



How To Laugh More Often and Why It's So Good For You

Diane Laffoon 0:01

Do you laugh often enough? Did you know that researchers say on average, a child will laugh 300 times a day, but an adult only 17 times each day. Let's see if we can increase that number a bit for you with a good laugh after all, laughter is good medicine. Hi, I'm Diane Laffoon. And I'm here with your joy Tip of the Week. And I'm so glad that you've joined me. So tell me I would love to hear what was the last thing that made you laugh? What was the last thing that gave you a great big belly laugh that made you laugh all over with your whole body? Can we agree that laughter makes us feel good and that we all need more laughter in our life. You know, when you laugh, that positive feeling it remains with you long after you laugh, especially if you have a good gut, you know, belly laugh that just shakes your whole body that will help you to feel better, because of those endorphins that it creates for an extended period of time, which is wonderful. That's why we need to laugh more often. And human humor actually helps you to stay positive and keep optimistic as in your Outlook. And then when you go through difficult situations, or disappointments or even loss, you're able to get through that a little better. So laughter is just good medicine. As it says in Proverbs, it's good for us, we need to find ways to laugh more often. You know, you may say I wasn't born with a good sense of humor. I've said that before. I don't know that I'm a funny person at all. I've never considered myself a funny person. I have an older brother, who is a very funny person. And so I've kind of been in his shadow when it comes to comedy. But I love to laugh. And so I do try to find things that make me laugh because I want that reason to laugh more often. Because I know how good it is for me, not only physically, but mentally, emotionally, it's really very good for you all the way around. So you you know best way to start is to start by laughing at your own imperfections. Start by laughing rather than feeling embarrassed when something goes wrong because we all have these imperfections or little failures, or little idiosyncrasy idiosyncrasies that we do that are funny if you really think about it, because they're so absurd. You know, I'll never forget the time I was living in Miami, Florida at the time. And I was a trainer and a mentor for leadership students who are high school students, we were traveling in a van and I have this problem. I'm surprised I haven't done it more often on my joy Tip of the Week with you. But I have this little problem where my brain gets ahead of my tongue or my tongue gets ahead of my brain. And I'll mix the front's of words up, like, I'll say, Can you please hand me the poffy cot instead of the coffee pot? Or don't you enjoy the shun sign today, instead of the sunshine? You know, I mix up those letters. And so one time, we were writing in a van group of leadership students, my colleague and I, and we were having a really intense, serious discussion. And I was so excited to get the words out that I mixed

up the front of the words again, and I meant to say, Well, if the shoe fits, and instead I said, Well, if the foo -*&\$%@! The whole van, just burst out laughing. And in fact, Tommy, my colleague, and I will bring it up even to this day, years later, and get a good laugh out of that. Because of the way I mixed my words up. It was so embarrassed about it, but at the same time got a good laugh from it. So why do we want to laugh more often? Well, there's tons of health benefits that come from laughter. It relaxes your body, it boosts your immune system is good for your heart. It burns calories, that's a good reason to laugh. And laughter may even help you live longer. There was a Norwegian study where researchers studied for 15 years over 50,000 men and women to see if they could tie a sense of humor to mortality rates. So does a sense of humor help you live longer, is was what they were asking.

Diane Laffoon 4:00

And so this was an extensive study, 15 years and over 50,000 people, that's a lot of studying to tie these two things together. And they did find some interesting things. They found that women with high scores for their sense of humor, were associated with 48% less risk of death from all causes. That's an incredible you know, if you're gonna live 50% longer because you laugh more, hey, let's find some things to laugh at. Right. So more specifically, it showed that women showed a 73% lower risk of death from heart disease and an 83% lower risk of death from infection. Those specific causes when they had had a good score for a good sense of humor. Now for men, it was different. The only there wasn't a link overall with death. It was only with the death of from infection. So the men with high humor scores had a 74% reduced risk of death from an infection. And the author of the research said that the gender vision that gender differences could be due to a slight decline in humor scores as the men aged. Well, I'm not gonna say anything about that. But I thought that was very interesting that there's actually a study out there that links, your sense of humor, or how often you laugh to your mortality. It's so true, it's good for us physically. And there are also mental health benefits of laughter. You know, laughter adds joy and zest to life, we feel better, we have a more positive outlook, when we laugh and have that joy. It eases anxiety, intention, you know, it's difficult to feel anxious or sad, or angry, even when you're laughing. I'll never forget my brother and his wife, Jay and Laura, they, they teach on marriage. And one of the times that they were teaching, they talked about how, in their early years of marriage, whenever they would get in a fight, and get angry with one another, that Jay would simply laugh. And then it would break the tension. And Laura would get so upset because she couldn't help but laugh because it's contagious. And that was just a great way of breaking down that anger. Just to laugh in the middle of this fight. Yeah, it's in the middle of a fight. So think about that with your relationships. Is there anyone that you feel comfortable enough with to say, hey, let's laugh about this and move on from our anger or our disagreement. Laughter also relieves stress, it helps you relax and recharge, and increases your energy. It's so good for you overall, it improves your mood, it strengthens your resilience and resilience is something that in recent years, psychologist and psychotherapist are talking about the importance of having that resilience. And what is resilience is simply your capacity to recover fully, emotionally and mentally, when you are experiencing adversity or difficult times and challenges. So even in the most difficult of times, a laugh or even simply a smile, which is, you know, the precursor to the laugh can go a long way to making you feel better. Laughter shifts your perspective, and allows you to see to see your situation in more realistic manner, and less threatening manner. So if you have that humorous perspective, it kind of creates this distance that can help you avoid feeling angry and overwhelmed, and it can defuse that conflict. You know, I remember we just had to laugh. May 8, my great niece Graelyn, she turned one and we had planned for this wonderful outdoor birthday celebration. And we were very, you know, there was a lot of build up to it. The family was all excited. We all course bought way too many presents for and it was just a glorious build up to her first birthday party. And we get there and the neighbor happens to be cutting, trimming, I think five or six trees in the yard next door. And so the entire birthday party, all you can hear is this chainsaw going off. And

you know, you just have to laugh about it. Who would have known that after all this planning for this birthday party, that the neighbors would have tree trimmers coming that day. And so all you can hear in fact all Graelyn was interested in was watching these trees coming down the tree limbs and the chainsaw and all the noise and everything. So you just have to laugh about those situations and get us a good perspective on it. You know laughter really is contagious sometimes when you just hear laughter. It primes your brain and readies you to smile and to join the fun. Because it does release those endorphins. And what are endorphins. That's those feel good neurotransmitters that it really have an effect. It's kind of similar to narcotics. And so endorphins are the reason that that laughter can be so contagious.

Diane Laffoon 8:44

So let me share with you five ways to bring more laughter into your life right now. I hope this is very helpful for you. First up is to spend time with people who make you laugh. You know, we do become like the people that we hang around with. And so if you spend time with people that make you laugh, you're going to laugh more often. And you're going to develop that sense of humor. You know that laughter again, is contagious. And most laughter studies show don't come from like listening to jokes or, you know, reading funny books or comics or whatever. But mostly, it comes from spending time with family and friends and just the simple things that happen in life. So that's number one. Spend time with people who make you laugh. Number two, spend time with the children in your life. Children laugh 300 times a day. That's got to be contagious. The sweetest sound in the world is when my great niece Graelyn laughs. It's just wonderful. And she's funny. She loves to tease. She just turned one and she loves to hand you something and then pull it back and then giggle where do they learn these things? Right? She just thinks it's such a hoot. And it makes us all laugh. Number three, play games with your family and friends. Seems like there's always lots of laughter when you're sitting around a table and playing a board game or a card game or some kind of game with other people who are either your family or friends. So if you notice this theme here, number one, number two, and number three all have to do with spending time with other people. And it's true research shows you're going to laugh more when you're with other people. Although sometimes I laugh at myself when I'm by myself because I do silly things. And I'm sure you do, too. But number four is a little bit different. Laugh at your pet. You know, we all love our dogs and cats and animals. And sometimes they do funny things. We have a dog or had a dog. She died a couple years ago now. But she was a miniature Schnauzer, and she would flip her bed in the air until it landed on top of her, and then she would just snuggle down underneath her bed and go to sleep. And it was just the craziest thing. She was such a silly dog. But you know, it made us laugh. And it was fun to watch her do that. So spend time with people who make you laugh. Spend time with the children in your life, play games with people laugh with your pets. And then finally, you'll find yourself laughing more if your entertainment is funny, too. I know there's so much crime and dark and these horrible things that are in our entertainment. Now I just don't understand why there's not more light heartedness and comedy more romance. Of course, I'm a woman. I love the romance. But I try to fill my entertainment with things that are going to bring a smile to my face movies, TV shows, podcasts, you know, even those pages and groups that you follow on social media. Those are going to kind of set your mind in, in the laughter mentality. I've talked about Mikey's Funnies before. Mikey's Funnies, is on Facebook. And he's got some great little clean jokes that just put a smile on your face and help you to get a laugh once in a while. So can you really develop a sense of humor? Of course you can. It's just like anything else. It's something that you'd have to make an effort to do. And you can develop that sense of humor. So the first step to developing a sense of humor is to not take yourself too seriously, you know, laugh at your own foolishness and your own mistakes and your own flubs. Like I said, you know, I get my words twisted all the time. And if I just can't laugh at it, like we laughed at it in the van years ago. What are you gonna do, it's just happen. So you have to laugh at yourself, and

find ways to make that the fun part of life. Next, you can look for humor in every situation, whether it's something that's absurd or ironic, like the tree trimmers at the birthday party, you know, you got to look at the funny side, and it'll be a memory for us. Remember, Graelyn's first birthday party where we could hardly hear anything because of the tree trimmers next door. It'll be a great memory. It wasn't so funny at the time, but it will be in the future, I'm sure. And then think of memories that were humorous and laugh all over again. Like I said, my friend Tommy and I, we can talk about that incident in the van and just get a good laugh out of it here now, years later. The other thing to do is if something funny happens, and nobody is around to see it, then tell somebody about it. Share it with your friends or your family, somebody who's gonna understand and get a good laugh at it. You know what I did this morning, and then share it with them. And you'll get a good laugh, find a reason to laugh, you know. And then finally, make a conscious effort to find something each day that makes you laugh. Look around you be observant look for those things that are gonna give you a giggle and make you laugh each and every day. And that will help you to grow that sense of humor. So what what could you do for me today, I would love for you to give me the opportunity to laugh today. You know, post a funny joke or a video here that will make me laugh. You know, tell me a funny source of entertainment that you enjoy. Because I love to see those funny sources of entertainment. Maybe it's something funny that happened to you lately. Tell me about that. I would love to hear about it.

Diane Laffoon 13:49

I'm always up for a good laugh. Like I said, I love to laugh. And so I'm always up for a good laugh. And I'd love to hear from you and get a good laugh from something that you share as well. Because remember what happened Henri Nouwen said, Joy doesn't simply happen to us. We have to choose joy and keep choosing joy every single day.



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