

Day-By-Day The Laughter Club Way



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Follow These Daily Practices to Prevent Hardening of the Attitudes & Add More Laughter to Your Life

Begin with *mindfulness*. Each day remember what the special practice is for that day. Whenever you see an opportunity, *take some action to fulfill the practice for that day*. These actions become habits and the habits become a *positive way of life*. Soon you will be amazed to find that you laugh more and are more cheerful and optimistic.

Whenever you are mindful of any of the practices and the pleasant feelings they bring, you can tell yourself, "Isn't it great that I feel happy now! Right now, this is being stored in my brain, where it joins my other moments of serenity. The larger the library and storehouse of serenity in my brain, the easier it will be for me to access it at will."

Mondays are for Compliments: This overcomes our tendency to criticize and be judgmental of others, which robs us of laughter. Look for the good in others, tell them about it, and you might just end up laughing together. Monday thought: "A kind word often goes unspoken, but never goes unheard."

Tuesdays are for Flexibility: There is no laughter in being stubborn. We all get set in our ways and yet it is a good thing to be open to new ideas. It can be more fun than being in a rut. An open mind lets the laughter in. Tuesday thought: "The tree that bends in the wind does not break."

Wednesdays are for Gratitude: A good way to feel miserable is to always think you need something more to make you happy. An attitude of gratitude brings serenity and laughter. Wednesday thought: "As you go through life, let this always be your goal: Keep your eye upon the donut and not upon the hole!"

Thursdays are for Kindness: Think of ways to help make the other person's life a little easier. Simple kindness may be the most vital key to the riddle of how human beings can live with each other in peace, and care properly for this planet we all share. Thursday thought: "The practice of kindness creates healthy relationships and community connections and inspires people to pass kindness on to others."

Fridays are for Forgiveness: Forgiveness means letting go of anger. Find a way to see those who have hurt you in the new light of compassion. Releasing anger makes you healthier and opens up room in your heart for more laughter. Friday thought: "I never hold a grudge because while I am being angry the other guy is out dancing!" (Buddy Hackett)

Weekends are for Chocolate: Remember to eat some chocolate or any other favorite food. Remember to take time for leisure, pleasure and relaxation. Weekend thought: "A bad day fishing beats a good day working."

And we should consider every day lost on which we have not danced at least once. And we should call every truth false which was not accompanied by at least one laugh.

Friedrich Nietzsche

The steamy August afternoon was just about more than I could take. Sitting in my car at a red light, I was nauseated from my recent chemotherapy treatment, in pain from other cancer medications, and depressed from the whole cancer experience. All I wanted was to finish my errands, go home and crawl into bed.

Noticing that my wig felt lopsided, I took advantage of the red light to look into the rear view mirror. I tugged on the sides and front of the wig to straighten it and saw - to my horror and embarrassment - four teenagers in the car behind me mocking my movements! They were modeling in exaggerated fashion the primping of a vain woman posing before a mirror, and they were laughing themselves silly.

Tears of anguish welled up in my eyes. *How could they be so cruel?* I wondered. *How could they make fun of a sick woman, a woman who might even be dying?*

Because they don't know, I quickly answered myself. *And besides, they're just kids. They don't know any better.*

Then I thought... *but they should.*

I don't know where it came from – maybe I was delirious from the heat – but a giggle bubbled up inside me and, without another thought, I placed my hand on top of my head and yanked off my wig. Still looking in the mirror, I gave a huge shrug of my shoulders and laughed out loud just as the light turned green.

I will never forget the look of total shock on those four teenagers' faces as I pulled away from the intersection. All four had their hands to their cheeks, and their mouths and eyes were as big and round as dinner plates. I can still hear the horns of other cars blaring at them to move as they sat there stunned and motionless.

I laughed for three days, and for the most part, I haven't stopped laughing since because what I discovered that day was that the physical act of laughing didn't just lighten my mood - it made me feel *physically* better.

Laughter improves your cardiovascular system in much the same way as aerobic exercise. It oxygenates your entire body. Laughter releases endorphins (the "feel good" chemicals) in your brain. Physical discomforts are minimized almost immediately and – even better – your immune system is strengthened. Not only is your body better able to withstand the rigors of any medical treatment you might be undergoing, but it is also better able to fight disease on its own in the ways God and nature intended. Every time you laugh, you become physically healthier, and you ensure that you will be even healthier tomorrow.

Dear God, Cancer is no laughing matter. There is nothing funny about what I am going through or what my family and friends are experiencing as they watch me struggle with my illness. But there are funny things that happen along this journey, and there are many opportunities to turn uncomfortable situations into occasions for smiles and laughter. Dear God, please help me find them and to recognize them when I do, knowing they can make me stronger, knowing they can help me feel better, knowing they are gifts from You to brighten this path I must take. Amen

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Excerpt from ***Practice True Gratitude: More Guidance Solutions***

By Cait Johnson, author of *Earth, Water, Fire, and Air* (SkyLight Paths, 2003).

These days, so many of us are feeling stressed or afraid of not having enough. Fear is everywhere. But a True Gratitude practice can go a long, long way to alleviate those uncomfortable feelings of scarcity and fear.

Simple Solution:

The secret is that where there is gratitude, there isn't room in the human heart and consciousness for fear. Here are some simple ideas and suggestions to help us open our hearts to the blessings of each moment, and feel thankful rather than fearful, here:

1. Start by Witnessing. When you catch yourself feeling tense, anxious, or afraid, just notice that those feelings are coming up. Give yourself permission to feel them. There is no shame in responding to life with tension or fear. Life can be pretty anxiety-provoking and scary!

2. Name Three Things. When you do notice yourself feeling anxious or scared think of three things for which you are really grateful. They can be really small--"The sweater I'm wearing is really warm and comforting" or large--"I'm grateful for the presence of my son in my life."

3. Write them Down. You can designate a special blank book to be your Gratitude Journal (there are so many gorgeous blank books available these days). Soon you will have a beautiful list of things to reread in the wee hours to soothe yourself when you can't sleep or you're feeling upset.

4. Gratitude Mantra. I often do this when I'm driving: I simply remind myself of all the things I can think of right now in the moment that make me feel grateful. You don't need to really think much--just start naming. "I'm grateful for the trees turning colors. I'm grateful that I can breathe. I'm grateful that my car runs. I'm grateful that I have enough to eat." Sometimes the list is short. Other times, I reach my destination and I'm still thinking of things! See what you can come up with. (Nature is a great prompter; when all else fails, I can be grateful for the sky and the rocks, the deer, the wind, and the hawks soaring overhead.)

5. In This Moment. Here is a healing affirmation that promotes gratitude: "Right now, in this moment, I have enough." It is true. And it is a deep balm for fearful-future thinking. Let's all be grateful for the enough-ness of the present moment

Weekly Meditation: Laughter

Pragito Dove

In the morning when you wake up, stretch your body – every muscle, cell and fiber in your body, just like a cat. After a few moments start laughing. Just start. At the beginning you may have to force it a little saying 'Ha, Ha, Ha,' or 'Ho, Ho, Ho' to get the energy of the laughter moving. Or you can try putting both arms up in the air and shouting "Yahoo!" several times. Soon a spontaneous laughter will arise at the sound of your attempts at laughing. Try it for five minutes. Just laugh for no reason at all. Laugh for the sake of laughing. Try it again for five minutes when you go to bed, just before you go to sleep. At the beginning it will take some effort, but after a little while it will start to happen naturally. Your body will get used to it, will start to expect it. Try it in the shower, while driving your car, stuck in traffic. Ha, Ha, Ha. Even to say those words out loud will start a transformation in your energy, in your mood.

Laughter is one of the easiest ways to find a non-thinking state, to find your inner being. It will make you more alive, more healthy, more creative, and more silent. Start laughing, especially first thing in the morning when you get up, and last thing at night when you go to bed. It will transform the quality of your day. It will transform the quality of your sleep. Laugh for no reason, at the whole ridiculousness of your life, of your day, rushing from here to there. It will create a chain effect; laughter leads to more laughter. Start and finish your day with laughter and watch as you become more easy going, more sincere, more creative, more youthful, more compassionate, more intuitive, more authentic, more expansive.

Simply relax into the enjoyment of it and let the flower of awareness bloom in its own time and in its own way. You will discover in yourself a tremendous natural talent for rejoicing in life. You may even laugh your way to enlightenment. Yes, it's that good. Remember to laugh -- a lot -- every day.

Try my Laughter and Tears CD to help you get started.
<http://www.pragito.com/products.html>

THE SCIENCE OF HAPPINESS is the subject of a recent Time magazine. There is an article about the original laughter clubs which started in India. Check it out here and have a few chuckles while you read. Have fun!

http://www.time.com/time/2005/happiness/learning_the_yoga_way_o06a.html

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AMERICA'S FUNNIEST MOVIES

This is the American Film Institute's list of America's 100 Funniest Movies, selected by AFI's blue-ribbon panel of more than 1,500 leaders of the American movie community.

1. SOME LIKE IT HOT. 1959
2. TOOTSIE. 1982
3. DR. STRANGELOVE OR: HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND LOVE THE BOMB. 1964
4. ANNIE HALL. 1977
5. DUCK SOUP. 1933
6. BLAZING SADDLES. 1974
7. M*A*S*H. 1970
8. IT HAPPENED ONE NIGHT. 1934
9. THE GRADUATE. 1967
10. AIRPLANE!. 1980
11. THE PRODUCERS. 1968
12. A NIGHT AT THE OPERA. 1935
13. YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN. 1974
14. BRINGING UP BABY. 1938
15. THE PHILADELPHIA STORY. 1940
16. SINGIN' IN THE RAIN. 1952
17. THE ODD COUPLE. 1968
18. THE GENERAL. 1927
19. HIS GIRL FRIDAY. 1940
20. THE APARTMENT. 1960
21. A FISH CALLED WANDA. 1988
22. ADAM'S RIB. 1949
23. WHEN HARRY MET SALLY..... 1989
24. BORN YESTERDAY. 1950
25. THE GOLD RUSH. 1925
26. BEING THERE. 1979
27. THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT MARY. 1998
28. GHOSTBUSTERS. 1984
29. THIS IS SPINAL TAP. 1984
30. ARSENIC AND OLD LACE. 1944
31. RAISING ARIZONA. 1987
32. THE THIN MAN. 1934
33. MODERN TIMES. 1936
34. GROUNDHOG DAY. 1993
35. HARVEY. 1950
36. NATIONAL LAMPOON'S ANIMAL HOUSE. 1978
37. THE GREAT DICTATOR. 1940
38. CITY LIGHTS. 1931
39. SULLIVAN'S TRAVELS. 1941
40. IT'S A MAD MAD MAD MAD WORLD.. 1963
41. MOONSTRUCK. 1987
42. BIG. 1988
43. AMERICAN GRAFFITI. 1973
44. MY MAN GODFREY. 1936
45. HAROLD AND MAUDE. 1972
46. MANHATTAN. 1979
47. SHAMPOO. 1975
48. A SHOT IN THE DARK. 1964



THE WORLD LAUGHTER TOUR ANTHEM

"S-M-I-L-E"

An American Melody

Sung To: "Battle Hymn of the Republic"

("Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord...")

1st Verse

It isn't any trouble just to S-M-I-L-E
It isn't any trouble just to S-M-I-L-E
So smile when you're in trouble,
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you'll only take the trouble just to S-M-I-L-E.

Chorus:

Ha-Ha-Ha-Ha-Ha-Ha-Ha-Ha!
Hee-Hee-Hee-Hee-Hee-Hee-Hee-Hee!
Ho-Ho-Ho-Ho-Ho-Ho-Ho-Ho!
Ha-Ha-Hee-Hee-Ho-Hee-Ho!
(Repeat chorus after each verse.)

2nd Verse:

It isn't any trouble just to L-A-U-G-H
It isn't any trouble just to L-A-U-G-H
So laugh when you're in trouble,
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you'll only take the trouble just to L-A-U-G-H.
(Repeat chorus.)

3rd Verse:

It isn't any trouble just to G-R-I-N, grin
It isn't any trouble just to G-R-I-N, grin
So grin when you're in trouble,
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you'll only take the trouble just to G-R-I-N, grin.
(Repeat chorus.)

4th Verse:

It isn't any trouble just to Ha-Ha-Ha-Ha-Ha
It isn't any trouble just to Ha-Ha-Ha-Ha-Ha
So "HA" when you're in trouble,
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you'll only take the trouble just to Ha-Ha-Ha-Ha-Ha.
(Repeat chorus.)