

Learn to laugh

by Rick Warren

Did you know that people who laugh live longer? It's true. Proverbs 14:30 says, "A relaxed attitude lengthens a man's life." (TLB)

Humor is an amazing thing. It's a tension dissolver. It's an antidote to anxiety. It's just like a tranquilizer, but without any troublesome side effects. And it's free! You don't even need a prescription.

Laughter is life's shock absorber. If you want to have less stress in your life, learn to laugh at your circumstances. Somehow, you must find the fun in the frustrating.

Someone once asked President Lincoln how he handled all the stresses of the Civil War. He said, "If it hadn't been for laughter, I could not have made it." Many famous comedians grew up in poor neighborhoods with lots of problems. They coped with their troubles by learning to laugh and making others laugh.

So learn to laugh. If you can laugh at it, you can live with it. And besides, if you learn to laugh at your troubles, you'll never run out of anything to laugh at! Life is full of funny situations. Will Rogers once said, "I don't know any jokes. I just watch the government and report the facts." Proverbs 17:22 says, "Being cheerful keeps you healthy." (GNB) We all need to develop a sense of humor.

One of my favorite verses in the Bible is Psalm 2:4, "The One enthroned in heaven laughs." Isn't that a great verse? God has a sense of humor. God laughs! Have you ever seen the face of an orangutan? God thought that one up! That proves he has a sense of humor. Do you want to be more like God? Learn to laugh. A sense of humor can preserve your sanity.

Sometimes, one irritation follows another, and before you know it, our day is ruined. I read this account in the The Encyclopedia Britannica's 1982 Yearbook, under the heading "Strange and Unusual Events." It tells about a man named Brian Heise who had what you might call a "very irritating day":

Brian Heise had more than his share of luck in July of that year, and most of it was bad. When his apartment in Provo, Utah, became flooded from a broken pipe in the upstairs apartment, the manager told him to go out and rent a water vacuum. That's when he discovered his car had a flat tire. He changed it, then went inside again to phone a friend for help. The electric shock he got from the phone so startled him that he

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inadvertently ripped the instrument off the wall. Before he could leave the apartment a second time, a neighbor had to kick down the apartment door because water damage had jammed it tight. While all of this was going on, someone stole Heise's car, but it was almost out of gas. He found it a few blocks away but had to push it to the gas station, where he filled up the tank. That evening Heise attended a military ceremony at Brigham Young University. He injured himself severely when he somehow sat on his bayonet, which had been tossed onto the front seat of his car. Doctors were able to stitch up the wound, but no one was able to resuscitate four of Heise's canaries that were crushed to death by falling plaster. After Heise slipped on the wet carpet and badly injured his tailbone, he said he began to wonder if "God wanted me dead, but just kept missing."

And you think you've had bad days! Sometimes, all you can do is laugh.

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Take my advice: acquire a sense of humor. Learn to laugh. It's relaxing and healing and a buffer to all the stress the world throws your way.

Until next week,

Rick