

THE HEALING POWER OF LAUGHTER



By Mike Moore

INTRODUCTION

Of all the workshops and seminars I do on human potential and performance motivation throughout Canada and the United States, the most frequently requested topics are those related to the role of humor in reducing stress, improving morale and promoting wellness at home, at work and at play.

While humor can do a great deal to improve our health and relationships it does work more effectively when combined with an ongoing commitment to promoting and fostering appreciation and praise of one another. William James once said that we have a hunger to be appreciated and praised and he is right on the mark in my opinion.

When people with whom you live and work feel appreciated by you, your relationship can't help but be enriched. When you add to this a wonderful sense of humor you end up with happy, productive and profitable relationships. Isn't that what makes life joyful and meaningful?

The bottom line is: It pays to care, to praise and to laugh.

*** Both spellings of the word humour/humor are used throughout this ebook.**

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Do This and Really Start Living By Mike Moore

<http://motivationalplus.com/cgi/a/t.cgi?ebk>

I have come to the conclusion that there are far too many people living lives of drudgery. Whenever I speak I meet nice people who have simply given up on life. Not that they want to end it. They just find life such a heavy burden. They tell me sad stories of their pain and disillusionment; stories that are filled with negative self talk, sadness and rejection. It reminds me of what George Bernard Shaw once said, "Some people should have inscribed on their tombstone, "Died at 30. Buried at 82." I agree with Sam Butler when he says that our main task in life is to enjoy it.

Life is short and we only go around once so I want to make sure that my life is a joyful, fun experience in spite of the inevitable pain and suffering. Here are a few suggestions I use to bring joy, laughter and peace to my life. I hope they do for you what they have done for me. Remember that the key to making them work is commitment to their application.

Ways to Thrive, Not Just Survive

- * Commit yourself to putting the fun back into your life. Whatever it is that's fun for you, do it, and do it often.

- * Laugh more. Become a laughologist. Watch funny movies and sit coms. Collect and display funny cartoons. Isn't that what a refrigerator door is for? Hang out with humourous people. Frequent the humour section of your public library. **LIVE BETTER, LAUGH MORE**

- * Develop a strong sense of E.S.P. (The Enjoyment of Simple Pleasures) Life is full of simple pleasures if we would only slow down and look for them. Just last night I stood at the front window overlooking the golf course and watched a full autumn moon rise in the eastern sky. I stood in silence taking in the awesome beauty of a moonlit night. I was filled with peace, stillness and an overwhelming sense of joy. A perfect example of E.S.P.

- * Go for a brisk walk in nature. You will feel good and you will put yourself in touch with your lost sense of wonder. There is nothing that lifts my drooping spirits faster than a nature walk.

- * Reach out and help someone. I believe that we are never more fully alive than when we reach out to help another human being. True happiness comes from investing your energy in caring for others and creation.

DO THIS AND REALLY START LIVING.

Life is to be enjoyed not endured. MM

Mike Moore is an international speaker and writer on human potential, motivation and humour. You are invited to subscribe to his FREE newsletter Lifeline at <http://motivationalplus.com/cgi/a/t.cgi?ebk1>

THE VALUE OF HUMOUR IN OUR LIVES by Mike Moore

<http://motivationalplus.com/cgi/a/t.cgi?ebk>

It is impossible to worry while you're laughing.

Humour cuts stress levels in half.

Humour helps us cope, conquer, and carry on.

Train yourself to look for the comedy in your chaos.

When we feel like laughing the least , we need it most.

The best exercise is jumping for joy.

Laughing helps you to stay happy and healthy and helps you return to good health when ill.

Laughter increases , by 20%, the activity of killer cells within the body which serve to destroy viruses and tumour cells.

A sense of humour is the number one survival skill.

George Bernard Shaw once said, " When you find something funny search it for hidden truth."

" The art of medicine consists of amusing the patient while nature cures the disease."Voltaire

We begin to solve our problems when we begin to see the humour in them.

A good laugh is not only the result of humour, it is often also the cause.

The body heals with play; the mind heals with laughter and the spirit heals with joy.

Mike Moore is an international speaker and writer on the benefits of humour in our lives. Check out his new cartoon site at

<http://motivationalplus.com/cgi/a/t.cgi?ebk2>

The Healing Power of Laughter

By: Mike Moore

Laughter isn't just fun and enjoyable, it's good for our health. Each month modern medicine is discovering more about the therapeutic dimension of humour and laughter and is encouraging us to add them to our wellness program.

The Health Benefits of Laughter

When we laugh we...

- * lower our blood pressure.
- * promote relaxation and reduce stress.
- * increase the oxygen level in our blood giving us more energy.
- * increase the endorphin activity in our body resulting in a sense of well being.
- * are able to keep things in perspective
- * banish boredom
- * are more socially attractive. People enjoy being with those who laugh easily and often.
- * increase our enjoyment of life.

Laughter has been called social glue because it bonds us to the people we laugh with.

The message is clear: To live better....Laugh more.

If it feels good to laugh then laugh to feel good.

This is an excerpt from Mike Moore's latest book **Light Up With Laughter** available at <http://motivationalplus.com/cgi/a/t.cgi?store>

Subscribe to Mike's FREE newsletter Lifeline at <mailto:newsletter@motivationalplus.com>

Mike Moore is an international speaker and writer on human potential, motivation and humor. He can be reached at www.motivationalplus.com

SMILE POWER.....by Mike Moore

There is power in a smile. The simple act of moving the corners of the mouth upward has the ability to touch the hard hearted and lighten heavy burdens. Smiling is both evocative and affirming. A smile evokes a response from the one smiled at and affirms their place in the universe. A smile usually prompts a smile in return. There are exceptions, of course. Some people are so suspicious and wounded emotionally that not even God smiling at them could evoke a positive response. You must be prepared for the, "What the heck are you smiling about?" look, because you are going to get it. But usually smiles beget smiles. I was entering the bank one morning as a woman with a foul scowl on her face was leaving. I held the door open for her and gave her a big smile. She looked at me, hesitated for a moment, and gave me a beautiful smile in return. I felt good and I'm sure she did too. One of the criteria my mother uses to judge people is whether they smile at her or not. "You know that Bob is such a fine lad. He always has a nice smile for me when he sees me." Bob could have been a hit man for the mob but if he smiled when he saw my mother he was, "such a fine lad."

Before I give a speech I make a point of scanning the room for friendly faces and friendly faces are smiling faces. In every audience there are many who smile easily, many who smile reluctantly and some who haven't smiled in one thousand years. I focus my attention on the smiling faces because they energize and affirm me. Such is the power of a smile.

Even in conflict situations a smile can work to your advantage. When you find yourself on the receiving end of someone's wrath or sarcastic humour look at them, smile gently and then look away. It drives them crazy. It helps if you can add a look of bewilderment as well. There is nothing more disconcerting than someone standing in front of you smiling while you are running off at the mouth in anger.

Begin each day with the intention of greeting people with a smile, even those who look miserable and unhappy. Watch the impact your smile has on them. It won't be long before you too become committed to the captivating, disarming power of a smile.

There is power and beauty in a smile.

This is an excerpt from **Dealing with Difficult People**. Visit <http://motivationalplus.com/cgi/a/t.cgi?store>

USING HUMOR TO SOLVE PEOPLE PROBLEMS by Mike Moore

People involved in interpersonal conflict in both business and industry are often too close to the problems to be of any great help in solving them. They feel insecure, uncomfortable and threatened when it comes to expressing their feelings and offering possible solutions. “What will the boss think if I rock the boat?” How will I be able to work with these people if I appear to be criticizing them?” “Will they think I’m a trouble maker?” “How can I hurt peoples’ feelings?” The predictable answers to these questions will ensure that things remain the same. Nothing will change. Nobody wants to step outside their comfort zone and disturb the status quo no matter how much the status quo needs to be challenged. So stress continues to increase and morale continues to decline.

I have found cartoon humor helpful in solving relational problems in the workplace. They present real conflict situations and place them within a humorous context. By taking a cartoon and using it as the basis for discussion you accomplish a few things: You remove any personal connection between the problem and your personnel. They are discussing a cartoon situation not a situation related to them. The characters are not real and therefore you avoid hurt feelings or damaged egos. Analysing a cartoon results in a more lively discussion than if you were analysing an existing, identified problem. Workers are separated from the problem and therefore are less threatened and more willing to offer suggestions and solutions.

The humor in a cartoon is empathic humour. People laugh with the characters in the cartoon because they empathize with them and their plight. Call it the “been there, had it done to me” syndrome. When I use cartoons in my presentations I always hear people in my audience say, “Isn’t that the truth?”

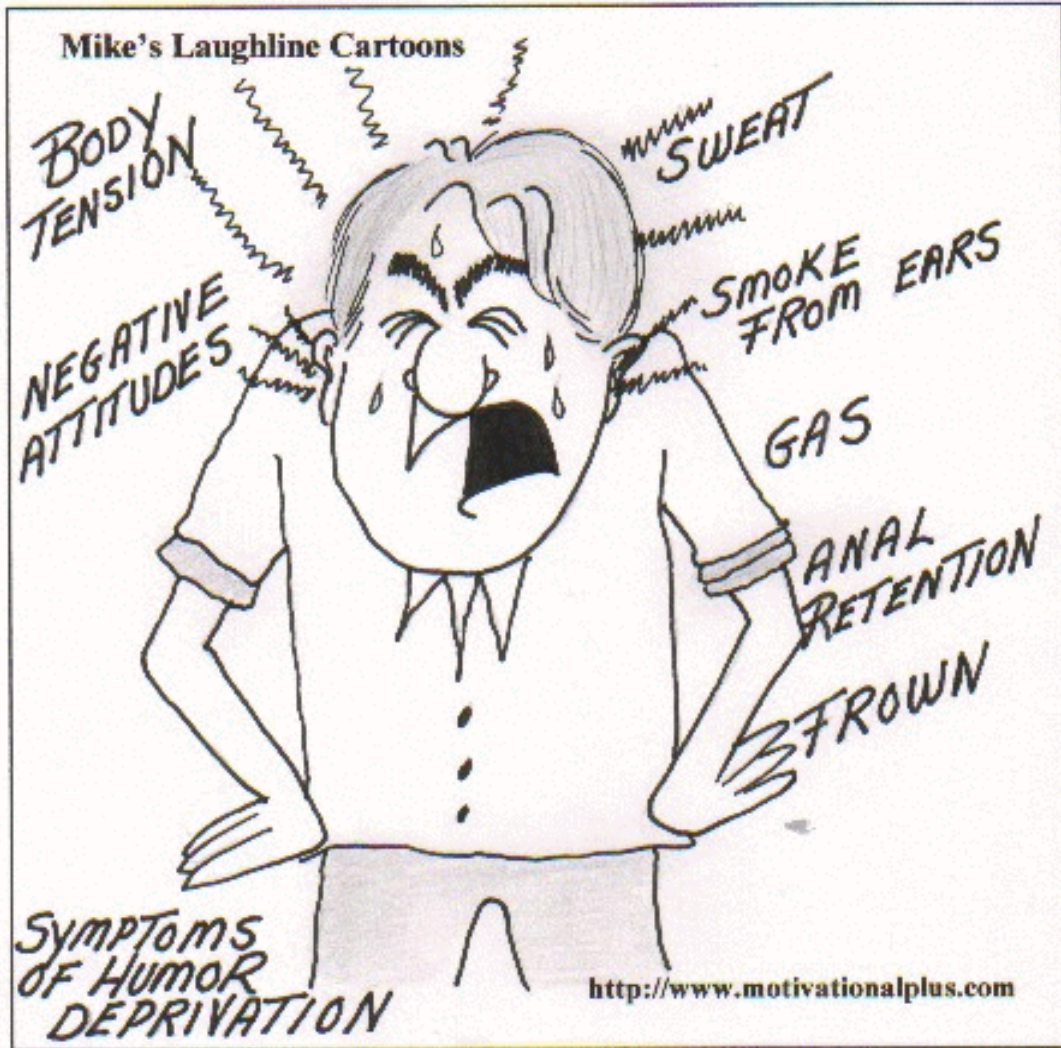
When I hear this I know that something has connected with them.

A wise leader will ask questions about the cartoon which will not only address the conflict generally, but will open the possibility of a similar problem existing in their specific workplace. Such as, “Could such a problem ever occur here?” “If it ever did occur here, how would we handle it?” At some point the direct link between the cartoon and an existing problem will have to be made. Even when this is done the cartoon can still be used as a non-threatening way to discuss the situation without making direct references to people who are causing the dis-ease.

This is an excerpt from Mike Moore’s special report Humor in the Workplace. For more ideas on the use of humor to solve people problems visit <http://motivationalplus.com/cgi/a/t.cgi?menu>

Visit Mike’s Laughline cartoon page at <http://motivationalplus.com/cgi/a/t.cgi?ebk2>

SYMPTOMS OF HUMOR DEPRIVATION



Take a close look at the people you live, work and play with and see if any of them are showing signs of humor deprivation. My guess is that you will come up with a few. It is important that we learn how to cope with these people and do what we can to counter balance their negative impact. Perhaps if you become a fun loving, humorous person you can help those who are humor deprived to see the light.

How to Use Humor to Improve Your Relationships by Mike Moore

Humor has long been considered one of the most effective tools to judge the quality of any relationship. If there is laughter present you can assume that the relationship is a healthy one. Happy people laugh a lot together. When the laughter ceases you can be quite certain that the relationship is on the down slide.

This laughter barometer can be applied to any relationship at home, at work and at play. Laughter means that you're having fun and fun means that things are going well. Take a look at the relationships around you. Do the couples laugh a lot together? Has the laughter stopped in some of your relationships?

Here are a few ideas you can use to make certain that laughter remains an ever present reality in your relationships thus ensuring their quality and endurance. Remember introducing humor to previously humorless relationships might take time but the results will be worth the effort. Start slowly by working on your own fun loving, cheery disposition. Laughter and humor are contagious so it won't be long before others catch the bug.

* Remember that a sense of humor is learned, not inherited.

* Commit to becoming a humor hound. Look for humor everywhere. When something strikes you funny enjoy it. Let the laughter flow. After the funny event has passed recall it and enjoy it and laugh again.

* Begin to cultivate an atmosphere of humor and laughter in your relationships. Try to enjoy and share humor as often as you can.

* If you don't laugh as much as you used to and want to correct the situation start associating with humorous, fun loving people and avoid the downers.

* Learn to laugh at yourself. If you don't, you leave the job to others.

* Look for funny items in your newspaper and cut them out and share them. I recall reading the want ads one night and discovered this gem : " The successful applicant should have 203 years experience." Obviously the writer meant to say 2 or 3 years experience. I immediately cut it out and placed it in my collection for future use.

* Encourage others to share their humor. Listen and appreciate it when they do. When someone sees that you enjoy their humorous contribution they will be eager to continue sharing.

* In my full day humor workshops I always ask the participants to break up into groups and begin sharing the funniest thing that has ever happened to them. The laughter that this simple activity generates is a joy to behold. Try this with your friends sometime.

* Collect cartoons and jokes and put them on display on the fridge or the bulletin board. Make sure to avoid racist, sexist or filthy humor. There is plenty of good clean humor to go around without resorting to these. Remember that there is a difference between dirty and earthy humor. I personally like earthy humor. I don't appreciate dirty material.

* Watch comedy movies and television programs as often as possible.

* Use humor to neutralize conflict in your relationships. When things get tense use self deprecating humor to lighten things up. I remember one evening having an argument with my wife, Carol. In the heat of the moment she said something totally out of character. She said something hurtful. In my surprise I looked at her and said, "Carol, when you say things like that you stoop to my level." She started to laugh and so did I. It wasn't long before things were back to normal.

Good luck on your journey to HA HA Land.

Mike Moore is an international speaker/ writer/ cartoonist on humor and human potential. Visit him at <http://motivationalplus.com/cgi/a/t.cgi?ebk>
<http://motivationalplus.com/cgi/a/t.cgi?ebk2>

CONCLUSION

As I said in the introduction, most of my work as a speaker has to do with bringing the message of the health and social benefits of humor to people everywhere. If you would like your organization to experience a workshop or seminar on humor and laughter therapy please contact me

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I am also available for conference keynotes, after dinner presentations and Lunch Laugh and Learn sessions with business groups.

Permission is granted to share this ebook with others provided that you don't alter it in any way and that you leave the contact information as is. Thanks, Mike Moore