

Laugh a Lot; It's Healthy

Norman Cousins (1915 – 1990) was a political journalist, author, professor and world peace advocate. He was editor-in-chief of *Saturday Review* for 30 years. Under his direction, circulation of the publication increased from 20,000 to 650,000.



In his book *Anatomy of an Illness: As Perceived by the Patient*, Cousins tells of being hospitalized with a rare, crippling disease. When he was diagnosed as incurable, Cousins checked out of the hospital.

Aware of the harmful effects that negative emotions can have on the body, Cousins reasoned the reverse was true. So he borrowed a movie projector and prescribed his own treatment, consisting of Marx Brothers films and old *Candid Camera* reruns.

It didn't take long for him to discover that 10 minutes of laughter provided two hours of pain-free sleep. Amazingly, his debilitating disease was eventually reversed.

After the account of his victory appeared in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, Cousins received more than 3,000 letters from appreciative physicians throughout the world.

R. Morgan Griffin, writing for *WebMD*, poses the question: "Feeling rundown? Try laughing more. Some researchers think laughter just might be the best medicine, helping you feel better and putting that spring back in your step.

"We change physiologically when we laugh," he continued. "We stretch muscles throughout our face and body, our pulse and blood pressure go up, and we breathe faster, sending more oxygen to our tissues. People who believe in the benefits of laughter say it can be like a mild workout – and may offer some of the same advantage as a workout."

One of my favorite entertainers was Carol Burnett. I always felt better after watching her shows. An incident from real life revealed her quick wit.

(more)



Burnett got out of a cab one day and caught her coat in the door. The driver was unaware of her plight and slowly began to edge out into traffic.

To keep from being pulled off her feet, the comedienne had to run alongside down the block. A passerby noted her predicament and quickly alerted the driver. He stopped, jumped out of the cab, and released Miss Burnett's coat.

"Are you all right?" he asked anxiously.

"Yes," she gasped, "but how much more do I owe you?"

Insert some laughter of your own into your work today.

He will yet fill your mouth with laughter (Job 8:22 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter