

Soul-Link, Inc.

"...fostering an awareness of and response to the sacred in nature, human nature and events of everyday life."

Volume 1 Issue 11
Fall 2003

Join us for the Fall Retreat - Sept. 13, 2003

Lighten Up: "Finding Humor in Good Times and Bad"

Anyone who has lived into adulthood knows that life can be difficult, and that we can become overly serious in response to it. This is true in the realm of health, spirituality, work, relationships, and the inner life of the spirit. A sense of humor can help us negotiate life's twists and turns in a manner that transforms the journey from a task to be endured, to an adventure with many lessons. Join us for the fall retreat as we "lighten up" and explore humor as a healthy and powerful method to help provide perspective on life's difficult situations. The retreat will be held on Sat., Sept. 13, at El Pomar (*Julie Penrose House*) 1661 Mesa Ave. (*near the Broadmoor*). Registration fee, if received by Sept. 9, is \$15.00. Registration for walk-ins the day of the retreat is \$20.00. Both amounts include lunch. You may use the registration form on page 4 of this newsletter or call 473-5852 and leave name and phone number of registrant(s). The retreat will offer presentation, reflection, group sharing, and an opportunity to network with others on the spiritual path. If you have questions about the retreat, please call 473-5852 and leave a message. A Soul-Link Council member will call you.



Soul-Link Council

CoCo Soper
Tom Stella
Jeff Tschida
Patrick Smith
Jim Francek
Chad Glang
Patricia Francek

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Levity Defies Gravity: Using Humor in Crisis Situations

Humor is one of the healthiest and most powerful methods to help provide perspective on life's difficult experiences, and it is frequently shared during periods of crisis. However, during a crisis humor is often experienced and perceived by individuals immersed in the crisis as insensitive and even hurtful. What then, differentiates healthful and harmful humor in crisis?

We know that, in general, humor aimed at oneself is well received by others. When we are the target of our own humor, others share our humor but are not threatened or injured by it. Humor aimed at situations is also generally appreciated by others, since it, too, has a target other than another person or group of people. Humor aimed at other individuals or groups may be harmful and not well received as it often is used to put down, insult, or degrade another.

One factor that influences an individual's receptivity to humor about a crisis situation is distance. As a rule of thumb, the greater the distance between the individual and the crisis the more likely humor will be therapeutic and not experienced as insensitive.

The timing of humor for those who are immersed in a crisis must be chosen carefully. As humor promoters, we must be sensitive to the inner emotional struggle of the individual with whom we choose to share our humor. In summary, humor can be both healthful and harmful when offered to those in crisis situations. As humor distributors, we must be sensitive to the potential benefit and harm of our humor. We must also be prepared to repair any emotional damage that may result from our attempts to relieve another's pain through the use of humor. (Excerpt from *Therapeutic Humor*, Smr 1995, Steven M. Sultanoff, PhD.)

FALL 2003

Spiritual Effects of Humor

Spirit can be defined as the vital essence or animating force of a living organism, often considered divine by origin. Spirit can also be regarded as vivacity or energy. Or it can refer to a characteristic temper or disposition (the spirit of the group was hostile). The word humor itself is a word of many meanings. The root of the word is "umor" meaning liquid, fluid. In the Middle Ages and Renaissance, humor was one of the four principal body fluids thought to determine human health and dispositions.

Humor, on all levels, is something that flows, involving basic characteristics of the individual which express themselves in the body, in moods and emotional reactions, and in qualities of feeling, of mind and of spirit. The qualities of humor and spirit are similar and, I believe, interdependent.

Throughout the history of medicine, experts have discussed the importance of attending to the body, mind and spirit. Humor is one of the pleasures of life. To dispense laughter will directly enhance the quality of life and perhaps the will to live--this may be the most important result of all.

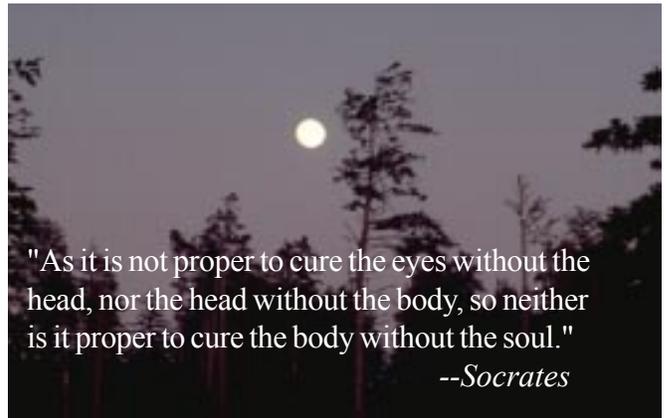
Humor and laughter can create an environment where hope can flourish because it provides a sense of joy, helps us connect with family and friends, and inspires an appreciation and gratitude for life. *(Excerpt from "Laughter as Therapy," by Patty Wooten in Pulmonary Rehabilitation ed. Hodgkin 1993, Philadelphia: Lippincott)*

Resources for the Spiritual Journey

MOVIES

American Splendor: This movie recounts the truly remarkable real life story of a Cleveland V. A. hospital clerk who dared to follow his bliss and wound up as a comic book writer with his own little cadre of antiheroes.

Rana's Wedding: A poignant and touching Palestinian film about love as the only valid antidote to fear in an environment of anger, hatred, violence, and death.



"As it is not proper to cure the eyes without the head, nor the head without the body, so neither is it proper to cure the body without the soul."

--Socrates

(Resources Cont'd)

MOVIES

Autumn Spring: This movie salutes play as one of the ways to keep a long-term marriage fresh, provided one has plenty of patience and an ability to go with the flow.

Seaside: A French film about the power of place and the small changes that give our lives meaning.

BOOKS

The Spiritual Emerson: Essential Writings edited by David M. Robinson, offers an overview of the spiritual vision of the preacher, teacher, poet and essayist.

Mindfulness for Everyday Living by Christopher Titmuss makes this Buddhist teaching relevant to our activities, energy, and inner life.

Anatomy of an Illness by Norman Cousins has become a classic work in the field of humor and medicine. Written from a patient's perspective. 1979, W. W. Norton, New York.

They Used to Call Me Snow White . . . But I Drifted by Regina Barreca, presents women's strategic use of humor. Viking-Penguin Pub., N.Y.

Letting Go of the Person You Used to Be: Lessons on Change, Loss, and Spiritual Transformation by Lama Surya Das is a robust and rounded resource filled with wonderful teaching stories and practices.

Upcoming 2003 Soul-Link Activities



- Sept. 8 6:30-8:00 p.m. **Potluck & Discussion**
Soul-Link Center at
2413 N. Cascade Ave.
No RSVP is necessary
- Sept. 13 9:00 a.m. - **Fall Retreat**
2:30 p.m. Information on Page 1
and registration form is
on Page 4. RSVP is
encouraged but walk-
ins are welcome.
- Oct. 13 6:30-8:00 p.m. **Potluck & Discussion**
Nov. 10 Soul-Link Center at
2413 N. Cascade Ave.
No RSVP is necessary

NO POTLUCK IN DECEMBER

Do you have friends who would like to learn more about Soul-Link? Please invite them to visit our web site: www.soullinkonline.org. You will find issues of current and past newsletters, our beginnings/history, updated calendar of events and more.

Taking Humor Seriously in the Workplace

How serious can we be about humor in the workplace, and how humorous can we be about the seriousness we often find there? According to a Robert Haft International 1985 survey only 15% of workers are fired because of lack of competence. The remaining 85% are let go because of their inability to get along with fellow employees. When asked about the qualities of an effective employee, senior administrators and human relations personnel check humor as one of the choice attributes of a desired employee.

Why has humor become a recognized asset in the workplace? Humor facilitates communication, builds relationships, reduces stress, provides perspective, and promotes attending and energizes.

(Humor in the Workplace Cont'd)

Humor Facilitates Communication: Humor provides a non-threatening medium through which an employee or employer can communicate with others without intensifying the emotional temperature of the relationship.

Humor Builds Relationships: The development of staff cohesion and a sense of team effort in the workplace can be effectively facilitated by the use of humor. Appropriate office jokes taking the seriousness of work lightly provide us with the opportunity to become more connected with others.

Humor Reduces Stress: Work is often associated with stress, and we know that stress is one of the main causes of illness, absenteeism, employee burn-out, etc. Humor is a great stress reliever because it makes us feel good, and we can't feel good and feel stress simultaneously. At the moment we experience humor, feelings like depression, anger, and anxiety dissolve.

Humor Provides Perspective: Another way in which humor oils the gears of the workplace is by providing perspective. Consider the Ziggy cartoon where Ziggy is lying on the psychiatrist's couch and the psychiatrist is saying, "The whole world isn't against you...there are BILLIONS of people who don't care one way or the other."

Humor Promotes Attending and Energizes: We know that all good speakers have many jokes, stories, and anecdotes that are shared in order to command attention and energize the audience. Humor wakes us up and increases our attending. A few moments of humor at work can lead to increased productivity as the newly energized employee returns to his or her task. In working environments where humor is supported there develops a culture that utilizes the humor to reduce stress and provide perspective. Learning to laugh at ourselves and our work lightens the load.

Humor is a major career asset, so let's be serious about humor and use humor to lighten the seriousness in the workplace. As we increase our personal humor quotient and spread our humor contagiously to others, we will begin to see the "lite" at the end of the tunnel.

(Excerpt from "Taking Humor Seriously in the Workplace,"

"Comedy is tragedy plus time."

---Carol Burnett

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TO:



Fall Retreat, Sept 13, 2003 - Registration at 9:00 A.M. Retreat sessions 9:30 A.M. - 2:30 P.M.
Lighten Up: "Finding Humor In Good Times and Bad" -- El Pomar, *(Julie Penrose House)* 1661 Mesa Ave *(near the Broadmoor)*.

(Clip and return with your check made payable to: Soul-Link, Inc.)

Mail to: Soul-Link, Inc. 2413 N. Cascade Ave, Colorado Springs, CO 80907

Registrations received by **Sept 9:** \$15.00 incl. lunch
Registrations on day of workshop: \$20.00 incl. lunch

No. of persons attending _____ Amount enclosed _____

Name _____ Phone No. _____
Name _____ Phone No. _____
Name _____ Phone No. _____

Please list any special dietary needs _____