

## **A Sense of Humour – What a Quality**

### **A Sense of Humour from Cradle to Grave**

A sense of humour is a natural, inherent, part of our lives; we learn to smile and then laugh within months of our birth and as we grow into childhood we tend to laugh many times a day. Unfortunately, as we move into adulthood we smile and laugh a lot less; life has become too serious. Perhaps it's a good idea to emulate the children as it seems they are only ones who still enjoy a sense of humour to the fullest extent.

In years gone by, socialising with friends was something to look forward to and it happened often. Society has changed and the majority of people don't interact with others as much as they used to. Television, the computer and other 'instant' entertainments mean people don't have to leave home to be entertained. And when everyone in the home has to work long hours, there is little time to go out and enjoy socialising with friends.

The workplace does not fare much better due to pressures to produce more in less time. A sense of humour in such an environment can be eroded very quickly.

Yet, the powers of humour and laughter are numerous. They entertain us and make us feel good, they help us cope better with life's challenges and they make life more enjoyable and rewarding.

Most importantly, a sense of humour connects us with others by strengthening our communications and our relationships. It improves our quality of interaction with those around us and can even help others to realise the benefits of laughter. When we laugh with another, we foster a positive bond with that person and it increases happiness and intimacy. It also acts as a strong buffer against stress, arguments and frustration.

Humour doesn't have to be offensive to induce laughter, nor should it be seen as laughing at someone else's expense. A sense of humour is an attitude; a rising to the occasion and a way of looking at ourselves and life that helps us respond positively to a situation, bringing pleasure, hope and harmony. Humour is not crass jokes; it is a warm, relaxing way of drawing people together sharing laughter and making life more enjoyable.

Not everyone fosters a sense of humour. Those people seem to feel the need to take life very seriously. Such an attitude can send their stress levels very high and they are not the happiest people to be around. Don't take yourself too seriously; it can become too hard to think outside the box and find new solutions to problems. Try to see the lighter side in difficult situations rather than bemoaning your bad luck. A sense of humour is sure to improve your mood and the mood of those around you. Of course, there are sad times that are clearly not occasions for a sense of humour; however, most people are sensible enough to be able to keep life in the right perspective.

Humour relaxes the body and puts you into a happy and positive frame of mind; it lightens your burdens, inspires hope and keeps you focused and alert. It has been observed, also, that the relaxation that comes with a sense of humour develops the kind of thinking that leads to greater creativity and results in raised productivity in the home and at work.

People with a sense of humour seem to be able to handle stress with more ease and are less judgemental and more compassionate, less anxious and more self-confident and popular. Generally, a sense of humour makes life more enjoyable and can even help to solve problems. There are always challenges in life but when they are handled without allowing stress to enter it is easier to concentrate on the solution.

There is a saying, “You don’t stop laughing because you are old; you grow old because you stop laughing” (Author unknown). A Norwegian study into the effects of a sense of humour on ageing found that those adults who have a sense of humour outlive those who don’t find life very funny. Of course, living longer is most people’s goal, as long as they can enjoy a quality of life with those extra years.