



PrairieCare
A Division of Newport Healthcare





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Why Laughter is Good for Mental Health!



Prairie Care Blog Post

Why Laughter Is Good for Mental Health March 26, 2025



- **At age 50, diagnosed with a connective tissue disease, ankylosing spondylitis, a chronic inflammatory disease that primarily affects the spine.**
- **Doctors told him that he had only a one-in-500 chance of recovery.**
- **Cousins discovered that he felt less pain and fewer symptoms while enjoying something that made him laugh.**
- **He prescribed himself large doses of Vitamin C and regular doses of laughter by watching episodes of Candid Camera and old Marx Brothers movies.**

Norman Cousins (b. 1915 – d. 1990)

American journalist and author

"I made the joyous discovery that ten minutes of genuine belly laughter had an anesthetic effect and would give me at least two hours of pain-free sleep. When the pain-killing effect of the laughter wore off, we would switch on the motion picture projector again and not infrequently, it would lead to another pain-free interval."

His struggle with that illness and his discovery of laugh therapy is detailed in his 1979 book, ***Anatomy of an Illness as Perceived by the Patient: Reflections on Healing and Regeneration***



The Research: A Brief Snapshot



The Mental Health Benefits of Laughter

- **Releases endorphins:** Natural chemicals in the body, endorphins promote a sense of well-being and relieve stress.
- **Decreases anger:** When we're in a difficult situation or a disagreement with another person, seeing the humor in it can help. Specifically, laughter defuses anger, conflict, and self-blame.
- **Eases distressing emotions:** Laughter counteracts feelings of anxiety and sadness. Moreover, it helps us release other intense emotions, such as grief.
- **Relaxes and revitalizes:** Along with reducing stress, laughter increases energy levels. Therefore, we can stay focused more easily.

The Research: A Brief Snapshot Cont'd:



- **Changes your perspective:** Laughter helps us access another point of view which helps us see something in a new, less scary way when we laugh about it. In addition, humor helps us take things less seriously.
- **Reduces stress:** When we laugh and smile the levels of cortisol, the stress hormone, decrease. Lower levels of cortisol are better for mental health, therefore, laughter increases our stress resilience.
- **Brings more joy and fun into our lives:** This one is self-explanatory!



The comedy rule of three is a writing principle. It states that a **trio** of events, characters, or jokes is more humorous, effective, and satisfying than other numbers. In comedy, the rule works by establishing a pattern with the first two elements. Then, it subverts expectations with an unexpected, absurd, or contradictory third element to create a **punchline.**

How can the Rule of Three apply to your work?



- 1. Someone was telling me about a book they were writing on rocks.**
- 2. They said it was really hard.**
- 3. Rocks make a terrible writing surface.**

Rick Glassman - best opening joke ever??



The Power of Laughter: A Brief Check In

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/zS20uFGjaFY>

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Thank You

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