

## Resilience in the Making: Humor

Welcome everyone! My name is Renee Dell'Acqua and I'm a Senior Health Educator in Health Promotion Services here at UC San Diego.

On this episode of Live Well Be Well, I'll be discussing a surprisingly shocking strategy to boost your resilience and help you live happier and healthier lives and that's humor!

So I hope you get inspired, I hope you feel connected, and I hope you discover new ways to live your best life. Let's get started!

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Smiling, laughing, experiencing joy and happiness are all things that lift us up and make us feel good! So it makes sense as to why humor is not only great for our overall health and wellbeing, but also for our resilience. Sometimes life can get really heavy and overwhelming, and it's important that we bring light and laughter into our lives by seeking out every opportunity to find humor.

The reason why humor is such a powerful tool in boosting our resilience is because humor is a great coping strategy for stress management. Humor elevates our mood by helping us experience positive emotions like happiness and joy, in turn making us laugh and bringing smiles to our face, which fun fact: the act of smiling and laughing actually initiates the release of our mood-boosting, happy hormones like endorphins, dopamine, and serotonin, while simultaneously reducing stress hormones like cortisol. All of which make us feel more relaxed and at ease, even when we experience stressful life events. I mean there's a reason why they say "laughter is the best medicine!"

Also, smiling and laughing are contagious and therefore, help us establish social bonds! Have you noticed that when you walk into a room that is filled with happy people who are smiling, laughing, and having a good time that that makes the environment feel more welcoming and friendly, which in turn can help us feel more comfortable establishing connections with others. Similarly, when we smile and display a positive disposition, that draws people in and helps us establish connections with others. And as

you may have guessed, building and nurturing social relationships is also good for our health and resilience. So smiling and laughing have more benefits than we may have realized!

So knowing that humor, laughter, and smiling are healthy ways in which we can manage our stress levels and cope with life's major challenges, here are some ways that you can find humor in life:

- **Tip #1:** Make time to find comedic relief whether that be watching funny movies, TV shows, videos, standup comedies, etc. There are a lot of humorous things out there, we just need to find them! Luckily for us, we live in a time of technology so you these types of comedic entertainment can easily be viewed on online platforms like YouTube, Netflix, Hulu, or apps like TikTok or Instagram. Oh the amount of time I've spent on TikTok watching funny videos is almost embarrassing to admit, but it's become a helpful tool in helping me manage my stress as well as connecting with my friends as we share videos and laughs with one another in this time of physical distancing!
- **Tip #2:** Take time to recall memories that made you laugh or smile – maybe you shared a funny moment with your friends several years ago that whenever you think about it or talk about it, it makes you smile and laugh all over again – Recall these moments often because I promise you, they will bring a smile to your face and hopefully even a laugh!
- **Tip #3:** Sometimes we're faced with some really bizarre and frustrating situations – so much so that the situation reaches the point of being flat out ridiculous. This is your time to laugh about just how ridiculous it is! Finding humor in situations such as these have actually been shown to weaken the negative impact these situations can potentially have by lessening the negative emotions associated with them.
- **Tip #4:** Raise the corners of your mouth and smile! Even if it's not genuine at first, make the decision to smile. Basically, this is a fake it till you make it

type of situation and researchers have found that even when we fake a smile, the action of raising the corners of our mouth releases those feel good hormones, which can consequently initiate a real smile. And that's why smiling is a simple yet powerful tool in helping us feel better.

- **Tip #5:** Tap into your social support system even when we are practicing social distancing! Make time for those in your life that make you laugh, make you feel good, and make you happy.

- **Tip #6:** Hang up a few funny quotes, pictures, or even memes around your room that whenever you look at them, it makes you smile and laugh.

This is an easy and simple way to bring joy into your space.

So those are just a few tips and tricks that I have for you. Each day consider setting aside time to discover ways in you can bring humor into your life so that you can reap the benefits of happiness, laughter, and a whole lots of smiles! We are all going through a lot right now so now more than ever is a time to seek comfort from our silly and quirky friend called humor! I wish for you all a life of endless smiles and laughter!

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So that concludes this episode of Live Well, Be Well! If you like what you heard today and would like to learn more about topics related to health and wellness, there's much more to come!

Please be sure to check out our website [healthpromotionservices.ucsd.edu](http://healthpromotionservices.ucsd.edu) and also follow us on Instagram and Facebook under UCSD Health Promotion Services. Stay tuned for our next episode of Live Well, Be Well.

Until next time, be kind, be true, be you. And remember, to be well is to live well.