

LAURA ON LIFE

# The best medicine is laughter

Humor is a funny thing. (Yes, that was a pun.) What one person may think is funny, another may not. Age seems to have some bearing on this, because kids' and adults' sense of humor is so different.

An adult's funny bone is so jaded that, to make us laugh, it takes a feat of derring-do that goes horribly wrong. There are many of these feats featured on America's Funniest Home Videos; feats that include trampolines or ramps and something with wheels, skis or wings. You know for a fact that someone got hurt, but your first response is to laugh.

I believe cartoons were the culprit for conditioning us to laugh at someone else's pain. It's shameful. A child could watch the same video and feel absolute empathy for the victim, while an adult can't help but laugh at the stupidity displayed.

We don't want to laugh. We would've aided the victim if we were present, but... Lord, it was funny! We should be whipped a thousand times with a wet noodle!

A teenager will laugh at made-up misadventures.

"What if that guy tripped on that stick?" Ha-ha.

"Yeah, and then he fell into that manhole..." Hee-he.

"But what if the manhole led into an alternate universe?" Ha-ha-hoo!

"And all the people looked like this banana..." Hee-hee!

"And they shed their skin?..."

"And the guy slipped on the banana guy's peel!"

"That would be so funny!" Ha-ha-ha!

They could go on for hours inventing a scenario that never happened and most likely never would. But it would be the funniest thing in the world to them.

An adult would look at them indulgently and smile – not because it was funny, but

because they thought it was.

Preteens are more likely to find humor in the noises their bodies can make. Belching contests and blowing into their elbows are hilarious to them. An unplanned gaseous event is enough to send a classroom of 5th graders into gales of laughter.

Adults will try to dissuade their Neanderthal leanings: "Hush, it's not polite to do that in church!" But we've already discussed what adults find funny, so who's the Neanderthal?

Young children are amused by "magic." If something suddenly appears that wasn't there before, they laugh. Peek-a-boo is a prime example. A toddler's laugh is sometimes so contagious that adults will laugh right along with him. Toddlers also like it when you talk to them and if you talk in an

unexpected way, they will laugh as well. This is why adults sound like a moron when they talk to little ones. Boochy-goochy-moo-moo-moo! Imagine saying that to the lady at the bank or the guy at the car wash. Would they laugh? Heck, no! If they were somewhat balanced themselves, they'd run as fast as they could in a different direction. If they had anger-management issues, they'd slug you. Yet, total strangers will talk like that to your baby.



Laura Snyder

The purity of a child's humor is lost to us, but we get to experience it through the contagion of their laughter.

Babies like funny

faces and sounds. When an adult can look at a funny face making an odd sound and actually laugh, the person doing it is called a comedian, invited to a party, and possibly even paid to do it again.

It may not be easy to make us laugh

without watching a life-threatening mishap, but oddly enough, laughter is the best medicine for all of us.

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