

Humor to Help Others Feel Happier

In our modern, fast-paced but tension-filled world, consider the popularity of or emphasis on such things as psychological care, anti-anxiety and anti-depression medications, treatments, spas, vacation getaways, etc. In this age of “self-help,” self-improvement seminars and workshops of all sorts abound. They may take on any one of many different possible forms: public speaking, fashion, wellness, sales, parenting, education, finances, etc. Whatever subjects these workshops address, in the end, they all aim to help people feel better about themselves. It is essential that you know this at the outset. Many people come to hear presentations to feel better about themselves, their lives and their circumstances. They may not even overtly realize or intend this, but seminar attendees certainly don't attend in the hopes of feeling *worse*. You want to be sure your message will give your audience that boost they need to take the next step. You want them to come away with a fresh perspective that inspires them and makes them hopeful. This is yet another area where humor can be a powerful ally.

People coming to hear you speak all have concerns and stresses they will return to when they leave your presentation. Think of your humor as having a therapeutic effect that will give your audience members the fortification and uplifting they need to confront their challenges. Dwight D. Eisenhower said, “Laughter can relieve tension, soothe the pain of disappointment and strengthen the spirit for the formidable tasks that always lie ahead.” Through your presentation, you are providing a time and place where distressing emotions are replaced with positive ones. It is very unlikely that your prospects will feel angry, depressed, anxious, guilty or resentful and enjoy your humor at the same time. Your humor can have a domino goodwill effect in instilling positive, happy emotions in your audience members. If you can help them to feel happier, in turn, you will open the locked doors of persuasion and influence with your prospects. Goldie Hawn once said, “Comedy breaks down walls. It opens up people. When you become good, you can fill up those openings with something positive. Maybe you can combat some of the ugliness in the world.” Humor also increases energy and productivity, which will feed your prospects' positive emotions even more.

By the time a child reaches nursery school, s/he will be laughing about 300 times a day. How about adults? Do you have a guess? Adults laugh an average of only 17 times per day. Make it your goal to change this statistic. If you can teach others to see the lighter side of life, even in their day-to-day situations, you will give them the key to feeling greater happiness more readily and more often. All aspects of their lives will be enhanced, simply by virtue of their new, positive outlook. I cannot think of a greater reward as a speaker/trainer. You can improve lives and make the world a better place.

Humor is both an art and a science. Like any skill, it can be learned and mastered, but only with consistent practice. Sometimes you may fail, but keep at it until you have harnessed the power to make others laugh. Then, others will always feel good when they are in your presence. They will also take what you have to say more seriously. Humor will give you the power to motivate and influence others in a productive, positive way.

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