LAUGH YOUR WAY TO HEALTH

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THE WELLNESS PARADIGM

• Norman Cousins
  • Correlation between stress, negative perceptions, emotions and certain diseases
  • Ten minutes of laughter allowed two hours of pain-free sleep
  • Positive emotions do have healing effects on health
  • Psychoneuroimmunology (PNI)
According to Steve Allen Jr.,

“Humor is a physical release, one of four actually. These include crying, yawning, orgasm and laughter. You can do them in succession, just get the order right.”

THEORIES OF HUMOR
REASONS WHY WE LAUGH AND SMILE

• Superiority Theory
  • Plato – the reason why people laugh, is at the expense of others
REASONS WHY WE LAUGH AND SMILE

• Incongruity Theory
  • Two concepts come together in our head and they don’t make sense (ex. Oxymoron) “He who laughs last….didn’t get the joke”

REASONS WHY WE LAUGH AND SMILE

• Release/Relief Theory
  • People laugh because they need to release nervous energy built up from repressed thoughts (Freud)
  • “Cocaine addiction is God’s way of saying you make too much money.”
REASONS WHY WE LAUGH AND SMILE

- Divinity Theory

- The belief that humor is a gift from God – humor has an adhesive quality that connects people... a component of spiritual well-being.
SENSES OF HUMOR

• A function of one’s upbringing:
  • Conventional – laughter occurs with someone, not at someone
  • Life of the party – “class clown” – spontaneous, creative, and quick-witted
  • Creative – joke writing is their career – very imaginative, quick-witted, creative, easily entertained
  • Good Sport – laughter is used to cope with personal imperfections; those who can laugh at their own mistakes and enjoy being human

PHYSIOLOGY OF LAUGHTER

• Effects of laughter on the body:
  • Short-term and long-term effects on body’s major physiological systems
    • Short-term: initiate the stress response:
      • Increase heart rate
      • Increase blood pressure
      • Increase muscle tension
      • Increase ventilations
    • Quickly followed by a rebound effect
    • Overall effect is homeostasis
PHYSIOLOGY OF LAUGHTER

• Dr. William Fry
  • Study on tears
    • Emotional tear drops – greater percentage of protein and toxins than those produced artificially
    • Rid the body of stress-related toxins

PHYSIOLOGY OF LAUGHTER

• Long-term effects
  • Negative thoughts
    • Trigger the neural release of the stress hormones, suppressing the immune system
  • Positive thoughts
    • Strengthen the integrity of the immune system
    • Inducing the release of neuropeptides from the pituitary gland, and throughout the body
    • Endorphins, interleukins, interferons

• “Thoughts are chemicals; they can either kill or cure.”
  Bernie Siegel
PHYSIOLOGY OF LAUGHTER

• Laughter causes the body to produce its own painkillers, (David McClelland MD)

“Humor can definitely lighten the load.”
Norman Cousins
HUMOR AS A COPING TECHNIQUE

• “Humor is the one defense mechanism that can increase pleasure and reduce pain at the same moment.”

  Brian Luke Seaward

• Humor’s greatest asset – balance the emotional scale between positive and negative perceptions.
  • Diffuse stress
  • Positive emotions derived from laughter have a positive effect on the immune system
  • Laughter is a recommended cognitive–behavioral intervention
HUMOR AS A COPING TECHNIQUE

- Victor Frankl, an Auschwitz survivor, “Man’s Search for Meaning,” stated that humor was a saving grace among fellow prisoners in the shadows of death.

  “Humor was another of the soul’s weapons in the fight for self-preservation.”

- A. Klein states, “...use of humor gives a sense of power in the midst of chaos.”

- Humor allows for an intermission in the cognitive war against stressors (Norman Cousins (1989), Head First.)
HUMOR AS A COPING TECHNIQUE

• Comic relief – used as a treatment method in many rehab programs today:
  • Physical trauma
  • Alcoholism
  • Drug addiction

HUMOR AS A COPING TECHNIQUE

• Psychotherapy – when patients joke about their conditions or predicaments, it’s acknowledged as a breakthrough in the emotional self-healing process.
TYPES OF HUMOR

- Self-parody
  - Something or someone is made fun of, thought to be the best type of humor to reduce stress, as long as it doesn’t sacrifice self-esteem
  - Exaggerating behaviors
  - Celebrity “roasts”
  - Parks and Recreation (TV show)
TYPES OF HUMOR

• Satire
  • Written or dramatic form of parody
    • Erma Bombeck
    • Dave Barry
    • Saturday Night Live
    • Shrek
TYPES OF HUMOR

• Irony
  • Two concepts or events, when paired together, come to mean or expose the opposite of what was expected
  • Oxymoron
  • “Honk if you love peace and quiet”
  • “My other car is a broom”

IRONY

• Oxymoron
  • Honest politician
  • Working vacation
  • Jumbo shrimp
  • Microsoft works
  • Tight slacks
  • Icy hot
THIS CAR CLIMBED MT. WASHINGTON

Ignore your rights and they’ll go away.

I'm from tech support. I'm here to delete your cookies.
A police officer called the station on his radio. "I have an interesting case here. An old lady shot her husband for stepping on the floor she just mopped."  
"Have you arrested the woman?"  "Not yet. The floor's still wet."

"I learned about stress management from my kids. Every night after work, I drink as much chocolate milk as my stomach will hold, eat handfuls of sugary cereal straight from the box, then run around the house in my underwear squealing like a monkey."

"Aside from ulcers, heart attacks, bypass surgery, drug and alcohol problems, and broken families, a little hard work never hurt anyone!"
TYPES OF HUMOR

- **Slapstick Comedy**
  - Physical farce – aggression based humor
    - Vaudeville
    - Steve Carrell, Jim Carey, Steve Martin

- **Absurd/Nonsense humor**
  - Gary Larson
  - Monty Python
  - John McPherson’s, Close to Home
TYPES OF HUMOR

- Double entendre
  - Wordplay where the expression has two meanings.

That awkward moment: When you walk through the metal detectors at the airport, and your abs of steel set them off.

YOU'RE NOT FAT
YOU'RE JUST A LITTLE HUSKY
DOUBLE ENTENDRE PUN
TYPES OF HUMOR

• Black Humor
  • Humor based on the fear of death
  • M*A*S*H
  • Scrubs

IRONY
IRONY

• Two concepts or events, when paired together, come to mean the opposite of the expected outcome

  • “Honk if you love peace and quiet”
  • “My other car is a broom”

TYPE OF HUMOR

• Dry Humor
  • Quick wit
  • Puns

  • “A pessimist’s blood type is always B–negative.”
  • “I fired my masseuse today. She just rubbed me the wrong way.”
  • “I used to work in a blanket factory, but it folded.”
Frank started to get a funny feeling that his doctor was a quack.
TYPE OF HUMOR

• Bathroom Humor
  • Crude, vulgar – describing every bodily function imaginable, chosen for cheap laughs
TYPE OF HUMOR

• **Sarcasm**
  - Means “to tear flesh”
  - Reveals latent anger
  - The lowest form of humor

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I am sorry, I didn’t realize that you’re an expert on my life and how I should live it! Please continue while I take notes.
HUMOR AND AGING

The Cat In The Hat On Aging

I cannot see
I cannot pee
I cannot chew
I cannot screw
Oh, my God, what can I do?
My memory shrinks
My hearing stinks
No sense of smell
I look like hell
My mood is bad -- can you tell?
My body’s drooping
Have trouble pooping
The Golden Years have come at last
The Golden Years can kiss my ass

TYPES OF HUMOR

I’m not bossy!
I have skills...leadership skills!!
Understand?
THE GROUNDHOG SAID SIX MORE WEEKS OF WINTER...

SO I ATE HIM.
STEPS TO INITIATE HUMOR THERAPY

1. Learn not to take life too seriously

2. Find one humorous thing a day

3. Work to improve your imagination and creativity
   - Read more books
   - Write a story
   - Play with children
   - Go exploring
   - Create something

4. Start a joke/cartoon-of-the-week swap

5. Learn how to hyper-exaggerate when describing a situation or story

6. Build a humor library

7. Find a host of varied humor venues (i.e. movies, theater, books, music, television, stand-up comedy)

8. Improve your self-esteem (accentuate your good qualities, positive affirmations, learn to love yourself)

9. Access your humor network (connect with someone that can make you smile)
HUMOR THERAPY

• HUMOR is not an emotion, it is a perception, however it can elicit several positive emotions.

• Use humor therapy to find a full range of human emotions, both positive and negative, to maintain a balance in your life.

JUST LAUGH

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uiws904iu8Q
KEEP LAUGHING!!!