



How Joyful Laughter is Healthy for Us

By Karen Sue Nyquist

Did you ever notice how much better you feel after a good, joyful laugh? It is not just your imagination. We are so wired that joy and laughter both have physical, psychological, emotional, social, and spiritual benefits. Numerous studies have shown this to be true. "There is nothing in the world so irresistibly contagious as laughter and good humor." – Charles Dickens. Even the Bible says, "A merry heart does good, like medicine" (Proverbs 17:22). Let's look at a list of the healthy, healing properties of joyful laughter.

1. Physical Healing Benefits

a. **Immune System Support:** Laughter increases the production of antibodies and activates natural killer cells, which helps the body resist disease.

b. **Pain Management:** Laughing triggers the release of endorphins, the body's natural painkillers, relaxes muscles, and relieves physical tension. Clinical trials have shown that patients using humor interventions report higher pain tolerance and lower pain intensity.

c. **Cardiovascular Health:** Mirthful laughter improves the function of blood vessels, increases blood flow, and lowers blood pressure. Some studies suggest regular laughter can reduce the risk of heart attacks by up to 40%.

d. **Physical Activity:** Hearty laughter stimulates the heart, lungs, and muscles. Ten to fifteen minutes of laughing can burn between 10 and 40 calories.

2. Psychological and Emotional Resilience

a. **Stress Reduction:** Laughter serves as a "reset" for the nervous system, cooling down the "fight-or-flight" response and promoting a state of relaxation by reducing stress hormones, like cortisol and adrenaline, approximately 32–37%, according to 2023–2026 data.

b. **Neurotransmitter Regulation:** Joyful activities release dopamine and serotonin, which are often deficient in individuals struggling with depression or anxiety.

c. **Perspective Shifting:** Humor provides psychological distance from trauma or hardship, allowing individuals to view difficult situations as less threatening and more manageable. Laughter creates emotional resilience, improves mood, counteracts depression, and provides a natural form of mindfulness.

d. **Enhances memory and learning:** Laughter activates the brain's dopamine reward system, which boosts memory consolidation. It also lowers cortisol levels that protects the hippocampus, the part of the brain crucial for memory and learning.

3. Spiritual and Social Connection

a. **Communal Healing:** Laughter strengthens social connections. It is highly contagious; sharing it with others strengthens social bonds and fosters a sense of safety and belonging.

b. **Spiritual Perspective:** Many spiritual traditions view joy as a "divine medicine." Laughter creates a sense of lightness and joy, fosters a present-moment awareness, facilitates connection with others, and helps gain perspective on life challenges.

(World Laughter Day: "The Healing Power of Laughter - The Positive Psychology People," by Lesley Lyle | March, 2025)

4. **Our Creator Wired Us to Be Joyful, Laughing, and Healthy!** - It is so wonderful to know that God loves us this much, that He wants us to be joyful, healthy people. In God's "presence is fullness of joy" (Psalm 16:11). "... the joy of the Lord is your strength" (Nehemiah 8:10). "... you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory" (1 Peter 1:8). "Then our mouth was filled with laughter, ... our tongue with singing ... The Lord has done great things for them" (Ps. 126:2).

5. **Using God's Gift of Laughter, Norman Cousins Cured Himself** - He had had a chronic, painful, and debilitating disorder! Read, learn, and be inspired in, "Laugh Yourself Healthy!" (<https://michigantoday.umich.edu/2026/01/22/laugh-yourself-healthy/#:~:text=Laughter> —)

6. **Come visit us and worship this God who loves laughter and joy.** Here you can get to know God better. You can become a follower of Jesus by accepting Him as your Lord and Savior, be filled with His Holy Spirit, and grow in your faith. We'd love to get to know you!

NationTakers Ministries - 856 Cabrillo St., San Francisco, CA 94118 - 1(415) 337-7027

Mail P.O. Box 27475, San Francisco, CA 94127 info@nationtakers.com

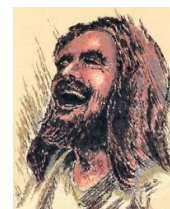
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**Did You Ever Get to Laughing With
A Really Close, Good Friend?
By Karen Sue Nyquist**

Did you ever get to laughing,
With a really close, good friend?
It did actually happen to me,
I hope it will, again and again.

How in the world did it get started?
We just don't even know,
But while filled with joyful laughter,
Our friendship, it did grow.

I saw his silly, tiny smirk,
Then I started with the giggles.
He responded with some chuckles,
Soon, we're both full of wiggles.

"Ha, ha, ha, ha!"
I pointed first at him.
"Hee, hee, hee, hee!"
Next, he pointed back at me!

"Ho, ho, ho, ho!"
Now my stomach really hurt.
He slapped me on my back,
And I grabbed him by his shirt.

I tried to get into a chair,
But had to crawl to make it there.
He slid down against the wall,
So that he would not fall.

He was rolling on the floor,
Letting out laughs that sound like roars.
Watching his belly, jiggle like jelly,
My eyes got teary, my sight all bleary.

I was slapping on my knee,
Gasping for air, trying to breathe.
With one eye, he took a peek,
Both so winded, we couldn't speak.

When we finally both could stop,
We both staggered, as we got up.
He gave me a light chuck under the chin,
I'm so glad he's my friend.

We wiped the tears out of our eyes,
With grins we both said goodbyes.
As he was leaving, he turned to shout.
"What was that all about?"

Who knows? ... God knows!

Thank You, God, for such good friends,
And for laughter, that never ends.
Thank You for joy from above.
It is truly a gift of love.

