

Laughter Program

We read "a merry heart doeth good like a medicine." Of all the gifts bestowed by nature on the human being, hearty laughter must be close to the top.

"What I have to report is better than good," I said. "It's wonderful. Actually, it's We all have heard the statement "Laughter is the best medicine". In the Bible better than wonderful. It's unbelievable. And as long as I live, I don't expect that anything as magnificent as this can possibly happen to me again."

"What happened is that when I arrived at the Los Angeles airport last Wednesday MY bag was the first off the carousel. I had never met anyone whose bag was the first off the carousel. "

"Flushed with success, I went to the nearest telephone to report my arrival to my office. That was when I lost my coin. I pondered this melancholy event for a moment or two, then decided to report it to the operator. Operator, I said, I put in a quarter and didn't get my number. The machine collected my coin."

"Sir, she said, "if you give me your name and address, we'll mail the coin to you."

"I was appalled. "Operator, I said, "I think I can understand the reason behind the difficulties of A.T. & T. You're going to take the time and trouble to write down my name and address on a card and then you are probably going to give it to the person in charge of such matters. He will go to the cash register, punch it open and take out a quarter, at the same time recording the reason for the cash withdrawal. Then he will take a cardboard with a recessed slot to hold the coin so it won't flop around in the envelope. Then he, or someone else, will fit the cardboard with the coin into an envelope, first taking time to write out my address on the envelope. Then the envelope will be sealed.

Someone will then affix a thirty-two cent stamp on the envelope. All that time and expense just to return a quarter. Now, operator, why don't you just return my coin and let's be friends."

"Sir, she repeated in a flat voice, "if you give me your name and address, we will mail you the refund."

Then, almost by way of afterthought, she said, "Sir, did you remember to press the coin return plunger?"

Truth to tell, I had overlooked the nicety. I pressed the plunger. To my great surprise, it worked. It was apparent that the machine had been

badly constipated and I happened to have the plunger. All at once, the vitals of the machine opened up and proceeded to spew out the coins of almost every denomination. The profusion was so great that I had to use my empty hand to contain the overflow.

While all this was happening, the noise was registering in the telephone and was not lost on the operator.

"Sir, she said, "what is happening?"

I reported that the machine had just given up all its earnings for the past few months, at least. At a rough estimate, I said there must be close to four dollars in quarters, dimes, and nickels that had just erupted from the box.

"Sir, she said, will you please put the coins back in the box."

"Operator, I said, if you give me your name and address I will be glad to mail you the coins."

A really good laugh utilizes the major parts of our body. It increases your oxygen intake, elevates your heart rate, moves your abdominal, facial, and shoulder muscles, and works your diaphragm. It sounds almost like an aerobic exercise, but it is a lot more fun and easier to do. Just as after an aerobic exercise, you will experience a sense of well-being, relaxation, a drop in heart rate and blood pressure.

And so this brings us to part one of our program for the night. If everyone would please come to the center of the room and make a nice round circle and be one arms length away from your neighbor, and our backs toward the center of the circle - we will have a practice run on how we might want to exercise some night with our chapter members.

We're going to play, "Pass the Buck". When the music starts, you will pass the buck (a dollar bill) to the right until the music stops. The person holding the buck drops out of the circle and sits down, giving up the buck to the next person. When the music starts up again, pass the buck to the left this time until the music stops. This continues until only two players remain, and they are back to back. The winner is the person who passes the buck to the other as the last note is played. That person wins the buck.

Have everyone sit down and then read on.....

We all have heard the statement "Laughter is the best medicine." If you stop to think about it, you might ask yourself, medicine for what? Probably the first thought that pops into your head is "mental health." While many scientists, doctors, and writers have written that laughter is therapeutic

for physical illnesses, in this program we will deal with the "feelings."
Stop and picture a morning when you rise and little things go wrong for the first 15 to 30 minutes. You are alone, and it seems like things just continue to go down hill. You don't feel like doing anything, such as dressing, dieting, and so forth. The day is just a bad day - all day. Isn't that the way it usually goes?

Now imagine that a friend calls and tells you a funny story. You sit and laugh with her for a few minutes and share conversation. When you hang up, your whole attitude has changed. Remembering the funny story, you chuckle out loud as you do your chores. You have forgotten all about the 15 or 20 minutes you had earlier when things went wrong.

A really good laugh utilizes the major parts of our body. It increases your oxygen intake, elevates your heart rate, moves your abdominal, facial, and shoulder muscles, and works your diaphragm. It sounds almost like an aerobic exercise, but it is a lot more fun and easier to do. Just as after an aerobic exercise, you will experience a sense of well-being, relaxation, and a drop in heart rate and blood pressure.

When something is really bothering you and seems so very serious, step back, look it over, and look for something humorous about the situation. Many times finding something to at least smile about in a situation makes all the difference in the world in how we feel about it and how we act upon it.

Now have each member place chairs in a circle, one for each member.

RULES: Every time a member can answer "YES" the member moves one chair to the right. If the person occupying that chair answers "NO", she or he stays put and the other member sits on that persons lap. The first person back to their original chair wins a prize. I have put extra questions in here because sometimes we do this at our open Honor Society meetings, and there are guests there that play along and we needed fair questions for everyone.

You ask the ones you want, and change or eliminate anything you don't want.

1. Did you have a good laugh today?
Do you have children?
2. Do you know where TOPS headquarters is located?
Are you a TOPS member?
3. Did you "Share" on the phone last week with a member?
Do you have pets at home?
4. Did you send a note to a member last week?
Is your birthday in the month of December?
5. Do you know the name of your TOPS Coordinator?
Are you retired?
6. Did you lose weight this week?
Do you live on the West side of the Hudson?

- Are you a TOPS guest here tonight?
7. Have you done a program so far this year?
Are your eyes brown?
8. Will you do a program sometime this year?
Are you wearing the color "red"?
9. Have you ever been a "Star for the Night?"
10. Do you own a TOPS nutrition monograph?
Are you the designated driver for the night?
11. Did you attend SRD last year?
Are you having fun yet?
12. Did you hand in a diet chart this week?
13. Do you have your name tag on?
Do you live on the East side of the Hudson?
14. Have you ever laughed at yourself?
15. Have you ever been a chapter officer?
16. Did you read the funnies this week?
17. Did you read your TOPS NEWS this month?
18. Did you help someone this week?
19. Have you lost so far this year?
20. Have you turned in a goal slip?

Lorraine DeCouto