

# Humor Therapy

## Mindfulness Worksheet

Date / Time:

What have you brought mindful awareness to today? Check all that apply.

Heart    Mind    Body    Breath    Environment

To begin this Meditation, please bring kind awareness to

- why you chose this topic
- how your belly, chest, and head each feel when you reflect on this topic
- the emotions that you can associate with these visceral feelings
- the positive or negative impact of any stories you believe in regarding this topic
- the fact that many others are feeling similarly about this topic as you
- how you might feel with increased awareness around this topic
- when you can apply increased mindfulness to this topic in your day-to-day life



### PURPOSE / EFFECTS:

Laughter may be the best medicine after all. Laughing is found to lower blood pressure, reduce stress, and boost the function of the immune system; it also triggers the release of endorphins, increases pain tolerance, and promotes general wellbeing. Humor therapy takes advantage of the natural benefits of laughing and channels them for psychological gain. Ensuring a healthy quotient of laughter every day is a great way to up your quality of life.

### METHOD:

#### Summary

Laugh lots. If you have to, fake it 'til you make it.

#### Long Version

The basis of humor therapy is, of course, to get yourself laughing. Jokes, funny anecdotes, comedy films, whatever makes you laugh is okay.

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However, sometimes in stressful situations, when the benefits of humor therapy are needed most, you may not have something at the ready, or the stress may keep you from seeing the humor in the situation. In that case, here is a meditation on humor to do whenever you need the therapy of a laugh:

- Stretch generally to loosen up any physical tension that may hold you back. Make sure you get your arms, shoulders, back, chest, and legs.
- Now, as silly as it seems, start faking laughter. Make yourself go through the motions of a good belly laugh. Soon, the contagiousness of the act of laughter alone will take hold. You'll begin to laugh spontaneously and genuinely. Throw your head back and laugh from the heart.
- Do this for five minutes at least, or for as long as the laughter takes.

### **HISTORY:**

The King James version of the Bible says in Proverbs 17:22, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones"; the therapeutic benefits of humor thus have been known for millennia.

Through the Middle Ages, Renaissance, and Enlightenment, doctors and philosophers advised laughter as a supplement to more traditional forms of care, with such figures as Martin Luther and Voltaire suggesting its use. In the modern era, some hospitals began to bring in clowns in to attend to sick children and keep their spirits up. Now therapeutic humor groups have sprung up around the world, offering some of the cheapest, easiest, and most fun therapy around.