

August 23, 2020



**Laughter** is our birthright, a **natural** part of life that is innate and inborn. Infants begin **smiling** during the first weeks of life and **laugh** out loud within months of being born. Even if you did not grow up in a household where laughter was a common sound, you can **learn to laugh** at any stage of life. Begin by setting aside **special times** to seek out **humor** and **laughter**, as you might with exercising, and build from there. Eventually, you'll want to incorporate humor and laughter into the fabric of your life, finding it naturally in everything. Here are some ways to start:

**Smile.** Smiling is the beginning of laughter, and like laughter, it's contagious. When you look at someone or see something even mildly pleasing, practice smiling. Instead of **looking down at your phone**, look up and smile at people you pass in the street, the **person serving** you a morning coffee, or the **co-workers** you share an elevator with. **Notice** the effect on others.

**Count your blessings.** Literally make a **list**. The simple act of considering the positive aspects of your life will distance you from **negative thoughts** that block humor and laughter. When you're in a state of sadness, you have further to travel to reach humor and laughter.

**When you hear laughter, move toward it.** Sometimes humor and laughter are private, a shared joke among a small group, but usually not. More often, people are very happy to share something funny because it gives them an opportunity to laugh again and feed off the humor you find in it. When you hear laughter, **seek it out** and ask, "What's funny?"

**Spend time with fun, playful people.** These are people who laugh easily—both at themselves and at life's absurdities—and who routinely find the humor in everyday events. Their **playful** point of view and laughter are **contagious**. Even if you **don't** consider yourself a lighthearted, humorous person, you can still **seek out** people who like to laugh and make others laugh. Every comedian appreciates an audience.

**Bring humor into conversations.** Ask people, "What's the funniest thing that happened to you today? This week? In your life?" We can learn to use humor to smooth over disagreements, lower everyone's stress level, and communicate in a way that builds up our relationships rather than breaking them down.

Laugh every day.