Positive Pulse
Smola Consulting

National Humor Month

April 1st kicks off National Humor Month. Laughter is not only fun, but it is free and good for you. Laughter is a powerful antidote to stress, pain, and conflict. Humor lightens your burdens, inspires hope, connects you to others, and keeps you grounded, focused, and alert. Here are just a few reasons to bring more laughter into your life:

- **Laughter relaxes the entire body**. A good laugh relieves physical tension and stress leaving your muscles relaxed for up to 45 minutes.
- **Laughter boosts the immune system**. Laughter decreases stress hormones and increases immune cells and infection-fighting antibodies.
- **Laughter triggers the release of endorphins,** the body's natural feel-good chemicals. Endorphins promote an overall sense of well-being and can even temporarily relieve pain.
- **Laughter protects the heart**. Laughter improves the function of blood vessels and increases blood flow, which can help protect you against heart attack and other cardiovascular problems.
- **Laughter burns calories**. Laughing for 10 to 15 minutes a day can burn approximately 40 calories.
- **Laughter lightens anger's heavy load**. Nothing diffuses anger and conflict faster than a good laugh. Looking at the funny side can put problems into perspective and enable you to move on from confrontations without holding onto bitterness and resentment.
- **Laughter helps you relax and recharge**. It reduces stress and increases energy, enabling you to stay focused and accomplish more.
- **Laughter draws you closer to others,** which can have a profound effect on all aspects of your mental and emotional health.
- **Laughter stops distressing emotions.** You can't feel anxious, angry, or sad when you are laughing.

Begin by setting aside time for humor and laughter as you do for exercising. Here are a few ways to get started:

- **Smile**. Smiling is the beginning of laughter and it is contagious. When you look at someone or see something pleasing, practice smiling. Look up when you are walking and smile at the people you pass. Notice the effect it has on others.
- **Count your blessings**. The simple act of considering the positive aspects of your life will distance you from negative thoughts.
- **When you hear laughter, move toward it.** People are happy to share something funny because it gives them the opportunity to laugh again and feed off the humor you find in it.
- **Spend time with fun, playful people**. Even if you consider yourself lighthearted, you can still seek out people who like to laugh and make others laugh.
- **Bring humor into conversations**. Ask people to share the funniest things that have happened to them.

Creating Opportunities for Laughter

Watch a funny movie or TV show
Read the funny pages
Share a good joke or funny story
Host game night with friends
Go to a "laughter yoga" class
Do something silly

Invite friends out to a comedy club
Seek out funny people
Check out the bookstore's humor section
Play with a pet
Goof around with children
Make time for fun activities

A day without laughter is a day wasted.
Charlie Chaplin