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Lighten Up At Work

By Virginia Reeves

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This article focuses on ideas to having more fun at work by employing a more light-hearted approach. I hope these ideas, obtained from several sources, will spark you to share as well. Wouldn't it be great to smile more while putting in all those hours on the job? Have fun, giggle, and make life easier for yourself and the people you spend a lot of time with.

Laughter works because it increases blood circulation, feeds oxygen to the brain, pumps out hormones that aid alertness, and releases pain-killing endorphins. These effects can improve mental skills such as decision making, negotiating, data organization, and word association. Tell me how any boss could argue with those benefits.

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Years ago I listened to a speaker, Jim Pelley of Laughter Works, who proposed that companies consider having a CEO of HOHO (Creative Employee Organizer who Helps Others Handle Obstacles). The concept is great. I jotted down these points on how to incorporate more humor into the work place.

- * use props such as humorous posters on the employee bulletin board or in your work space
- * decorate a plant with a red rubber nose, scarf, silly glasses, magic wand, etc.
- * create a humorous sick leave, bathroom or vacation policy to parody those typical boring office policy manuals
- * keep a cartoon or joke book near the telephone to relax and laugh while you are on hold (not only will you feel better, you'll probably carry over that smile and boost up the spirits of whoever answers the

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phone thereby lightening up their day too)

- * give out monthly awards for the most creative use of telephone time, late-to-work excuses, expense account rationalization, etc.
- * sing out your complaints (use whatever form of music fits you or pick something that isn't you to really make a point)
- * take a quick laughter break every two hours (you should walk away from anything you're doing periodically anyway so why not make it fun?!)
- * when you are having a "train-wreck-of-the-mind" or a "mental meltdown" it's even more critical to step away in order to keep things in perspective and restore your positive outlook.
- * Jim's a fun speaker – check his website at <http://www.laughterworks.com>

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One of the reasons we respond to people with a sense of humor is that humor implies control and command of a situation. If there is a crisis, an emergency, a time of challenge – and a leader can joke in the face of it – it implies that a solution has been found, the right path to follow has been determined. Humor is the ultimate expression of being cool, calm, and collected. A great example is during 1944, the German army had the 101st Airborne Division surrounded and trapped at Bastogne. When the German commander presented an ultimatum to surrender to General McAuliffe, he gave a one word answer: "Nuts!" It brought a smile to Allied faces throughout the world and a new resolve to the men of the 101st to break out of the ring and move on to win – and they did.

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As I've stated in other articles, I keep material gathered from all sorts of places. This came from a workbook somewhere. I hope you enjoy it and consider posting it.

The New "Throw Your Weight Around" Diet

If you're worried about not getting all the exercise you need because you're not jogging, swimming, or playing tennis, worry no more. A study released by the U.S. Foreign Service Medical Bulletin shows that managers do indeed burn up calories despite the sedentary nature of their jobs. The following chart tells how, along with the number of calories burned per hour.

- * beating around the bush 75
- * jumping to conclusions 100
- * climbing the walls 150
- * swallowing your pride 50
- * passing the buck 25

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- * throwing your weight around (depending on your weight) 50 to 300
- * dragging your heels 100
- * pushing your luck 250
- * making mountains out of molehills 500
- * adding fuel to the fire 150
- * wading through paperwork 300
- * bending over backwards 75
- * jumping on the bandwagon 200
- * running around in circles 350
- * eating crow 225
- * climbing the ladder of success 750
- * pulling out all the stops 75
- * wrapping it up at day's end 12

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Have you ever wondered what those adjectives on job performance

evaluations mean? What follows are some enlightening definitions.

Quick thinking: offers plausible excuses for mistakes

Takes pride in his work: conceited

Tactful in dealing with superiors: knows when to keep his mouth shut

A keen analyst: thoroughly confused

Meticulous in attention to detail: a nit picker

Strong adherence to principles: stubborn

Demonstrates qualities of leadership: has a loud voice

Approaches difficult problems with logic: finds someone else to do the job

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Keep personal anecdotes that are funny or embarrassing that happened to you and use them to illustrate a point. This makes you real and builds rapport. Make sure they are relevant to your message. Use humor to make or enhance a point.

Create a humor file of cartoons, quotes, photographs, postcards, jokes – anything you think is funny. Save them for meetings or presentations. You can even open up the file when you need to cheer up yourself!

Think of the most bizarre or weird things that might happen if you followed a certain course. Some brainstorming sessions have reaped a real treat when they ended up coming up with the best solution when they were being "silly" because they stepped out of "reality" and let their

creativity and imagination take over.

If you have a hard time being witty on your own – use a prop. Visual aids help people remember the message and the speaker.

Humor can focus the group, remove tension from the room and be very healing to the soul. A whimsical anecdote can set up or amplify a subject matter. A good story is also an opportunity to build rapport and set up a "sameness" between you and your audience.

Steve Allen said "Nothing is funnier than the everyday humor of reality". During a boring or frustrating meeting, while on hold on the phone, or while standing at the copy machine – think about situations that had you shaking your head in disbelief or amusement and let those memories bring a smile to your face.

If these ideas haven't provided you with some delightful diversions for your work space or work place, then I don't know what we can do but track you down and find your tickle spots! Bring some silly into the serious and see how much more quickly and easily the day goes by. Remember the old saying: All work and no play make Jack (or Jill or anybody else) a dull person. Let your outer and inner dimples show –

it's healthy for your body, mind, and soul!

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When Not To Color

By Jenny Andrews B

We all know the girl. Every time you see her, she has a different color hair. One week it might be streaked with blond highlights, the next it is vibrant red. And so it goes until the day you see her with an extremely short cut or worse yet, a ball cap. When you ask what happened, she blames it on a color disaster. She got a hold of a box of color that had something wrong with it or some similar excuse. But you've seen it coming. I mean, how many times can you actually color your hair without it falling out?

To avoid the same mistake, there are a few simple rules that you should follow. No, you don't have to be relegated to wearing the same hair color all of the time. You can change your look every now and then. The key to it, though, is to know when and when not to color your hair to avoid hair color burn out.

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Before you color your hair, you should always check it to see if it is strong enough to withstand another coloring. There are a few ways that you should do this. First, shampoo your hair and feel it for overall dryness before you add conditioner. If your hair feels like straw or something other than hair, you should not color. You can also take an individual hair strand and test it for breakage. Simply apply tension to the hair strand until it breaks. If it breaks easily without stretching, you definitely cannot color. Another thing to look for is fading color. If you have been coloring your hair only to have the color fade out within a few weeks, your hair is in no condition for further coloring.

In addition to checking your hair to see if it can be colored, you should also avoid certain color combinations to eliminate or reduce damage. When making hair color changes, avoid drastic differences. For example: Do not lighten your dark brown hair to platinum blond only to put deep red on it and then try to lighten it again. What you will end up with is mush.

You should also wait a good while in between hair colors. Wait at least 6 to 8 weeks between root touchups. If you want to change your hair color completely, you should use the following time guidelines: Going darker - wait 4 weeks after last color. Going lighter - wait 8 weeks after last color. And always check to see if your hair is strong enough to withstand the service. If in doubt, ask a professional.

Jenny is a hair expert, and the author of an incredible free minicourse, that explains how to find your unique style, how long or short you should have your hair, how to find the right hair color for you, how to find the right salon, and a lot more. Go to

now and get this amazing

hair minicourse - absolutely free



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