



Midwest Conference On Problem Gambling & Substance Abuse



Using humor on the road to recovery: *Laughing to Ease the Pain*

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<http://www.humorhorizons.com>

Overview



- Presenter's story of using humor to overcome adversity
- Benefits of humor as we grow older: physiological, psychological, social, and spiritual.
- 7 1/2 Humor Coping Strategies
- The 7 1/2 Habits of Highly Humorous People
- Q & A

The Texas Billionaire

My story

The Stress Response

- Shallow breathing
- Increased blood pressure
- Adrenalin floods blood stream
- Increased muscle tension
- Digestion slows down
- Increased heart rate

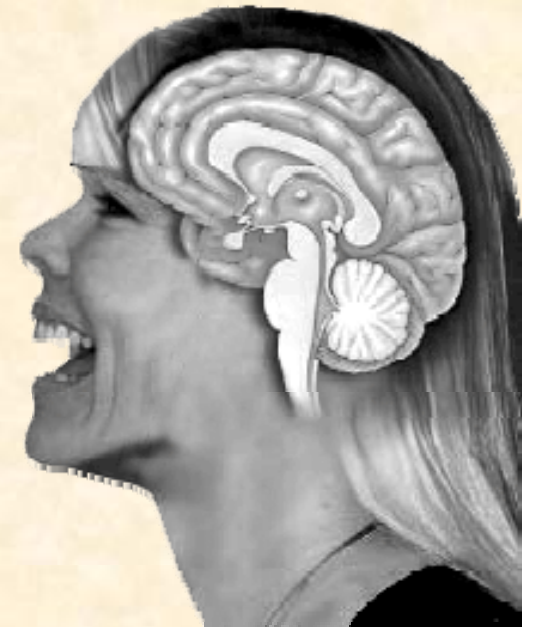


The Laughter Response

- Deep breathing
- O₂ in blood increases
- Blood pressure decreases
- Muscle tension decreases
- Better digestion
- Brain releases endorphins

Psychological Benefits

- Helps with replacing losses
- Increases self-esteem
- See new perspective
- Reduce internal stress
- Increase mental flexibility
- Helps gain control over situation



You are here

Social Benefits

- Helps to diffuse anger
- Decrease conflict
- Builds trust
- Decreases fear
- Eases tension
- Enhances group activities

**The shortest
Distance between
2 people is a smile
* Victor Borge**

Spiritual benefits

- Laughter is universal
- Decreases prejudice
- Reveals connections of all
- Balances mind, body and soul
- Helps towards obtaining tranquility



To help other's apply humor as a coping skill, you must be comfortable in using humor yourself.

Steps to improve one's sense of humor

Humor Strategy One

- Develop a willingness to laugh and play attitude

Physiological Exercise

stand

Humor Strategy Two

Get to know what amuses you.

Your favorite comedian?

Humor Strategy Three

Identify humorous situations

Inappropriate humor

Puts others down - pokes fun at other people's short comings

Reflects anger

Offends with inappropriate use of sexual references or profanity

Uses stereotypes to denigrate a person or group

Creates a cruel, abusive, offensive atmosphere and is insensitive to others

Divides a group by put downs

Appropriate Humor

Reduces tension by joking about universal human faults

Delights in poking fun at oneself

Encourages people to relax and laugh

Unites people

Creates a supportive atmosphere of fun and caring

Includes everyone in the good time

Builds rapport

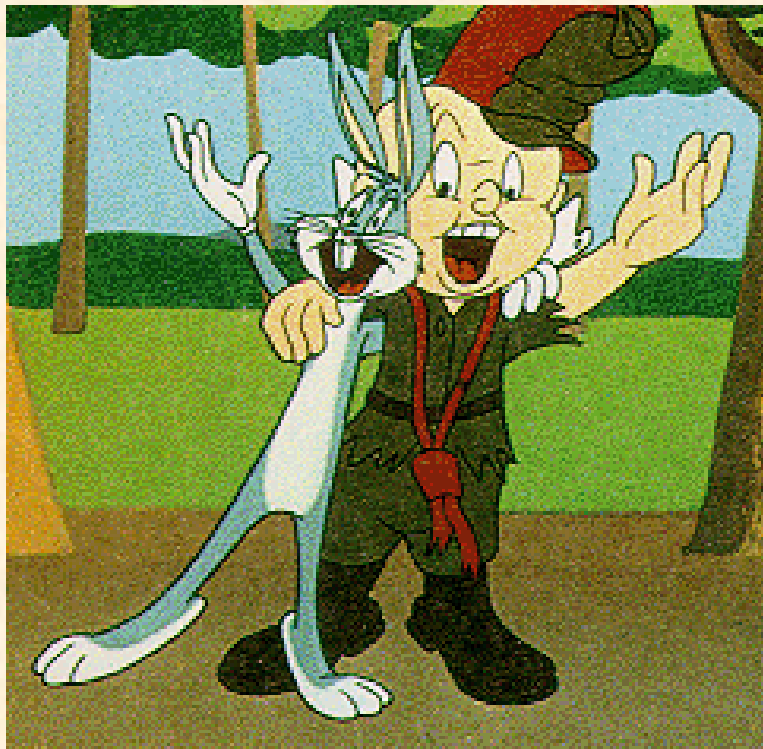
Notes the positive aspects of human relationships

Humor Strategy Four

Take risks and share humorous situations and embarrassing moments

Humor Strategy Five

Use humorous fantasies



Humor Strategy Six

Collect & use humorous memos, signs, posters, bumper stickers, etc.

Top Ten Church Bulletins

1. Don't let worry kill – let the church help
2. Thursday night – Potluck supper. Prayer and medication to follow
3. Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our church and community
4. For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs
5. This afternoon there will be a meeting in the South and North ends of the church. Children will be baptized at both ends

Church Bulletins

6. Tuesday at 4 P.M. there will be an ice cream social. Will ladies giving milk, please come early
7. Wednesday the Ladies Literary Society will meet. Mrs. Jones will sing "Put Me In My Little Bed" accompanied by the Pastor
8. Thursday at 5 P.M. there will be a meeting of the Little Mothers Club. All wishing to become Little Mothers will please meet the Minister in his study.
9. On Sunday a special collection will be taken to defray the expenses of the new carpeting. All wishing to do something on the carpet, please come forward and get a piece of paper
10. The ladies of the Church have cast off clothing of every kind. They may be seen in the basement on Friday afternoon

Humor Strategy Seven

Keep a humor journal

Humor Strategy 8

Start a humor library

Playshop

List 5 things you love to do, that you feel joyful when you do them, that you haven't done in the last several months. (I.E. lying in the sun, taking a cruise, getting a message, reading a good book, dancing, going to a humor talk, etc.)

- 1.
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

Now, besides each of these things list what stops you from doing it – something either inside (your feelings) or outside (lack of money, time) that keeps you from doing it.

Take two things on your list that hold the most joy and think of one step you can take toward bringing it into your life.

- 1.
- 2

Make your calendar with a date and time that you will bring each of these joyful activities into your life.

Humor Strategy Eight

Buy gag gifts



Humor Strategy Nine

Start a humor library



Humor Strategy Ten

Create your own strategies

The 7 1/2 Habits of Highly Humorous People



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Artwork by Philip Rubinov-Jacobson

The Half Habit

- You don't need the whole habit in order for it be effective. It is the most difficult habit to maintain.
- This is the habit of changing your thoughts.

- Mastering your thoughts is a constant struggle, if you master them half the time, you'll be twice as healthy!
- The thoughts you share with others can have a profound influence on them.



Habit One

- Treat humor as a necessity, not a luxury

*The Moving Name
Game*

Habit Two

Use Self Effacing Humor

**Know your
weaknesses and
turn them into
strengths.**

Habit Three

Keep your eyes open for humorous situations and share them!



Humorgy

To have the ability, when you are in a poor mood, to merely think about something funny and begin to feel better.

Incorporate humor into your worldview

Habit Four

Use the power and influence of humor to make your life and the lives of others better

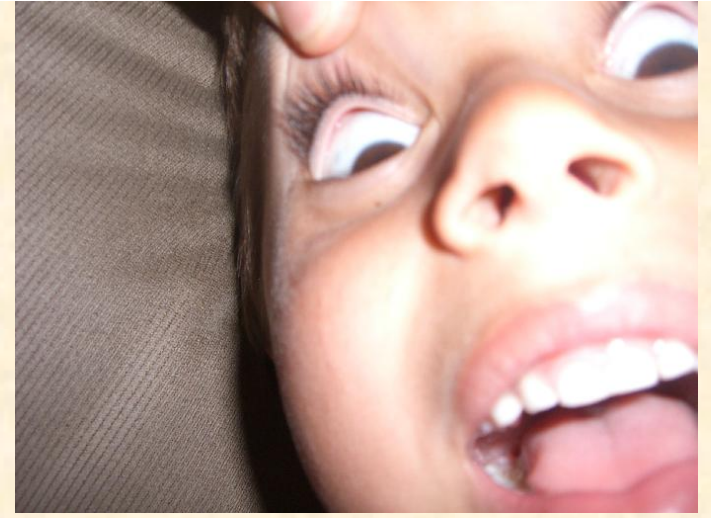
Habit Five

**Use your humorous imagination
to improve your communication**

Humor is a therapeutic communication technique



Habit Six



Humorize with Humorgy (humor force)



Habit Seven

Act Like the highly humorous person
you've become or are becoming.

An exercise

List 5 things you love to do, that you feel joyful when you do them, that you haven't done in the last several months. (I.E. lying in the sun, taking a cruise, getting a message, reading a good book, dancing, going to a humor talk, etc.)

1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

Now, besides each of these things list what stops you from doing it – something either inside (your feelings) or outside (lack of \$, time) that keeps you from doing it.

Take two things on your list that hold the most joy and think of one step you can take toward bringing it into your life. 1. 2.

Make your calendar with a date and time that you will bring each of these joyful activities into your life.

A Place for Pain

I open the door
pain walks in
filling my home with darkness and
discontent

I open the door
love walks in
replenishing the bedroom

I open the door
faith walks in
illuminating my living room

I open the door
hope walks in filling the kitchen with
wonderful smells

I open the door
joy walks in
I explain that she has the wrong address
she should be next door
She comes in anyway
joy, like pain
knows not of manners or proper protocol

I open the door
humor walks in
It fills the empty spaces

Pain is still here
but, it has little room.

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