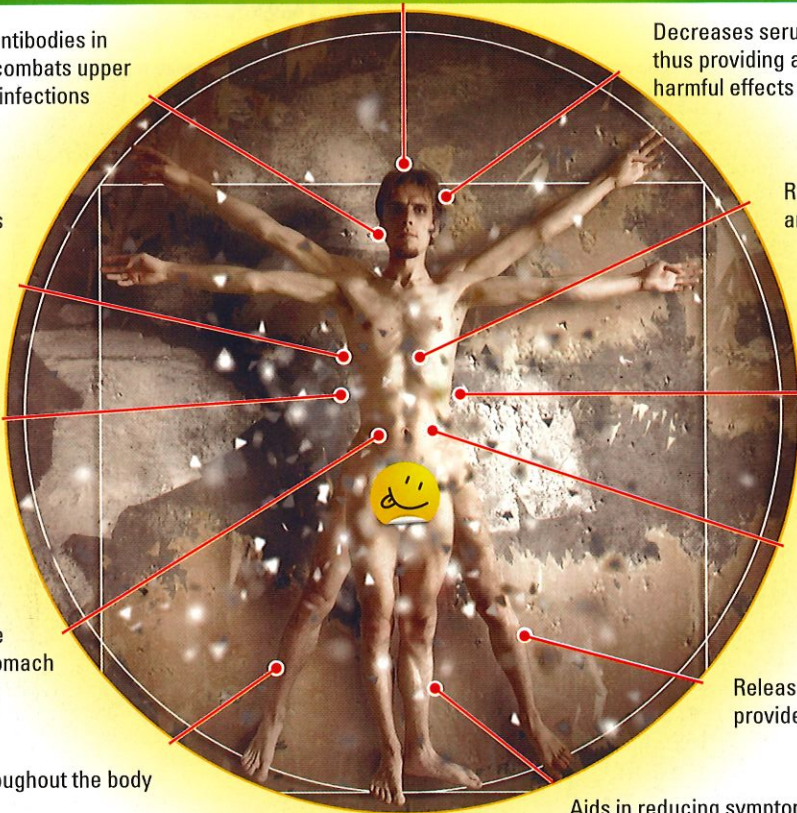
Secretes an enzyme that protects the stomach from forming ulcers

Conditions the abdominal muscles

Relaxes muscles throughout the body

Releases endorphins, which provide natural pain relief

Aids in reducing symptoms of neuralgia and rheumatism



LAUGHTER TRIGGERS THE RELEASE OF ENDORPHINS, THE BODY'S NATURAL PAINKILLERS, AND PRODUCES A GENERAL SENSE OF WELL-BEING.

- Dr. Lee Berk

sample for the nurse. He is said to have poured apple juice into the urine container and when the nurse returned, looked confused by the sample, Cousins asked "Is everything all right?" "It looks a bit cloudy," she replied. He then took the container from her hand, said, "I'll run it through one more time," and proceeded to drink the contents.

Throughout his illness Cousins watched hours of comedy films and sketches, including Charlie Chaplin and Candid Camera, and attributed much of his miraculous recovery to the power and spirit of laughter. Cousins discovered that, for him, 10 minutes of belly laughter resulted in two hours of pain-free sleep.

Laughter expert, Lee Berk, also concluded in his research that watching comedic video decreases

the level of two stress hormones that can cause an irregular heart beat that may lead to heart attacks.

And while laughter plays an important role in our physiological well-being, it is also a key to our social development. Where politics and religion divide, a good giggle unites. By elevating the mood of those around us, our social environment becomes less stressful, more productive and engaging. It improves the quality of interaction between us - which, by the way guys, is a huge tip when trying to attract the attention of a certain lady. Make her laugh and your chances soar.

Laughter and humour are critical skills to survive and thrive. Life has some unexpected curve balls but it is our choice how to respond to them.

Stepping back from life's challenges and having a deep belly laugh is a tremendous, therapeutic, coping mechanism. It enables us to look at our problems and challenges with a fresh new perspective.

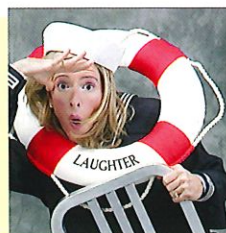
Who is on your Laughter team?

You don't have to be the life of a party or tell jokes to hone your humour skills. It is about seeing funny not being funny. Look around you because funny stuff is happening all the time. Look in the mirror. Don't wait for other people to make you happy - you can make you happy. And it is contagious. When you put forward your best, happiest you, your joy and laughter is contagious.

Laughter diffuses stress and brings people together.

It is impossible to be angry and laugh at the same time. ☺

Do you need to trade some stress for a good laugh? Send us your thoughts, chuckles, jokes or even those stressful situations that need a good bust up. Our Laughter Coach will help break down your worries and show you the lighter side of life. VISIT CHILLONLINE.CA/LAUGHTER.



Catherine Lawrence is the Chief Laughter Officer ("CLO") of the Survival of the Funniest. She infuses the energy of Lucille Ball into impassioned and innovative presentations using laughter to reduce stress, improve skills and increase creativity and productivity in the workplace. www.survivalofthefunniest.com