

IN PRAISE OF LAUGHTER, *LIFE'S BEST ANT-ACID AND MUSCLE RELAXANT*

By Rob Peck

HUMOR HELPS US HANG TOUGH IN HARD TIMES. Laughter is Nature's natural leavening agent. It helps heavy spirits rise. Finding the funny side gives us a lift because it relieves some of the weight of frustration. Having a sense of humor is like going through life with a built in shock absorber. Short of severe medical or emotional tragedy, if we can laugh at it... we can live with it.



When we're stressed we tend to take the situation and ourselves too seriously. A good laugh eases anxiety, and gives our brain breathing space. It replenishes our spirit and allows us to step back to see the big picture; putting our problems into better perspective. Sure sometimes in life you reap the fruits...and other times you eat the pits! But the great thing about humor is that when our heart stays light our head thinks more flexibly. Instead of drowning in despair, we've got the mental life raft to see that pits... are also seeds!

At its best our sense of humor lets us reframe a situation and find the funny side, which relieves the weight of frustration and gives our mood a boost. From my earliest days I've always been drawn to the healing power of humor, and found it a readily available balm for anxiety. I remember my Grandma telling me a Yiddish proverb: What soap is to the body- laughter is to the soul. Which makes me think there should be some new reality TV show called- "When Life Stinks, Humor is the Best Deodorant!" (Of course, it will have to premiere on H-BO!)

We all know the old adage, "Laugh and the whole world laughs with you." The corollary is equally true: 'Groan and we feel alone.' With some practice, it's a choice we can consciously make. We can cry foul or we can find the funny side. One fosters resiliency and resourcefulness. The other leads to misery and martyrdom. Now, that's a tough choice to make – NOT!

Hearty laughter keeps us young. It revitalizes our soul with the promise of untapped possibilities. The power of surprise reconnects us with childlike imagination. A good belly laugh pumps oxygen to our brain and releases

endorphins. When we allow ourselves to crack up like a little kid, we regress for success. According to renowned author and speaker, Loretta Laroche, "Humor is the best way to simultaneously prevent hardening of the attitude and stop global whining!"

Life is laced with pleasure and pain. When we connect with someone through humor, it halves our sorrow and doubles our joy. If it's true as Shakespeare wrote "that music be the food of love" then surely, laughter is the best dessert. (AND, it's fat free!) Like I said, humor helps us stay light, and it keeps us healthy. To tweak another famous line, this time from Mark Twain: "Laughter is the best medicine" Plus no co-pays! And considering the steep price we pay for taking things too seriously and turning little slights into large vendettas, lightening our mood with humor may be the best muscle relaxant money can't buy!

Having and honing a good sense of humor is both a great tool for defusing tension and a heart centered spiritual practice for alleviating sadness. When we're able to crack a smile and provide a chuckle during an awkward situation it relieves us and everyone around us. Humor not only heals, it reveals unexpected twists , and reminds us we've always got a choice.

We can choose to complain, or we can find a way to reframe. When we do the latter we loosen up in a way that invites creative alternatives. By switching our point of view and looking at a problem through the lens of laughter we see that the word stressed is just desserts, spelled backwards. (And remember if you stay light, they're fat-free!)

By being on the laughter look out and nourishing our sense of humor, we cultivate three key ingredients for personal and spiritual growth: appreciation, optimism, and humility. When we stop to savor little joys like the giggles of small children on a playground, we infuse our soul in a way that helps us feel gratefully alive. Every time we find a way to laugh at our own foibles we refresh our spirits in life's deep reservoir of irony. To paraphrase comedienne, Rosemary Verri- the

best part about laughing at yourself, is that you never run out of fresh material! Even in the face of failure, humor is a time tested remedy for disappointment. When we're feeling down, laughter is like leavening. As the old saying goes, the reason angles can fly is because they take themselves lightly. Humor both restores and reinforces our sense of hope. It keeps us optimistic because it's a living reminder that in the end, he or she who laughs, lasts!

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www.zestworks.com Rob Peck is a former professional juggler who's become an award winning motivational speaker, stress management trainer, and creativity consultant -who still defies convention (and gravity!)

ZESTWORKS high energy- and highly interactive programs on flexible thinking, humor in the workplace and creative team building are individually designed to help leaders and their teams reduce Burnout and regain a better Life Balance.

Rob Peck loves to remind adults to play- and is a pioneer in the use of humor as a tool to consistently retain (rather than constantly retrain) key personnel. If you want to see how, please go to the above website and click on LIVE STREAMING VIDEO to view sample 3 minute excerpts.

Top 3 reasons to have Rob Peck as your next speaker:

- * Too many balls in the air is a feeling everyone can relate to and Rob's trademark ability to compellingly illustrate and lovingly spoof people's daily balancing acts immediately forges a strong, empathic connection that wins audience's trust.... and makes content come alive by linking lessons with laughter
- * Forget power point! Rob Peck blends verbal and visual communication in such a fresh and fun way, listeners literally see core concepts of focus, flexibility (and responding to fallibility) IN ACTION!
- * Easy to work with and solid track record for creating customized juggling and balancing visuals to engagingly illustrate, and memorably animate main conference themes and/or key objectives of meeting.