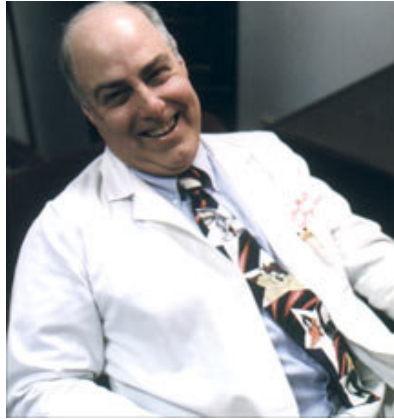


THE FUN FACTOR THE FUN FACTOR THE FUN FACTOR



"Ten Ways You Can Be Happier ...Right Now!"

by Clifford Kuhn, M.D.

<http://www.natural-humor-medicine.com>

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This book excerpt is designed to give you a good insight into the wonderful book "**The Fun Factor**" which is available at <http://www.natural-humor-medicine.com> along with the "**Fun Factor Guidebook**", and the "**Living Happily Over Laughter – Daily Meditation**" e-book

Prepared for publication by <http://www.strategic-services-aust.com>

INTRODUCTION

by Jerry Lewis

Dear Reader;

You're in for an unusual treat, a treat that is only exceeded by the treat I'm getting writing the foreword to this wonderful book by my friend, Cliff Kuhn.

When I received the manuscript I couldn't wait to read it, and read it I did, twice. And I'm proud to be a small part of what I believe is one of the best "how to" books I have ever read. The "how to" aspect comes from one of the most prolific men of medicine I have ever known. As well as being an expert about laughter and the healing power it can bring, Cliff Kuhn brings us into the broader world of humor that has been either verboten or laid back so far that no one has recognized it. It needed someone like Cliff to breathe some air into it for all to see and understand. In all my years of examining and studying the human condition I have found that it isn't easy for people to truly comprehend humor—its power and complexity—but Dr. Kuhn reduces its complexities into forms that anyone can understand and *implement in their lives*. Just reading about how humor can heal and console when heartaches engulf you is an incredible gift.

The answers the good doctor offers come from years of hands-on experience, studying humor as if he were studying the brain itself.

The results of his work are not just for survival, but for real living—ecstasy! The principles are laid out here in 200 pages of a man's life work—a man who cares and loves desperately, emotionally ready for the violent tug and pull of modern life.

Human life is quite funny all by itself. Many men who try to improve it are often attacked and misrepresented. People ask, Why would he bother? How does he know what I need? Why should he care, and for that matter, why should anyone care? The answer is *just because they do*, and people like Cliff Kuhn get more from giving than anyone can really believe. It's right there in the first 40 pages; you'll learn what courage means and what determination means. And when a man like Dr. Kuhn has those two vital elements in his character, that's what makes books like this come alive.

So listen to what Dr. Kuhn has to say. He has a manner that is easy to get involved with. Trust his experience and his tales of humanity, tales that can and will take you to places you only dreamed about. I, for one, learned so much that I feel like I had a semester at MIT, and you will feel the same way, if you care enough about yourself.

After you've read Dr. Kuhn's book, if you think I've poured on the praise too heavily, complain to my attorney, Albert Lasker, 236 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10019, and sue me for misleading you. But if you find I was right, do me a favor and remember the Muscular Dystrophy Association in Tucson, Arizona, or your local MDA office. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Dr. Cliff Kuhn's friend,
Jerry Lewis



This book excerpt is designed to give you a good insight into the wonderful book **“The Fun Factor”** which is available at <http://www.natural-humor-medicine.com> along with the **“Fun Factor Guidebook”**, and the **“Living Happily Over Laughter – Daily Meditation”** e-book.

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The Fun Factor



Chapter One

MAKING YOURSELF A HUMOR BEING

A middle-aged CEO sat dejectedly in my consulting room.

It was only mid-morning, but he had the look of a weary man who had already put in a full day's work. His clothing reflected expensive tastes and the wealth to indulge them.

He spoke haltingly. "I thought that when I got to this point in life I'd be happy. I'm making more money than I ever imagined. I've got three homes, a beautiful wife, great kids and expensive toys I can't even find the time to play with."

He went on. "I'm a successful man. I should be free to do anything I want. But I can't get free. I have no time to enjoy any of it. It feels like I'm on a treadmill and I can't get off. I'm trapped by my success and it doesn't make me happy."

I thought I saw tears welling in his eyes. Embarrassed by this, he looked furtively around for a tissue.

"Where the hell are your tissues?" he grumbled. "You're a shrink for God's sake. Surely you have a tissue."

"Do you want a new one or a used one?" I replied.

He looked at me sharply.

"The new ones cost extra," I added, keeping a straight face.

He looked confused. Then he burst into laughter. It lasted for much longer than my silly joke warranted. When he caught his breath, he had a different kind of tear in his eye.

"That's the first good laugh I've had in a week," he said. "I used to laugh all the time. That's what's missing!"

“Sounds like you’re not having any fun,” I ventured.

“Damn right! That’s why I’m here. You’re the Laugh Doctor.

So make me laugh.”

We got to work.

A nervous young woman fidgeted in her chair. It was clear she did not want to be in a psychiatrist’s consulting room.

“I’ll be honest with you, Dr. Kuhn. The only reason I’m here is because I respect Dr. Adams, my oncologist. I don’t have much faith in psychiatry, but she thinks you can help me. She calls you the Laugh Doctor. If you’re planning to tell me I can laugh away my cancer, I’ll just leave right now.”

“I don’t see anything funny about breast cancer,” I said quietly. “However, I have discovered this to be true. If you can hold onto your sense of humor while you are going through the surgery, the chemotherapy, the fear, uncertainty and pain of it all, you’ll do better, live longer and have a better quality of life. If you’ll let me, I’d like to help you keep your sense of humor.”

“That doesn’t make any sense,” she countered. “How do you keep a sense of humor when there’s nothing to laugh about?”

“That’s an excellent question,” I said. “I think I know how to help you answer it.”

And so we, too, got to work.

These two vignettes are not isolated cases. Both individuals made the same mistake we all make when it comes to humor. They had forgotten the relationship between fun and success; between fun and accomplishment; between fun and adaptability. As a society we are suffering from this same oversight. We have lost our understanding of the true nature of humor.

We think that being financially successful is the best way to bring more fun into our lives. Wrong! We think that fun does not apply to the frightening and serious parts of life. Wrong again! We think that fun is synonymous with laughter and jokes. Strike three!

I'm pretty sure our civilization has lost its sense of humor.

We have relegated fun to the realm of recreation and entertainment.

We've gradually been depriving ourselves of an essential resource for dealing with the serious challenges we face every day at work and at home.

We've lost our sense of humor for many reasons, and the reasons why are not that important. But it is time we reclaimed it, for as the world's philosopher-clown, Jerry Lewis, once told me, "Without humor, nothing can prevail."

In this book, you will rediscover the nature of your sense of humor—your true "humor nature." You will gain a renewed understanding and appreciation for its power to bring you success in any endeavor. And you will learn many strategies and techniques for restoring the Fun Factor in your work, your family and your life.

Each of us has in the depths of his being an energy so strong it is capable of getting us through the worst experiences of life.

Whether it is war, famine, pestilence, disease, oppression or death that befalls us, this energy not only gets us through, but also has been known to lift us above such atrocities in transcendent triumph.

Each of us has deep inside a spirit so universal that it connects us all at a level too profound for words. This spirit sustains our hope and lifts our morale in the face of adversity. It is indomitable.

Within our personal chemistry we carry a medicine that reduces stress and prevents depression even more effectively than any pill.

The energy/spirit/medicine I'm referring to is none other than your sense of humor or, as I choose to call it, your humor nature. To me humor nature is synonymous with human nature, because I believe that humor is the essence of who and what we are as human beings. Our humor nature is the deepest, highest and widest part of us, encompassing everything we esteem about the

human character—resilience, perspective, creativity, passion, tenacity, integrity, optimism, hope, and much more.

So integral to us is our humor nature that I believe we could as easily be called humor beings as human beings. For a humor being, *fun is the fullest expression of humor nature*. That is why I say fun is fundamental to excellence in all our endeavors. Without it we are settling for less than our best.

This brings us to a critical distinction. Notice I said fun is fundamental to excellence. I did not claim funny as fundamental.

Nor did I mention laughter in this respect. That is because fun is a very different concept from both funny and laughter. Although they may at times overlap, having fun is quite a different experience from being funny.

I had been performing for almost a week with Jim, a seasoned veteran of the comedy club circuit. One night during dinner Jim asked, “Cliff, do you mind if I ask you a personal question?”

“Of course not,” I responded. “What’s on your mind?”

“I was just wondering,” he said. “Have you ever tried telling the truth up on stage?”

“I don’t understand,” I countered.

“I notice you tell an awful lot of lies in your act,” he continued. “You say things about yourself that I can see aren’t true, now that I’ve gotten to know you.”

“But Jim, they’re jokes,” I replied. “You know, set ups for punch lines. The idea is to make them laugh. Right?”

“I guess I assumed you would have by now noticed the difference between making them laugh and sharing a laugh with them,” he answered.

It was an interesting distinction. I wanted to hear more.

He lit a cigarette and continued.

“To me, performing comedy is a lot like a sexual relationship.

If two people are technically knowledgeable and competent, if they both know the right buttons to push, it can be extremely pleasurable.

But that's nothing compared to the intensity that results when two people make love. I think when you're making the audience laugh, your having sex with them. But if you're sharing a laugh with them, you're making love. And you can feel the difference in the interaction."

"Interesting analogy," I mused.

"I've watched you all this week. You're working too hard at it, son. (I loved it when he called me son. At that point in my comedy career, he was the only comedian I had worked with who was older than me.) The effort shows. You're not having any fun, and when you aren't having fun, the audience isn't either. It's really more important to have fun than to be funny."

Hey, who's the doctor here?

When you stop to think about it, there is a huge difference between having fun and being funny. Funny is a behavior calculated to provoke laughter. Without laughter the effort has failed. Not everyone has the skill to be funny (You know who you are). But more important, funny has relatively limited applicability. In many situations, laughter is inappropriate and unwelcome.

On the other hand, fun is not a behavior. Fun is pure energy, reflecting a certain attitude—willingness. Having fun is never inappropriate. It is a personal choice, a private experience. Whether or not to share fun with others is a separate decision.

Every one of us knows how to have fun. We were born with this precious gift hardwired into our brains. As children, we have fun naturally. The average 5 year-old laughs 250 times a day. Observe a group of youngsters playing and you will undoubtedly hear laughter. Are they being funny? Think about it. When was the last time a preschooler told you a good joke? These kids know nothing about being "funny" and everything about having fun.

We adults were once that way. But then we went to school, where the systems inevitably stifled and suppressed our natural gift of laughter. Do you remember how your teacher reacted to your playful nature? "Wipe that smile off your face;" "What are you, some kind of comedian?" "You think that's funny? I'll show you what's funny!" (This was my personal favorite, because they never

did show me what was funny.)

Again and again we were taught that laughter was a frivolous thing and that responsible people were serious. Not wanting to be considered irresponsible, we suppressed our humor, relegating it to the realm of recreation and entertainment, appropriate only when all our responsibilities had been met. Consequently, the average 35 year-old now laughs only 15 times a day.

Reserving your humor nature solely for entertainment purposes is like owning a Mercedes automobile and only driving it to the corner grocery once a week. It could take you so much further.

Besides, as it turns out, we have been denying ourselves the full benefit of this marvelous resource based on erroneous information. It appears that seriousness is not at all our most responsible posture.

When we are serious, we are not more creative, resilient or healthy; nor are we better communicators. We are all those things and more when we lighten up and take ourselves *less* seriously. Behavioral research shows us that our seriousness has been holding us back.

Here's an example of what we've been missing: About six and a half years ago our family was in a painful crisis. Our daughter had lost her first baby, which was our first grandchild. Six months later, our daughter-in-law, who was also pregnant, went into labor prematurely and delivered an underdeveloped baby who was not breathing.

Little Jordan Kuhn was fighting for his life in the "Premie ICU", while we were struggling with the fear, rage and pain of a possible second heartbreak in less than a year. You can imagine how much tension we had that first morning when my wife Connie and I were allowed to visit Jordan in the ICU. The tension was made only worse by the presence of all the technology—the blinking lights, the electronic alarms, those huge machines supporting such tiny, frail bodies. It was a daunting moment.

At that moment in our lives we did not know what I can now tell you. Later this year our family will gather to celebrate Jordan's seventh birthday. He's a healthy, robust little boy who is currently the star of his soccer team (at least his grandfather thinks so). But we had no assurance of these things on that morning. We were, to say the least, uptight.

As we made our way to Jordan's basinet, Connie saw another baby under an ultraviolet light for control of jaundice.

She grabbed my arm and whispered, "What's that blue light?"

Without thinking, I just blurted out the first thing that came to mind.

"Sweetheart, that baby's on sale for the next ten minutes."
Stupid? Absolutely.

Insensitive? I don't think so (It was heard only by the two of us).

Effective? You bet. It wasn't very funny, but when Connie jabbed me in the ribs with her elbow and whispered, "Cut that out," I knew that the tension had been broken and we were going to get through that experience a little more easily.

That, my friends, is the human humor nature in action; usually not very funny, but marvelously effective in getting us through tough challenges. And it has been serving our species in that regard since the beginning of our history. There is nothing new about the notion that humor is our best resource. It goes back at least as far as the Bible. In the Book of Proverbs we read, "A happy heart is good medicine; a cheerful mind works healing." That's pretty unambiguous.

Sometimes it appears that we have just recently discovered humor's power, because it has only been over the last 25 years that science has taken the matter under serious consideration. Indeed, we've seen an explosion of scientific research into humor over the last quarter century, which has established beyond doubt that it reduces stress, boosts immunity, relieves pain, decreases anxiety, stabilizes mood, rests the brain, enhances communication, inspires creativity, maintains hope and bolsters morale.

Who would not want those benefits in their life? How could they not lead to greater success on many levels? Yet, we seem to have fallen into a pattern of underutilization of our humor nature, a deprivation syndrome characterized by taking ourselves too seriously. I call this condition terminal seriousness.

Terminal seriousness will take us down if we do not counteract it. That's why we need to reclaim the Fun Factor in all that we do.

The first step in reclaiming the Fun Factor is remembering that we are indeed humor beings who are at our best only when we are having fun. Understanding the distinction between having fun and being funny, we need to ask ourselves frequently, “Am I having fun?” And if the answer is no, we must then be prepared to commit ourselves to having fun above everything else. When we do, we will discover that no matter how much fun we are having, we can always have a little bit more. In Emeril’s jargon, we can always “turn it up another notch.”

There are specific principles involved in getting more fun out of any experience. These principles work regardless of the circumstances. I have organized the principles into the “Ten Commandments of Fun.” If you practice these commandments and make habits of them, you will never be without a reliable way to tap into your humor nature for the energy you need to be maximally successful.



FUN COMMANDMENT ONE: Always go the extra smile.

Don’t ever underestimate the power of a smile. Internally, it immediately sets good physiology into motion — muscles relax, your immune system perks up and you feel a surge of energy.

Externally, others respond to your smile with encouragement and enthusiasm. As comedian Victor Borge once put it, “A smile is the shortest distance between two people.”

All of this takes place even if you don’t feel like smiling. So force a smile on your face and keep it there. Just the muscular configuration will cause some changes in your favor. As they say in twelve-step recovery, it makes sense to “fake it until you make it.”

Or to paraphrase comedian George Burns, when it comes to smiling, “Always be sincere, even if you have to fake it.”

Try it right now. Oh, go ahead. Nobody's watching. Force a big smile on your face and hold it. Can you feel that subtle surge of energy and confidence inside? It never fails to materialize if you hold the smile long enough.

Here is an exercise that will help you follow this commandment. If you are willing to practice this protocol at least once a day, I guarantee you will find it easier to smile more often.

That's because when you gently stretch your smile muscles, they become stronger and more available. Hence smiling takes less effort.

(CAUTION: THIS EXERCISE INVOLVES MILD EXERTION OF CERTAIN MUSCLE GROUPS. BE SURE TO CHECK WITH YOUR PHYSICIAN BEFORE ATTEMPTING THESE MANEUVERS.)

Exercise #1:

(1) Raise your eyebrows as high as you can on your forehead. Try to touch your hairline with each eyebrow. Hold for a count of 10, then release.

(2) Close both eyes as tightly as you can without hurting yourself. You want to get your cheeks involved with this maneuver. Hold for a count of 10, then release.

(3) Try to touch your earlobes with the corners of your mouth. This should produce the biggest, broadest grin you can muster. Count to 10, then release.

(4) Now try to touch the corners of your mouth underneath your chin, producing a huge frown. Hold for 10, then release.

(5) Gently bring your chin down towards your chest, then look up at the ceiling, then slowly bring your chin back down to your chest. Look up and down in this fashion for six repetitions.

(6) Carefully touch your right ear to your right shoulder, then your left ear to your left shoulder, and gently stretch your neck from side to side six times. Try to bring your ears down to your shoulders, rather than raising your shoulders to meet your ears.

(7) Roll your shoulders in vertical circles, stretching your chest and the muscles between your shoulder blades, for a count of ten. This should feel like a mini-massage.



FUN COMMANDMENT TWO: Tell the Truth

This commandment challenges you to live truthfully according to your personal priorities and values. What is the purpose of your life? Why are you here? Does your daily behavior reflect your highest priorities? Or are you trying to be something or someone you are not?

Admittedly these are tough questions, but if you are going to rely on the Fun Factor to achieve maximum success, you've got to be clear on what's "negotiable" and what's not. Your humor nature will not fabricate on your behalf. Humor always tells the truth, which is why it's so unwelcome in some segments of society.

So if you are trying to be someone you are not, your humor nature will trip you up. It knows and respects you too well to misrepresent you.

Your humor nature is exactly who you are. It is the part of you that you did not create. It is the part of you that you will never improve upon, because there is no need for improvement. You are wonderful just as you are. Why settle for less than your unique perfection?

Be true to yourself. Trust yourself. Get in the habit of asking "Am I being honest with myself?" If you are not sure of the answer, this exercise will help:

Exercise #2:

Sit quietly in a comfortable chair.

Take several deep, relaxing breaths. Try to release all of the tension that will leave you as you let go of each breath. Dismiss all the usual thoughts from your mind and set aside, momentarily, any problems you've been wrestling with. About a dozen relaxing breaths should suffice.

After getting as calm as possible, turn your mind inward and look deeply into yourself. Search every nook and cranny of your inner awareness, looking carefully for any attitudes, ideas, thoughts, or feelings that might be holding tension in you. These ideas and feelings usually come under headings like anger, fear, resentment, judgment, frustration and impatience.

If you identify such thoughts or feelings within you, be willing to set them outside yourself for the next minute or two. Let go of any anger, even if it's justified. The same for any fear or resentment you may find. Let it all go for a moment.

Then, concentrate on love, peace, joy, compassion, patience and hope. Dwell on these thoughts and feelings for a moment. If, during this moment, doubt or self criticism creep into your awareness, gently set them outside yourself with the other stress inducing thoughts. Give yourself a minute or two of pure concentration on the many positive aspects of your joyful nature.

Complete the exercise by taking one final deep breath in and, as you slowly release the breath, gently open your eyes. Stretch both arms over your head, and then bring them down before getting up from the chair.



FUN COMMANDMENT THREE: Laugh at Yourself First

This commandment is not about losing self-respect or demeaning ourselves. Just the opposite — it is an act of loving kindness. Willingness to laugh at ourselves frees us from the restrictions of the unrealistic and unremittingly harsh expectations to which we hold ourselves when we are under duress. It gives us latitude to appreciate the ever-present inconsistencies and contradictions that are part of our makeup.

Laughing at ourselves helps us recognize the difference between perfection and perfectionism.

Perfection is what we are, and that includes all the inconsistencies and shortcomings. You are not perfect, but you are perfect because of, not in spite of, your contradictions.

Perfection is healthy. It includes imperfection.

Perfectionism, on the other hand, is what we think we should be. It is always unhealthy. It is intolerant of imperfection. When we are caught up in our perfectionism, we are brittle and inflexible. We can be broken down by change.

So laughing at ourselves is not a form of humiliation. It is a way of taking ourselves lightly, while still taking our responsibilities seriously. Once we are able to lighten up, we become more creative and resourceful. When the going gets tough, the tough lighten up. If you are having trouble laughing at yourself, this exercise is recommended:

Exercise #3:

Sit quietly in a comfortable chair.

Take several deep-relaxing breaths. Try to release all of the tension that will leave you as you let go of each breath. Dismiss all of the usual thoughts from your mind and set aside, momentarily, any problems you have been wrestling with.

After approximately a dozen relaxing breaths, let your attention focus upon a trait or characteristic of yours that you do not like. It can be physical, mental, or social. It doesn't matter. Just make sure it's something you don't like about yourself.

While keeping the "unwanted" trait firmly in mind, try to think of a way this characteristic could be amusing. Be playful and gentle. Do not be unkind or mean spirited. Simply do what you can to see this trait in a more amusing or ridiculous light.

After a moment, discontinue this thought pattern and simply take a few more deep relaxing breaths. End the exercise by taking one final deep breath, slowly exhaling as you open your eyes and stretch your arms over your head, and then bring them back down.



FUN COMMANDMENT FOUR: Allow Your Mistakes

Far from a license for mediocrity, this commandment is a formula for success. If we are to rise above our fear and pain we must have the energy for it. Trying to deny our mistakes and keep them hidden from others is a waste of that precious energy.

As we've already observed, we are perfectly imperfect.

Mistakes are inevitable, but they can be real assets if we are willing to learn from them. Acknowledging them freely is the first step in turning our perils into pearls.

What can we learn from mistakes if we're willing to acknowledge them? Of course the most obvious payoff is that they teach us what doesn't work. Being wrong will often alert us to another perspective or point of view. Mistakes also force us to develop new behaviors and coping styles—expanding our repertoire. Tonight Show host Johnny Carson was a master at deliberately “making mistakes” in his nightly monologue as a way of exercising his adlibbing skills.

Learning what doesn't work, seeing additional perspectives, or developing new coping skills are all priceless assets when we are going through inevitable changes in our lives. And when it comes to expanding repertoires and gaining new perspectives, we have no greater resource than humor.

To practice “welcoming” your mistakes, try this exercise:

Exercise #4:

Be like Johnny Carson. Make mistakes on purpose.

Ask dumb questions. Wear mismatched socks. Push the elevator button after it's already lit.

I call this deliberate foolishness. Acting in this way provides many benefits:

1. You will get used to feeling foolish. It's an exhilarating feeling.
2. You will enjoy knowing that others will misjudge you and feel a false sense of superiority over you.
3. Being foolish is a good stress reliever.



FUN COMMANDMENT FIVE: Listen Very Carefully

The most difficult thing to do when we are faced with stressful challenges is to listen very carefully. Yet it is a fact that our listening skill is our greatest asset for success.

Most people find listening difficult because they think of it as a passive state. Careful listening may be a quiet activity, but it is certainly not passive. It requires the activation of every sense— our ears, of course, but also our eyes, our touch and especially our hearts.

The goal is to first understand, before seeking to be understood.

If we are willing to listen fully to what we are hearing, we will discover information that will make us more successful. Quite often others will give us clues to the response that will be most effective.

Not only that, but when we listen intently, we will become aware of the humor in a situation that might otherwise be overlooked.

This plays right into our commitment to have as much fun as possible at all times.

The following exercise, performed daily, will increase the sensitivity of all your observational senses:

Exercise #5:

Read the newspaper twice.

The first time read the news, comics and whatever else interests you. Then go back through looking for “funny” headlines and captions.

Practice focusing just on the choice and positioning of words, and nothing more. Suddenly amusing variations will become apparent. You can have fun with these variations, which will be missed by the majority of those who read them.

To give you an idea of what awaits you, here are a few examples of headlines that I have found in my local newspaper:

“JUDGE TOLD TO RULE ON LIFE SUPPORT CASE OF MAN ALREADY DEAD”

“KENTUCKY COUPLE CONVICTED OF FRAUD FAILS TO APPEAR AT PRISON”

“SUING EMPLOYER CAN BE HAZARDOUS TO YOUR CAREER”

“INDIANA PARK FEES MAY RISE—OR FALL”

“TOWN OVERWHELMED BY POLLUTION HOPES TO BECOME NATIONAL PARK”

“THIRD TEEN IS CHARGED IN PIZZA STABBING”

“UNWANTED VASECTOMY COULD WRECK MARRIAGE”



FUN COMMANDMENT SIX: Let Go Frequently

In life, as in juggling, success depends less on what we catch than on how quickly we can let go. Failure to let go of what we have already lost increases our suffering and ineffectiveness during life’s inevitable transitions.

Now, suppose you are an innocent recipient of misfortune or abuse. You did nothing to deserve the loss. You have a right to be resentful and angry. If you accept it gracefully, you may feel like you are endorsing an injustice or letting somebody or something off too easily.

Nonetheless, it's still advisable to let go and "forgive" as quickly as you can. Do this for one reason only — it's good for you. Harboring resentment, no matter how justified it may be, imprisons the resenter, while making no impact on the situation. It drains energy and limits options. Letting go is something we do for the benefit of no one but ourselves.

But it is not easy. The more important the loss, the harder it is to release our grip. This is where the issue of priorities, raised earlier, becomes important. We must not allow difficulty in letting go of the more important issues to stand in the way of our releasing what we can. Every little bit helps free us to be more resourceful and effective in our responses.

Humor nature provides an effective and practically effortless way of letting go — laughter. We cannot laugh without letting go. Believe me, I've tried and it gave me a hernia.

If you are able to let go, it may be only for today. Tomorrow may require a renewed effort, since resentments have a way of building back up, with or without justification.

Perhaps you will find this exercise helpful:

Exercise #6:

Begin by letting the little things go. There may be things in your life that you can't forgive right now. That's certainly understandable, but it doesn't have to stop you.

To practice this exercise, all we really need is the willingness to release the things that we can. Each little bit helps. Every time we let go of a small resentment we increase the likelihood of eventually being free of our bigger ones.

Start with the easy ones and work your way up.



FUN COMMANDMENT SEVEN: Challenge Your Assumptions

This a crucial “commandment,” because most of the fear we experience in life relates to assumptions we make based on past experience or the counsel of others (usually some form of hearsay).

We are tireless assumers. Drop us into any situation and the first thing we’ll do, whether or not we know the facts, is begin to make assumptions. We are not deterred by ignorance of the facts.

Whenever we don’t know, we simply make more assumptions, more quickly.

Most of our assumptions go unchecked. Soon we begin to treat them as fact and assign them the power of truth.

There’s only one problem with all of this. Most of our assumptions are wrong! Our batting average is so poor it’s a miracle our species has made it this far.

In order to survive life’s challenges successfully, we need the capacity to challenge our assumptions frequently enough to stop us from veering too far off course. Humor nature is our best resource for this. Challenging prevailing assumptions is the chief mechanism of all humor.

Challenge the assumption that you are sufficiently diligent in riding herd on your assumptions by practicing this exercise:

Exercise #7:

Playing the “What if?” game is a good habit to develop.

What and if are the two words that usually begin any assault on your assumptions. “What if ..” is a wake up call to your humor nature. Even when you are certain of your facts, “What if ..” is still a good habit, because it will stimulate your creativity (eg. What if two plus two did not equal four?)

Practice playing “What if ...” with common every day objects. Look around the room right now and try it with anything you see. What if this pen wasn’t a pen? What else could it be? A microphone ... a miniature space craft ... a jumbo lipstick tube?

What if that wasn’t my hat? Would it be a frisbee made of cloth ... a lunch box ... a potholder?

Please don’t try to be funny in this exercise. There’s no need for it. Simply let your imagination run free.



FUN COMMANDMENT EIGHT: Stay Focused, But Flexible

This sounds like an assignment for a contortionist. Focused and flexible? Aren’t they opposites?

Let me put it this way. We all know the shortest distance between two points is... usually under construction. That’s right. The theoretical straight line does not exist in real life.

We are challenged to keep our goals and priorities clearly in focus, while remaining flexible enough to accommodate the inevitable surprises. At times life resembles a game of “Twister.” That’s why humor is so valuable.

Balance is the issue. If focus overrides flexibility, we become stubborn, rigid and bull-headed. If flexibility eclipses focus, we are left aimless and vulnerable. Humor helps us avoid these extremes.

When it comes to flexibility, your humor nature offers a win/win situation. Flexibility stimulates your sense of humor and humor will keep you more flexible.

If you are having trouble with this seemingly oxymoronic “commandment,” here’s an exercise that might help:

Exercise #8:

Keep humor props with you at all times. Props are very helpful in keeping focus and perspective.

For example, one prop I find indispensable in rush hour traffic is my red clown nose. When caught in a “logjam”, I put on the nose and wave to people in the other cars.

Incidentally, if you should ever want to try this, I will warn you right now that half the people who see you do this won't like it.

They'll look away quickly, so as not to encourage you at all. But the other 50 percent love it. They laugh, wave, and tell me I'm #1 - at least I think that's what that finger means.

The point is that, regardless of the effect it has on others, the prop helps me stay focused on the big picture, which keeps the small frustrations in perspective.



FUN COMMANDMENT NINE: Act and Interact With People

The best ideas are merely intellectual curiosities until put into action. Success is measured by action. Life is not a spectator sport.

We must have a plan of action. Even if it calls for us to do nothing for now, planned passivity is better than immobilization by despair. Yes, there is risk involved in taking action. In fact, there is a certain degree of risk in every breath we take. But if we are willing to be bold in putting our humor nature into action, we will find that the risks have been vastly overrated. Others are surprisingly receptive and supportive, once we take the initiative.

Which brings us to the second aspect of this “commandment” — interacting. Nobody achieves success without help from others. Even the Lone Ranger, the quintessential symbol for going it alone, had Tonto at his side.

Have you noticed that your sense of humor becomes stronger the moment it connects with another person? Amusing yourself is better than nothing. Sharing your humor with others is the best.

You will find that if you make the effort to reach out with humor, others will be eager to meet you more than half way.

Here's an exercise to help with this challenge:

Exercise #9:

Reach out. Engage other people at every opportunity. A childlike, playful spirit is the best approach. Despite the impersonal tendencies of modern technology, there are many everyday situations in which we find ourselves in close proximity to other people. Do we interact? Usually not.

A prime example is a ride in an elevator. Here we have a small room, many people, and no windows. So what do we do with this golden opportunity to interact? We stare silently at the numbers over the door.

Don't ever let this happen to you again. Say something - anything. Break the silence.

My favorite ploy is to announce, "If I'd known so many were coming to this meeting, I'd have reserved a bigger room." Then I'll ask for somebody to give the treasurer's report. Someone usually "volunteers", and has some fun with it. I'll ask departing passengers how they want to vote on the upcoming merger issue. Newcomers are greeted with, "You missed the first part of the meeting, but don't feel left out. We elected you president." By the time we've gone a few floors, everybody's smiling and having fun. It's silly. But it's better than staring at the numbers.

There are many similar situations. It's ludicrous to be thrown into face-to-face contact and have nothing to say to each other.

Don't let it happen. Reach out. You never know whom you might meet.



FUN COMMANDMENT TEN: Celebrate Everything

Perhaps you've heard the story of the optimistic little boy who, when confronted with a room full of horse manure, dove right in, exclaiming, "With all this manure, there's got to be a pony in here somewhere!" Although I don't think I want to hug him right now, I think the little fellow's got it right.

No matter how big a pile of "manure" life dumps in your path, looking for the pony is the best response. Even if there is no pony, digging in with enthusiasm is better for us than being burdened with reluctance and resentment. Between you and me, there usually is a pony, but we miss it because we're not looking for it.

When you opened your eyes this morning, you were already breathing. If not, I don't think you should be reading this.

If you went on to check the obituaries and didn't find your name, you're apparently alive. That's a miracle. Celebrate it.

Celebration is made up of two elements — gratitude and joy. Remember, joy is the most natural state for us humor beings. If you want more joy in your life, begin each moment with gratitude.

Gratitude is the essence of celebration. It doesn't have to be noisy or raucous. A quiet "thank you" to a special person in your life can be an effective form of celebration.

If you have not been celebrating everything, try this exercise:

Exercise #10:

Get in the habit of listening for the sounds of laughter constantly going on all around you. I call these sounds the Symphony of Laughter.

Whenever you are out in a public place, such as the mall, an airport, or a theater lobby, you can hear laughter, because that's the way we communicate when we have no imposed agenda. Whether it's a giggle right beside you or a guffaw from across the room, the sound will lift your spirits and bring a smile to your face.

Soon one more laugh will be heard—yours.

There you have my Ten Commandments of Fun, each a practical strategy for bringing forth your humor nature in all its strength and glory. Notice that all of them are focused on you, rather than the things going on around you. That's because, if you're aiming to focus on fun, you must look to yourself first. As selfish as that may sound, it's simply the way it is.

The roots of fun do not lie in the circumstances or things that surround you. They are deeply embedded within your being.

If you catch yourself thinking thoughts like, "I could have more fun, if I had more money" or "My job would be more fun if the boss would get off my back," you're focusing in the wrong direction.

Fun starts inside you and works its way out. It doesn't happen the other way.

The best way to remember how fun works is to "take" my Ha Ha Ha Prescription. Whereas most doctors say, "Open wide and say AH," I say, "Open wide and say HA HA HA."

The first HA is Humor Attitude. This is where fun begins.

Attitude is a 100 percent inside job. Our attitude may be the only thing in life over which we have total control. If we cultivate an attitude of willingness to be light and playful, to appreciate all the absurdities swirling around us all the time and to laugh whenever we can, we have done our part.

The next step happens automatically, without any effort

from us. Our Humor Attitude creates a Humor Atmosphere around us. That is the second HA. It just "oozes" from us. Others may not know what to call it, but they know it's there. They can feel it. They are drawn into it. It's irresistible. They want to be near us and hear what we have to say. They are eager to share their positive thoughts with us. They want to "play" with us.

Once this is accomplished, what follows is a no-brainer.

The very next thing we do will be fun. That's the last HA—a Humor Action. Humor Action does not require anyone to be witty or funny.

There is no pressure to perform or to make anything happen. It is merely a trustworthy natural outcome.

Because we have the tendency to mistakenly think that success produces fun instead of the other way around, we often find ourselves trying to apply the HA HA HA Prescription backwards.

We attempt to say or do something funny (Humor Action) hoping that our “performance” will stimulate laughter (Humor Atmosphere) and thus lighten the mood of everyone present (Humor Attitude).

It doesn't work that way. Even when it seems to, it's only a transient phenomenon, hardly a dependable basis for lasting success.

Sustained excellence comes only from having fun first, and that begins, not ends, with attitude.

With the HA HA HA Prescription and the Ten Commandments of Fun under our belts, we are now ready to consider how to build the Fun Factor back into our lives. Let's begin by looking at the most basic social structure we encounter in life—our family.

..... End of chapter 1.



The Fun Factor:

Contents in this preview:

1. MAKING YOURSELF A HUMOR BEING

CONTINUED IN THE BOOK:

2. CREATING A FEARLESS, HAPPY FAMILY

3. TRUST AND DISCIPLINE IN A FEARLESS
FUN-FILLED FAMILY

4. REWARDING AND REINFORCING THE FUN FACTOR
IN THE FAMILY

5. MAKING WORK NOT WORK AT WORK

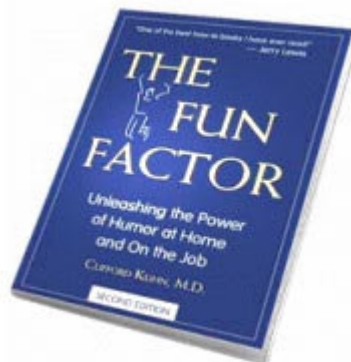
6. CREATING A FUN FACTOR ORGANIZATION

7. REWARDING AND REINFORCING THE FUN FACTOR AT
WORK

8. THE CARE AND FEEDING OF YOUR HUMOR NATURE

9. THE MORAL AND SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE OF
THE FUN FACTOR

10. THE FUN FACTOR AMID GRIEF AND TRAGEDY



Order book here: <http://natural-humor-medicine.com>



All about The Laugh Doctor, Clifford Kuhn M.D. and his son Greg.

Two Lucky Men

Clifford Kuhn, M.D., and his son, Greg, are two lucky men. Not only do they get to spend time collaborating, but they are also best friends to boot! They relish the time spent together having fun while they work to spread Dr. Kuhn's prescription, [The Fun Factor](#) to as wide an audience as possible.

The mutual love and admiration they have for each other is evident to even the most casual observer; you might say they are each other's biggest fans!

The Good Doctor's Background

Dr. Clifford Kuhn is a retired professor of psychiatry from the University of Louisville School of Medicine. His medical practice has given him a deep appreciation for humor's healing power and, as a professional speaker and comedian, he enjoys a unique perspective on the practical applications of fun.

Dr. Kuhn came from a loving family, successfully completed medical school, married a beautiful woman, had two wonderful children, and made a more than adequate living practicing medicine. However, nothing he accomplished on the outside changed how he felt on the inside. Deep inside, he was a perfectionist who couldn't be satisfied with himself.

Dr. Kuhn had learned to be funny, but he didn't know how to have fun. He was experiencing pleasure, but he wasn't celebrating life. He could do good things, but he didn't feel free to enjoy his accomplishments.

How The Laugh Doctor Was Born

Dr. Kuhn realized that his patients were doing fine compared to him. They were able to have fun even in the midst of pain, uncertainty, and fear that accompanied their diagnoses. It didn't make sense to him. There was nothing funny about cancer or the other chronic illnesses Dr. Kuhn treated. Yet, his patients were the ones urging Dr. Kuhn to lighten up. He asked them to teach him how - and teach him they did.

Primarily they helped Dr. Kuhn appreciate the difference between having fun and being funny. He used to think they were the same thing. And they helped Dr. Kuhn discover the biggest danger facing, not just his patients, but all of us - seriousness.

Through his attempts to rid himself of his seriousness, Dr. Kuhn created his prescription - [The Fun Factor](#). His subsequent work with his patients, his stint as a standup comedian, and his professional speaking and corporate training led him to realize that America is suffering from an epidemic of seriousness. An epidemic requiring drastic steps to cure. Thus as the Laugh Doctor, Dr. Kuhn teaches [The Fun Factor](#), his amazing prescription for fun and success, to individuals, organizations, and corporations across the globe.



Dr. Kuhn Is Joined By His Son

In the late 1990s, the Laugh Doctor was joined by his son, Gregory. Greg, dubbed Laugh Doctor Junior, is also an ardent proponent of [The Fun Factor](#) and has been using his Father's prescription as an effective leader within the Jefferson County Public School System since 1993.

Once a victim of seriousness himself, Greg has used The Fun Factor to secure a wonderful life of his dreams. Greg is married to a beautiful wife, has three wonderful sons, and is an assistant principal at Louisville's Youth Performing Arts School.

Greg assists Dr. Kuhn by compiling, editing, and producing the Laugh Doctor's newsletter, [The Fun Times](#), and this website. The Dynamic Duo Fight Seriousness 24-7!

Taking themselves less seriously, Cliff and Greg Kuhn are now free to be happier and more effective than ever. They are no longer imprisoned by their perfectionism, fear, and seriousness. Having been given such a gift, Dr. Kuhn and his son have no choice but to pass it along to others.

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“The Fun Times,” Clifford Kuhn, M.D.'s Free Newsletter, Boosts Your Health, Wellness, And Fitness Using The Natural Medicine Of Humor

You've Never Seen Such Letters As Dr. Kuhn Gets About The Fun Times

"Keep The Fun Times coming! It takes stressful situations that I sometimes take too seriously and puts them into perspective."

David Gore
Smyrna, TN

"Being a Humor Being is a proud accomplishment of mine. Thank you both for reminding me and encouraging me to use this for the benefit of myself as well as others. I have less anxiety and am instantly in a better mood."

Sharon Mattingly
Louisville, KY

"The Fun Times inspires creativity, which brings energy to my life and puts me on paths that add more fun to my life, and puts me in contact with more people who bring joy to my life. What a wonderful feeling!"

Paula Stopjik
Alma, MI

"I have so much happening that I sometimes get overwhelmed and can't do anything. The Fun Times helps me focus on the tasks I need done and I'm able to work through them one at a time and make progress. Thank you!"

Cherylyn Murphy
Boise, ID

Which Group Do You Want To Be In?

77% of Americans don't like their jobs; our divorce rate is climbing; our country becomes more polarized each year; stress induced illness is at an all-time high! Americans need help finding satisfaction, enjoyment, and fun at home and on the job.

The Fun Times, the Laugh Doctor's twice-monthly newsletter, is your key to less stress and more success!

Find Out What Happens When A Doctor Listens To His Patients

Reading The Fun Times leads to profound positive changes at home and at work. Among other benefits, you'll:

Smile and laugh 75% more often!

Become part of a vibrant community of Humor Beings!

Find time with your family is now 55% more fun, open, and spontaneous!

Multiply your leadership skills 300% through secrets and tips from Dr. Kuhn and other industry experts!

Become 65% more productive on your job with techniques and perspectives offered by Dr. Kuhn and others guests!

Have fun and win prizes participating in games and contests!

Keep your connection to Dr. Kuhn, and [The Fun Factor](#), alive and dynamic!

Use our product and service reviews, covering fun products and services that can help you personally and professionally!

Benefit From The Discoveries A Stressed-Out Doctor Made While Turning His Own Life Around.

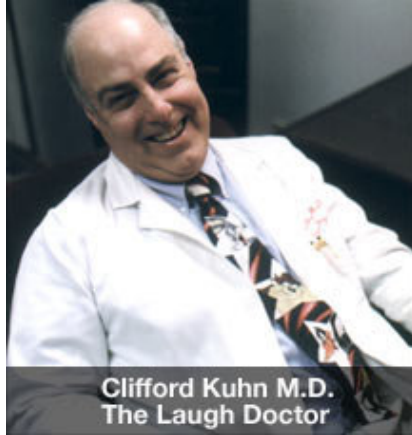
We all want to make more money; we all want our relationships to be more fulfilling; we all want to be healthier and less stressed!

Dr. Kuhn created his prescription to help you (and himself) become happier and more successful in your work and your personal life.

The more you read The Fun Times, the happier and more successful you will be!

Visit The Laugh Doctor's website at <http://www.natural-humor-medicine.com> & subscribe to "The Fun Times" newsletter





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