PSYCHOLOGY OF LAUGHTER

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WHAT IS LAUGHTER?

• "Laughter is a rhythmic physical and vocal reaction to humor or to a number of other stimuli" (WorldBookOnline.com)
• Larynx, also known as the voice box, contracts during laughter
• Involuntary spasms of breathing muscles used cause the person to audibly gasp or exhale
• Heavy laughter or laughing for a long time can activate the tear ducts
• Laughter may stimulate the release of endorphins, which are chemicals in the brain that produce a feeling of well-being

https://youtu.be/UxLRv0FEndM?t=4m19s
IMPORTANT DISCOVERIES

• Laughing with another person might increase the likelihood of social bonds that are the precursor of stronger, healthier social relationships

• The social benefits triggered by laughter appear to extend beyond a single social interaction to other parts of our life

• Tends to make people feel more positive, confident, resilient

• Physical health improves
MORE IMPORTANT DISCOVERIES

• Lee Berk, DHSc, of the Loma Linda School of Medicine, countered with a commonly cited study that reported that laughter lowered catecholamines and other hormonal measures of sympathetic activation
  – This reduction in stress and associated hormones is the mechanism through which laughter is presumed to improve immune function

• Lennart Levi, of the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, reported that comedy activates the body's "fight or flight" system
  – increasing catecholamine levels in urine, which is a measure of activation and stress
Researchers at California’s Loma Linda University held a study using 20 healthy older adults in their 60s and 70s

- One group was asked to sit silently without talking, reading, or using their phones and the other group watched funny videos.
- After 20 minutes, the participants gave saliva samples and took a short memory test
- The “humor group” performed significantly better when it came to memory recall
- Participants who viewed the funny videos had much higher improvement in recall abilities: "43.6 percent, compared with 20.3 percent in the non-humor group" (Huffington Post)
- The humor group showed lower levels of cortisol, also known as the “stress hormone,” after watching the videos
True or False: Humor can help people remember things more clearly
• True
MORE RESEARCH

- "A Vanderbilt University study estimated that just 10-15 minutes of laughter a day can burn up to 40 calories" (Huffington Post)
- A University of Maryland study discovered that "a sense of humor can protect against heart disease" (Huffington Post)
What still needs to be figured out?

• Because of new studies, not much still needs to be discovered about this topic
• It has been scientifically proven under multiple circumstances that there are social benefits as well as healthy benefits to laughter.
The Psychology of Laughter is relevant to every human and mammal because most people laugh on a daily basis and there are many benefits to it:

- Lower blood pressure
- Give a workout to the diaphragm and abdominal, respiratory, facial, leg, and back muscles
- Reduce certain stress hormones such as cortisol and adrenaline
- Increase memory and learning
- Improve alertness, creativity, and memory
- Ted Talk Video on why we laugh:
  - [https://youtu.be/UxLRv0FEndM?t=4m51s](https://youtu.be/UxLRv0FEndM?t=4m51s)
• True or False: Laughter is not relevant by any means today and should not be studied
False!! Laughter is completely relevant in today's society and should continue to be studied.
DISCUSSION QUESTION

• How can telling jokes in class and relaxing enough to encourage laughter in school help students improve their learning environment?
Because laughter reduces stress and has many other healthy benefits, it would be good for students to have a relaxed and humorous environment to learn because they wont be stressed or anxious and will therefore be more engaged and interested in the material that is being taught to them,
BIBLIOGRAPHY


• "Laughter." World Book Advanced, worldbookonline.com/advanced/article?id=ar754974&st=laughter#tab=homepage.

