



Parenting Tips

A LITTLE LAUGHTER GOES A LONG WAY

Studies show that humor and laughter provide physical, mental, and emotional health benefits, as well as enhancing work productivity and life satisfaction. If you rarely take time out for pleasure and tend to look at things in a negative way, you are likely to have health problems in the future and perform less productively than if you take the time to enjoy the opportunities for humor in life.

Each moment of enjoyment or burst of laughter recharges the spirit, making it easier to cope with the more serious side of life. Mirth and merriment also release some of the physical and emotional tensions that come from stress. Those who play together, often work together more easily in family and job settings. Laughter can produce muscle relaxation and is a powerful tool for releasing pent-up feelings of anger, fear and anxiety and for reducing the risk of heart disease, headaches, chronic anxiety and stress. Good laughter is like a "social lubricant" that helps break the ice and ease social tension.

Having fun often means simply letting yourself be spontaneous, childlike or impulsive. Sometimes, however, it takes planning. For those individuals who have a hard time seeing the funny side of life, try some of these suggestions and put a little fun into your lives:

- ☞ Laugh out loud or try to make someone else laugh at least ten times a day--once an hour is even better.
- ☞ Read your favorite funnies in the newspaper.
- ☞ Occasionally, do something silly. For example, roller skate to a neighbor's house or wear an outrageous tie. A bit of foolishness is good for a laugh today, and in the future when you recall the incident.
- ☞ Rent funny movies from a video store or borrow them from a library. Watch a classic comedy rerun on television.
- ☞ Try to find the humor in predicaments as they happen.
- ☞ Play with young children and let them make you laugh.

Parents who develop their sense of humor will enjoy family life more and will be less bothered by some of children's annoying behavior and may even be able to find something lighthearted and funny in many aspects of family life that previously bothered them.

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