

Dating Advice: How to Keep Humor In Your Relationship



By Dr. Jane Greer

During these difficult times, because of the pandemic and everything that has come with it, it is important for people to make room for laughter. There is no question that it is challenging to find the funny among all the hardship. It can be a struggle to balance the bad with the good. But it is a long-held belief that humor is an important elixir that helps to soothe the pain and even heal. Professor of Surgery Henri de Mondeville famously said in the 1300s that laughter, compiled with the treatments he recommended, would help toward recovery. That eventually translated into the saying we all know today: laughter is the best medicine. Norman Cousins is

known for having cured himself of a terrible disease by chuckling through all the Marx Brothers' movies. Recently even Blake Shelton and Gwen Stefani poked fun at the way they found each other during a Super Bowl commercial for T-Mobile.

So how can you find a way to incorporate humor into your relationship and your daily life to take the sting out of all the stressors you are experiencing?

Believe it or not, the first thing to do is to give yourself permission to laugh despite what is going on in the country and the world. Some people think they have to be serious because of all the suffering taking place, and may even feel guilty for being lighthearted. But the shows we find the funniest and the comedians we embrace are the ones in which they illustrate how to laugh at ourselves and each other. They have learned through their own hardships and demonstrate to the rest of us the value of humor, even if it is self-deprecating, to cope with the negatives – our own and those in our relationships. We look to them for comic relief, and can actually model our behavior after them to use poking at ourselves and our loved ones as a way to ease tension and release anger. And while you wouldn't expect doctors and nurses in a hospital setting to be making jokes, it is something that goes on regularly to manage the intensity of working with ill and dying patients. In fact, someone I know who was going through his own illness with a brain tumor wrote a book called, "You Have To Keep Your Sense Of Tumor," which helped him survive for many years. Nurturing your sense of humor can actually become your emotional health insurance.

The next thing to do is take inventory of all the things that

are irritating you in your life and prioritize them so you can gain some perspective. If you look at each one specifically, it gives you the opportunity to focus on what is aggravating you the most and needs to be addressed first. This way, instead of being equally upset about all of them, you can determine what is going on that demands your immediate attention in order to manage it more effectively. Once you have honed in on what it is, look for any way to make it amusing or silly so that when it continues to happen it loses some of its steam.

If you are in a relationship, however, your private jokes can give you mileage if you use them as morse code to short circuit an impending argument. Rather than blaming or criticizing your partner, if you can find a gentler way to tease them about the problem at hand it can increase your chances of their being willing to compromise. Laughter is also a great release for anxiety, and a place it can be really helpful is in the bedroom. That is where people can feel pressure to please their partner, and also themselves. Embracing humor is a great way to relax and dissipate some of that expectation so you are able to enjoy yourselves.

It is clear that Blake and Gwen have a lot of playfulness between them. That is one of the things that is so appealing about watching them interact, and it appears to have contributed to their strong foundation. You can do the same and increase your personal happiness by learning to laugh off what you can, and by following the adage angels fly because they take themselves lightly.

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