

**THE
'SENSE' OF HUMOR:
Bringing Joy and Fun
to the Workplace**

Using Humor, Laughter and Improvisation
to Train, Motivate and Inspire

Presented by
Michael Edgar Myers

WHAT IS 'SENSE OF HUMOR'?

HUMOR (n.)

A _____ phenomenon, personal and subjective, influenced by culture, language, intelligence, tastes, preferences, values and the mood of the moment. – *World Laughter Tour*

Let's LIC Humor

- L _____
- I _____
- C _____

LAUGHTER (v.)

A _____ response to express mirth, pleasure, derision or nervousness with an audible, vocal expulsion of air from the lungs that can range from a loud burst or sound to a series of quiet chuckles, and is usually accompanied by characteristic facial and body movements.

– *Webster's Unabridged*

IMPROVISATION (n.)

A presentation process of devising a solution to a requirement by making-do, despite absence of resources that might be expected to produce a solution.

COMEDY (n.)

A purposeful, formulaic use of _____ to induce _____ through physical, visual or auditory stimulation.

– *Wavelength, Inc.*

Yes, And: You Must Remember This

The Soul of Wit

(a brief summary)

- **Humor exists without comedy;**
- **Laughter exists without humor;**
- **Improvisation exists each moment of our lives;**
- **Comedy cannot exist without laughter (trust us)**
- All are born with a sense of humor and laughter; *some* are born with a skill for comedy.
- Laughter, improvisation and comedy can be taught and developed to form our Sense of Humor.

Great Improvisers & Great Teachers

- Need to “be in the moment.”
- Play at the top of their intelligence
- Bridge conflict
- Heighten and explore another’s gifts
- Work without a script

Improv Skills and Learning Modes Intersect

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| • Kinesthetic | • Verbal |
| • Cross-Brain | • Creativity |
| • Interpersonal | • Non-verbal |
| • Relationship | • Collaboration |

BENEFITS OF HUMOR

Four Cs of Education Addressed by Improvisation

- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Communication
- Collaboration
- Creativity and Innovation

The P's of EFFECTIVE HUMOR

Physiology

- Reduces and tension
- Improves mention functioning
- Decreases depression and anger

Psychology

- Mature coping skills
- Promotes sense of empowerment
- Improves mood

Productivity

- Enhances climate
- Increases involvement
- Jumpstarts creativity

Pedagogy

- Brain compatible
- Facilitates learning and productivity
- H.O.T. – Higher Order Thinking Skill

Personality

- Happier
- Healthier
- More effective

THEORIES OF HUMOR

I. Incongruity Theory - (Kant, Schopenhauer)

- ❑ Multiple meanings
- ❑ Detecting ambiguities
- ❑ Sudden shift of perspective

II. Superiority Theory - (Plato, Aristotle, Descartes)

"Everything is funny as long as it's happening to someone else."

- Mark Twain

- ❑ Humor to inflate our own ego
- ❑ Humor to deflate others we feel are superior
- ❑ Seeing flaw in others as compared to ourselves

III. Relief\Release Theory - (Freud)

- ❑ Temporary freedom from our restrictions
- ❑ Rebellion against the repressive or uncontrollable
- ❑ Levity in a tense situation.

IV. Humor as a Form of Play - (Eastman)

- ❑ A reversion to childish innocence

V. Humor Exposes the Truth - (White)

- ❑ Rips away the veils of pretense
- ❑ Reveals truth of human nature and human affairs

From "License to Laugh" by Richard A. Shade

KEYS TO THE SUCCESSFUL USE OF HUMOR

I. Relationship

- Know your audience
- Tell stories with a purpose

II. Rapport

- Have an understanding of your audience's feelings
- Should be laughing with, not at someone

III. Setting

- Make sure the humor is appropriate for the space
- Humor should enhance, not distract

Areas of humor to likely avoid:

From "A Laughing Place" by Christian Hageseth III, M.D

- Sexual
- Ethnic/racial
- Religious
- Hostile/Sick
- Demeaning to Men/Women



Final Words

"He who laughs, lasts."
– Mary Pettibone Poole, author, "A Glass Eye at the Keyhole," 1938.
(Let's assume this idea also applies to the female pronoun.)

HOW TO DEVELOP YOUR PERSONAL SENSE OF HUMOR

- ❑ Look for humor in everything
“Nothing is quite as funny as the unintended humor in reality.”

- Steve Allen

- ❑ Collect humor -
Keep a journal/file/bulletin board/library/ of:
Books Magazines Videos/Audio tapes
Jokes Stories Cartoons Headlines
Signs Anecdotes Excuses Oxymorons
MEM's Educational Pinterest boards
[UnCommon Core Comedy](#) [Toons](#) [Sometimes I Just Find Stuff Funny](#)
[Books on Humor & Cognitive Science](#) [Association for Applied & Therapeutic Humor](#) (AATH)

- ❑ Smile more - Lighten up - Be more playful
- ❑ Participate in humorous activities
Dress up for “dress-up” day
Create/perform in a sketch written by/for your colleagues
Make a presentation in costume
- ❑ Hang out with funny people - try the humor buddy system
- ❑ Use humor in your correspondence/surveys/tests
- ❑ Try out other styles/forms of humor
- ❑ Tell stories on yourself
- ❑ Have some sort of humor always at the ready



I GOT THE HUMOR IN ME

Today I Discovered:

Something Humorous I'm Going to Try Is:

HUMOR PRACTICE

Sounds of Laughter Exercises

“Warm Up”

Ho-ho-ho

Works the Diaphragm

Ha-Ha-Ha

Works the Mouth and Jaw

He-He-He

Works the Lips and Cheeks

“Ho-Ho, Ha-Ha-Ha-Ha Dance”

Ho-ho-Ha-Ha-Ha

Ho-ho-Ha-Ha-Ha

--

Add A Clap

--

Add a Dance in Place

--

Raise Your Hands and Shout ‘Yeah’

Good-Hearted Living

Six Daily Practices to Prevent Hardening of Attitudes and Add Laughter to Your Life

Mondays are for **Compliments**

It only takes a second to brighten someone’s day.

Tuesdays are for **Flexibility**

Having flexibility to change will reveal new paths to explore

Wednesdays are for **Gratitude**

Awake and be thankful. Open your eyes, ears and heart to all you have.

Thursdays are for **Kindness**

There has never been a random act of kindness that was too small to make a difference.

Fridays are for **Forgiveness**

The release of anger makes room in your heart for more joy.

Weekends are for **Chocolate**

Remember to balance your life with some sweetness in your day

Used by Permission, Steve Wilson, World Laughter Tour, Inc..

RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

Books & Articles

(Many available through Amazon in print and audio)

- Energize Your Meetings with Laughter** by Sheila Feigelson, ASCD Publishing, 1998
www.ascd.org.
- Good-Hearted Living** by Steve Wilson, World Laughter Tour, 2001
- Hatch!: Brainstorming Secrets of a Theme Park Designer** by C. McNair Wilson, 2012
- Improvisation for the Theatre** by Viola Spolin, Northwestern U. Press, 1983
- Laughing Matters: Strategies for Building a Joyful Learning Community** by Susan Stephenson & Paul Thibault, Solution Tree Press, 2006
- A Laughing Place** by Christian Hageseth III, M.D., Berwick Publishing Company, 1988
- License To Laugh** by Richard A. Shade, Teacher Ideas Press, 1996
- "She Who Laughs, Lasts,"** by Jim Winter, *Principal* magazine, March/April 2004. NAESP Publications. www.naesp.org
- The Laughing Classroom** by Loomans & Kolberg, H J Kramer, Inc., 2005
- The Second City Almanac of Improvisation Paperback** by Anne Libera, Second City Inc., Northwestern U. Press, 2004
- Unscripted Learning: Using Improv Activities for the K-8 Curriculum** by Carrie Lobman & Matthew Lundquist, Teachers College Press, 2007
- Using Humor to Maximize Learning.** by Mary Kay Morrison, Rowman & Littlefield Education, 2008
- Yes, And: How Improvisation Reverses "No, But" Thinking and Improves Creativity and Collaboration—Lessons from The Second City** by Kelly Leonard and Tom Yorton, Harper Collins, 2015.

Organizations

- The Association of Applied and Therapeutic Humor** – AATH provides state-of-the-art, evidence-based information about current research and practical applications of humor to education, health-care, business, and government. www.aath.org
- The Humor Project, Inc.** Joel Goodman, Founder. – Produces annual “Positive Power of Humor” Conference. 480 Broadway, Ste. 210, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866, (518) 587-8770 www.HumorProject.com
- Wavelength Inc.**– Improvisational comedy ensemble using humor, laughter and spontaneity to train, motivate and inspire educational professionals. Training DVDs, CDs, interactive workshops and live keynotes for professional learning. www.wavelengthinc.com
- World Laughter Tour** - Famous for its two-day Certified Laughter Leadership workshop “to teach people enjoyable, systematic, self-care strategies.” www.worldlaughtertour.com

About The Presenter



Michael Edgar Myers is teaching artist based in Chicago. Michael's teaching artist roles include serving as an actor, director, playwright, essayist, educator and audio-book narrator.

Michael has been a member of the educational comedy troupe Wavelength since 1988, appearing in 49 states and overseas in such memorable characters as "Gen. Wormwood," the militaristic superintendent; Smith, the shell-shocked diversity teacher; Bernie, the schizophrenic principal.

Michael teaches workshops in team building, conflict management and listening, has presented at ASDC, NSCD, and AASA, and is widely known to be a former high school English *student*.

To Keep In Touch



Wavelength Teacher
Comedy
@wavelengthinc



@MyersMedia0429
@wavelengthinc
#WLSOH



linkedin.com/in/michaelgedgarmyers/

For Booking Information

WAVELENGTH

5325 N. Lakewood Ave.

Chicago, Illinois 60640 USA

Toll free: 1 (877) LAUGHS 2 * Fax: 1 (773) 784-1079

Email: info@wavelengthinc.com

Online: www.wavelengthinc.com

THE PUBLIC FACE

1723 Roosa Lane

Elk Grove Village, IL 60007

630-632-7775

Email: themyersplace@msn.com