

RYAN'S RESOLUTION: LOOKING FOR SMILES AND LAUGHTER

Ryan Tripp

Laughter is one of my all-time favorite stress management strategies because it's free, convenient, and beneficial in so many ways. Laughter reduces the level of stress hormones like cortisol, epinephrine(adrenaline), dopamine and growth hormone. It also increases the level of health-enhancing hormones like endorphins. Laughter increases the number of antibody-producing cells we have working for us, and enhances the effectiveness of T-cells. All this means a stronger immune system, as well as fewer physical effects of stress.

Doctors and health care professionals report the following information. When we laugh there is a decrease in stress hormone levels, a strengthening of the immune system, muscle relaxation, pain reduction, a lowering of blood pressure, cardiovascular conditioning, and the creation of a natural anti-depressant. Look to entertainment at concerts, at the theatre and at home with television . Watching hilarious movies and shows is an easy way to get laughter into your life whenever you need it. Go to a movie or comedy club with friends. The contagious effects of laughter may mean you'll laugh more than you otherwise would have as a solo viewer. As well, you'll have jokes to reference at later times. Having friends over for a party or game night is also a great setup for laughter and other good feelings.

Instead of complaining about life's frustrations, try to laugh about them. If something is so frustrating or depressing it's ridiculous. Realize that you could "look back on it" and laugh. With this attitude, you may also find yourself being more lighthearted and silly, giving yourself and those around you more to laugh about. Approach life in a more mirthful way and you'll find you're less stressed about negative events and you'll acquire the health benefits of laughter.



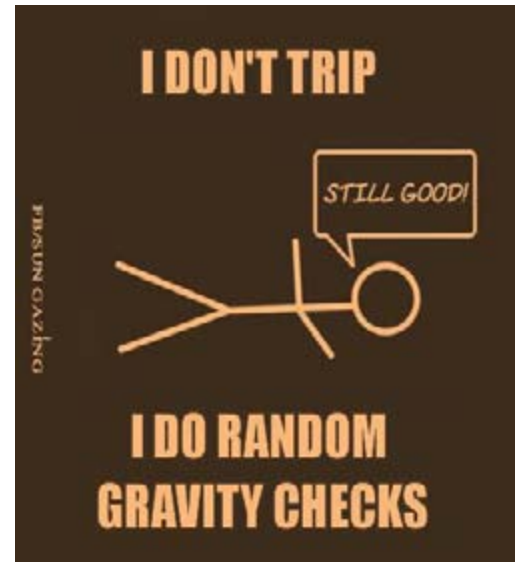
Just as studies show the positive effects of smiling occur whether your smile is fake or real, faked laughter also provides the benefits mentioned above. The body can't distinguish between "fake" laughter that you just start doing on purpose, and "real" laughter that comes from true humor--the physical benefits are exactly the same, and the former usually leads to the latter anyway. So smile more often, and fake laughter; you'll still achieve positive effects and faking merriment may lead to the real thing.



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"Life is supposed to be fun", say some. And I totally agree with that; life can be more fun than you think. We all want a happy life, and we all know that having a positive attitude feels better than a negative one. But for some reason, we are all attracted to and can be easily drawn to the negative side.

How do we go about to establish a more positive attitude as a daily habit? Read the funnies, watch the comedy channel, listen to children's play and their conversations, or try telling a funny story or a one liner.



The following points might help you change your life completely:

"Humor is like salt in food", observes Psychologist Martin Seligman. It amplifies everything.

Try to smile at the absurdities of life. Look for the things that can make you smile. Go to the funny side. Smiles & laughter are the best medicine!

Three seniors are out for a stroll. One of them remarks, "It's windy." Another replies, "No way. It's Thursday." The last one says, "Me too. Let's have a beer!"

