

THE SENSE OF HUMOR

Using Humor, Laughter, and Improvisation
to Train, Motivate, and Inspire.

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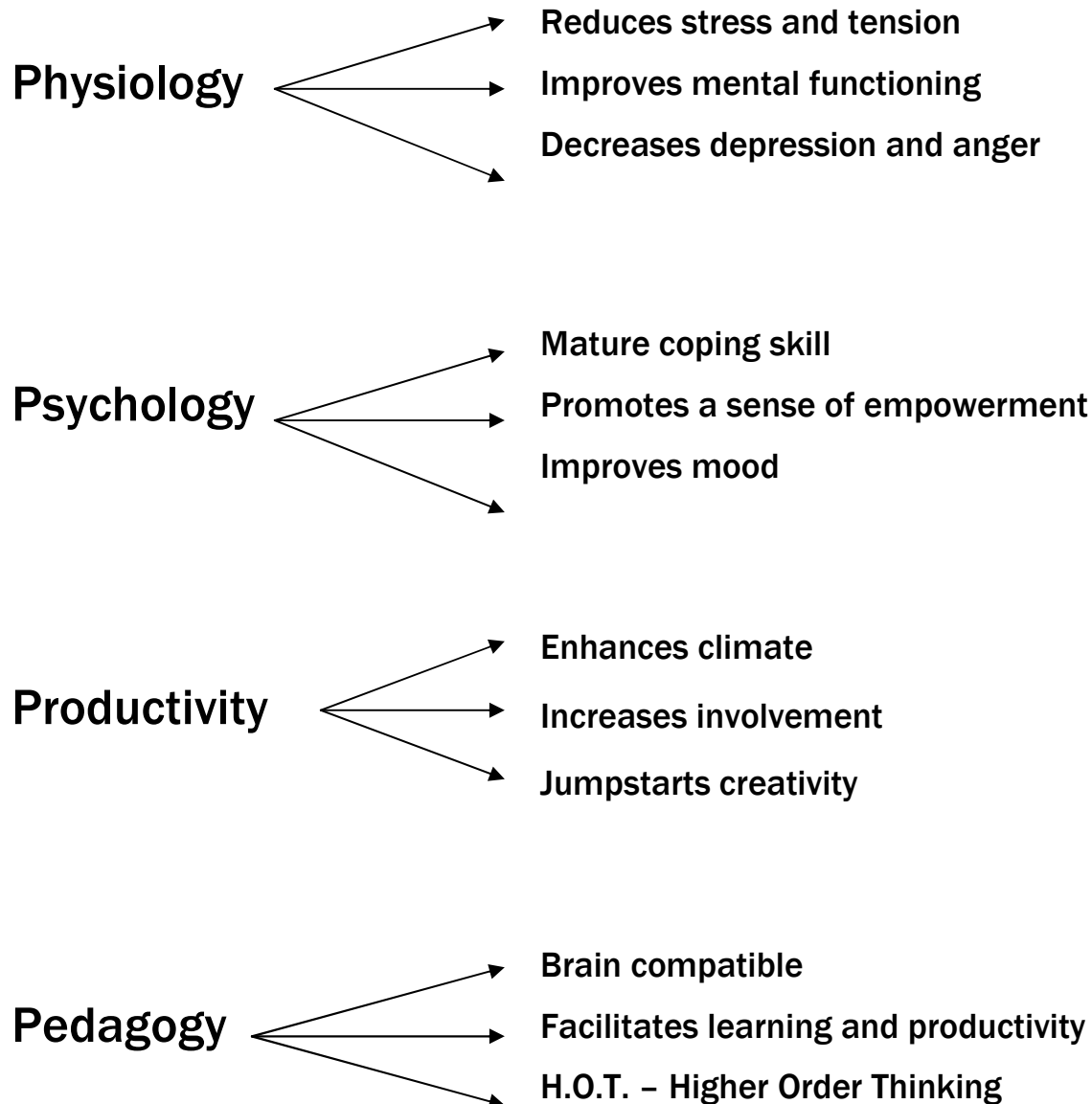
Download a copy of this handout and other resource materials at:
<http://www.wavelengthinc.com/web/sensehumor.ppt>

HUMOR'S EFFECTIVENESS

★HAPPIER★

★HEALTHIER★

★MORE EFFECTIVE★



THEORIES OF HUMOR

I. Incongruity Theory - (Kant, Schopenhauer)

- ❑ Multiple meanings
- ❑ Detecting ambiguities
- ❑ Sudden shift of perspective

II. Superiority Theory - (Plato, Aristotle, Descartes)

"Everything is funny as long as it's happening to someone else."

- Mark Twain

- ❑ Humor to inflate our own ego
- ❑ Humor to deflate others we feel are superior
- ❑ Seeing flaw in others as compared to ourselves

III. Relief\Release Theory - (Freud)

- ❑ Temporary freedom from our restrictions
- ❑ Rebellion against the repressive or uncontrollable
- ❑ Levity in a tense situation.

IV. Humor as a Form of Play - (Eastman)

- ❑ A reversion to childish innocence

V. Humor Exposes the Truth - (White)

- ❑ Rips away the veils of pretense
- ❑ Reveals truth of human nature and human affairs

From "License to Laugh" by Richard A. Shade

KEYS TO THE SUCCESSFUL USE OF HUMOR

I. Relationship

- Know your audience
- Tell stories with a purpose

II. Rapport

- Have an understanding of your audience's feelings
- Should be laughing with, not at someone

III. Setting

- Make sure the humor is appropriate for the space
- Humor should enhance, not distract

IV. Timing

- Allow time for the imagination to work
- Remember the non-verbal pathway to humor

Areas of humor to likely avoid:

- Sexual
- Ethnic/racial
- Religious
- Hostile/Sick
- Demeaning to Men/Women



From "A Laughing Place" by Christian Hageseth III, M.D.

HOW TO DEVELOP YOUR PERSONAL SENSE OF HUMOR

- ❑ Look for humor in everything

"Nothing is quite as funny as the unintended humor in reality."

- Steve Allen

- ❑ Collect humor –

Keep a journal/file/bulletin board/library of:

Books	Magazines	Videos/Audio tapes	
Jokes	Stories	Cartoons	Headlines
Signs	Anecdotes	Excuses	Oxymorons

- ❑ Smile more - Lighten up - Be more playful

- ❑ Participate in humorous activities

Dress up for "dress-up" day

Create/perform in a sketch written by/for your colleagues

Make a presentation in costume

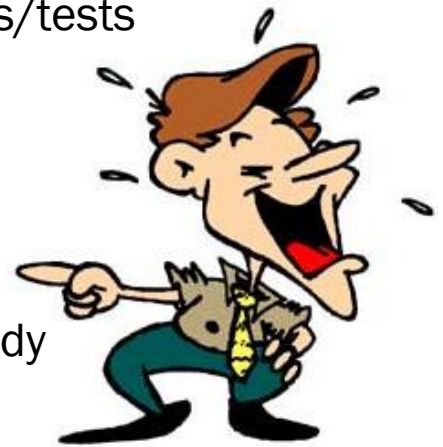
- ❑ Hang out with funny people - try the humor buddy system

- ❑ Use humor in your correspondence/surveys/tests

- ❑ Try out other styles/forms of humor

- ❑ Tell stories on yourself

- ❑ Have some sort of humor always at the ready



RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

The Association of Applied and Therapeutic Humor - Mission: "To advance the understanding and application of humor, laughter and play." AATH provides state-of-the-art, evidence-based information about current research and practical applications of humor to education, health-care, business, and government. www.aath.org

Energize Your Meetings with Laughter. Sheila Feigelson, ASCD Publishing, 1998
www.ascd.org.

Health, Healing and the Amuse System. Paul E. McGhee, Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1996

The Humor Project, Inc. Joel Goodman, Founder. (Produces annual "Positive Power of Humor" Conference.) 480 Broadway, Ste. 210, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866, (518) 587-8770 www.HumorProject.com

Impro: Improvisation and the Theatre. Keith Johnstone, Theatre Arts Books, 1979

Improvisation for the Theatre. Viola Spolin, Northwestern U. Press, 1983

The Laughing Classroom. Loomans & Kolberg, H J Kramer, Inc., 1993

A Laughing Place. Christian Hageseth III, M.D., Berwick Publishing Company, 1988

License To Laugh. Richard A. Shade, Teacher Ideas Press, 1996

"She Who Laughs, Lasts." Article by Jim Winter in *Principal* magazine, March/April 2004. NAESP Publications. www.naesp.org

Truth In Comedy. Charna Halpern & Del Close, Meriwether Pub. 1994

Using Humor to Maximize Learning. Mary Kay Morrison, Rowman & Littlefield Education, 2008

WAVELENGTH – Improvisational comedy ensemble using humor to focus on educational concerns. Training DVDs, CDs, interactive workshops and live performances for professional development. www.wavelengthinc.com

World Laughter Tour - Famous for its two-day Certified Laughter Leadership workshop "to teach people enjoyable, systematic, self-care strategies." www.worldlaughtertour.com