

A Collection of  
Laughter Quotations  
Assembled by:  
Kit Hammond Stapely  
And  
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[A]

So many tangles in life are ultimately hopeless that we have no appropriate sword other than laughter.

Gordon William Allport (1897-1967),  
American psychologist, known for Theory of Personality

Comedy comes out of exposing the difficulties in life and laughing at them.

Lourie Anderson

When your world seems like too much to handle, Just take a deep breath and laugh. It clears the mind and frees your spirit.

Anonymous

When you laugh, be sure to laugh at what people do and not at what people are. Anonymous

It is requisite for the relaxation of the mind that we make use, from time to time, of playful deeds and jokes. St. Thomas Aquinas

[B]

There are some things so serious you have to laugh at them.

Niels Henrik David Bohr (1885-1962),  
Nobel Prize winning Danish physicist

If you can't make it better, you can laugh at it.

Erma Bombeck

Always laugh when you can; it is cheap medicine. Merriment is a philosophy not well understood. It is the sunny side of existence.

Lord Byron 1788-1824 English  
romantic poet

[C]

True humour springs more from the heart than from the head; it is not contempt, its essence is love.

Thomas Carlyle

Seriousness is equated with responsibility, when, in fact, I think we would be much more responsible if we had more joy and laughter in our lives.

Deepak Chopra

To truly laugh, you must be able to take your pain and play with it! Charlie Chaplin

Laughter is the tonic, the relief, the surcease for pain. Charlie Chaplin

The most wasted of all days is that on which one has not laughed.

Sebastien-Roch Nicolas De Chamfort (1741-1794) French Writer.

We need laughter very, very badly - especially in this country. We have so much news being thrown at us. We need something to say, "Hey, wait a minute, let's hold on here. There's a life, you know, to live and to be enjoyed."

Sid Ceasar. American comedian

I see humour as food. An adequate share of humour and laughter represents an essential part of the diet of the healthy person.

Norman Cousins (1915-1990),

What was significant about the laughter . . . was not just the fact that it provides internal exercise for a person . . . a form of jogging for the innards, but that it creates a mood in which the other positive emotions can be put to

work, too. Norman Cousins American editor, writer, author, "Anatomy of an Illness"

Laughter, while it lasts, slackens and un-braces the mind, weakens the faculties and causes a kind of remissness and dissolution in all the powers of the soul; and thus it may be looked on as weakness in the composition of human nature. But if we consider the frequent relieves we receive from it and how often it breaks the gloom which is apt to depress the mind and damp our spirits, with transient, unexpected gleams of joy, one would take care not to grow too wise for so great a pleasure of life. Malcolm De Chazal

[D]

The first half of our lives is ruined by our parents, and the second half by our children. If you lose the power to laugh, you lose the power to think.

Clarence Seward Darrow (1857-1938),  
American criminal lawyer

Your joy is your sorrow  
unmasked. And the self-same  
well from which your laughter  
rises was often-times filled with  
your tears.

René Descartes (1596-1650), French  
mathematician, philosopher, father of

analytic geometry

## [E]

Laughter can relieve tension,  
soothe the pain of  
disappointment, and strengthen  
the spirit for the formidable  
tasks that always lie ahead.

Dwight D. Eisenhower

If its sanity you are after there  
is no recipe like laughter.

Henry Elliot

A good laugh heals a lot of hurts.

Madeleine L'Engle

## [F]

All the time people are  
questioned by life. The way to  
respond is by being responsible  
for their lives. Working with the  
matter that fate has supplied  
them, people are like sculptors

who chisel out and hammer  
unshaped stone so that it  
takes more and more form.  
Though surrounded by  
biological, sociological and  
psychological restrictions,  
humans can either conquer  
and shape them or choose  
to submit to them.

We who lived in  
concentration camps can  
remember the men who  
walked through the huts  
comforting others, giving  
away their last piece of  
bread. They may have been  
few in number, but they  
offer sufficient proof that  
everything can be taken  
from a man but one thing:  
the last of the human  
freedoms - to choose one's  
attitude in any given set of  
circumstances, to choose  
one's own way.

I would never have made it  
if I could not have laughed.  
It lifted momentarily out  
of this horrible situation,  
just enough to make it  
livable. Victor Frankl Nazi Death  
Camp Survivor

## [G]

If I had no sense of  
humour, I should long ago  
have committed suicide.

Mahatma Gandhi

Laughter is a tranquilliser  
with no side effects.

Arnold Glasgow

Men show their character  
in nothing more clearly than  
by what they think  
laughable.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Humour is laughter made  
from pain - not pain  
inflicted by laughter.

Joel Goodman

Galen was called to attend  
the wife of a Roman  
aristocrat. Her doctor had  
been treating her for an  
organic complaint, but she  
had not improved. Galen,  
while taking her pulse,  
mentioned the name of an  
actor with whom her name  
was linked in the gossip of  
the town. Her pulse  
immediately bounded.  
Then Galen leaned down and  
whispered something in her  
ear that made her laugh.  
That laugh began her cure  
and is one of the earliest  
instances of a psychiatric

treatment for psychosomatic  
illness.

The Little, Brown Book Of Anecdotes By

Clifton Fadiman

## [H]

You can increase your brain  
power three to five-fold simply  
by laughing and having fun  
before working on a problem.

Doug Hall, Author

God cannot be solemn, or He  
would not have blessed man with  
the incalculable gift of laughter.

Sidney J. Harris

Man is the only animal that  
laughs and weeps; for he is the  
only animal that is struck with  
the difference between what  
things are and what they might  
have been. William Hazlitt

Life can be wildly tragic at  
times, and I've had my share.  
But whatever happens to you, you  
have to keep a slightly comic  
attitude. In the final analysis,  
you have got not to forget to  
laugh. Katharine Hepburn

Laughter is a highly addictive  
positive contagion: if somebody  
starts, it's very difficult to stop.

Robert Holden

For a man learns more quickly  
and remembers more easily that  
which he laughs at, than that  
which he approves and reveres.

Horace

Humour is laughing at what you  
haven't got when you ought to  
have it.

Langston Hughes

Laughter is the sun that drives  
winter from the human face.

Victor Hugo

I've seen what a laugh can do. It  
can transform almost unbearable  
tears into something bearable,  
even hopeful.

Bob Hope

## [I]

At least one way of measuring  
the freedom of any society is  
the amount of comedy that is  
permitted, and clearly a healthy  
society permits more satirical  
comment than a repressive, so  
that if comedy is to function in  
some way as a safety release  
then it must obviously deal with  
these taboo areas. This is part  
of the responsibility we accord  
our licensed jesters, that  
nothing be excused the  
searching light of comedy. If  
anything can survive the probe  
of humour it is clearly of value,  
and conversely all groups who  
claim immunity from laughter are  
claiming special privileges which  
should not be granted.

Eric Idle, comedian, member of Monty  
Python's Flying Circus

To become conscious of  
what is horrifying and to  
laugh at it is to become  
master of that which is  
horrifying. Laughter  
alone does not respect any  
taboo, laughter alone  
inhibits the creation of a  
new anti-taboo; the comic  
alone is capable of giving us  
the strength to bear the  
tragedy of existence.

Eugene Ionesco

People tell me they feel so  
much more available to life  
once they learn how to  
clown around. That's what  
being a clown is about... it's  
about touching your soul  
and finally giving it room to  
laugh.

Arina Issacson

## [J]

The size of man's  
understanding might be  
justly measured by his  
mirth.

Mirth is like a flash of  
lightning that breaks  
through a gloom of clouds  
and glitter for the moment.  
Cheerfulness keeps up a  
daylight in the mind, filling

Samuel Johnson

it with steady and  
perpetual serenity.

Samuel Johnson

Humour expressed with a  
gentle smile or exuberant  
mirth is recreational  
therapy.

Eileen Jackson

Become a child again. Laugh!

Barbara Johnson

We don't laugh because  
we're happy - we're happy  
because we laugh.

William James

One hearty laugh together  
will bring enemies into a  
closer communion of heart  
than hours spent on both  
sides in inward wrestling  
with the mental demon of  
uncharitable feeling.

William James

Laugh, and be fat, sir, your  
penance is known. They that  
love mirth, let them  
heartily drink, 'Tis the only  
receipt to make sorrow  
sink.

Ben Jonson

## [K]

By laughing at me, the audience  
really laughs at themselves and  
realizing they have done this,  
gives them sort of a spiritual  
second wind for going back into  
the battles of life

Emmett Kelly Sr.

There are three things which are  
real: God, human folly, and  
laughter. The first two are  
beyond our comprehension. So  
we must do what we can with the  
third.

John Fitzgerald Kennedy

## [L]

Laughter is the best form of  
medicine. For when we laugh, we  
neither think, grieve, or feel.

Eugene Lam

Laughter is by definition healthy.

Doris Lessing

I believe in laughter.

I think it is food for the soul.

Tommy Lasorda

If you're not allowed to laugh in  
heaven, I don't want to go there.

Martin Luther (1483-1546) German  
theologian, reformation leader

It is pleasing to the dear God  
whenever thou rejoicest or  
laughest from the bottom of thy  
heart.

Martin Luther

Shared laughter creates a bond  
of friendship. When people laugh  
together, they cease to be young  
and old, master and pupils,

worker and driver. They have become a single group of human beings, enjoying their existence.

W. Grant Lee

You can't stay mad at somebody who makes you laugh.

Jay Leno

One who has the courage to laugh is almost as much the master of the world as he who is ready to die.

Giacamo Leopardi

Laugh and the world laughs with you. Cry and the world laughs at you.

J. M. Linsner

It's possible to forgive someone a great deal if he makes you laugh.

Jo Bunge

## [M]

One thing I've learned about humour is that it's never quite so funny as when your situation is almost hopeless. You're dealing with an absurdity and the humour arises out of the absurdity.

Pat McManus

Laughter and crying are two of the best healers we have.

Peter McWilliams

When we begin to take our failures non-seriously, it means

we are ceasing to be afraid of them. It is of immense importance to learn to laugh at ourselves.

Katherine Mansfield

Then let us laugh. It is the cheapest luxury man enjoys, and, as Charles Lamb says, 'is worth a hundred groans in any state of the market.' It stirs up the blood, expands the chest, electrifies the nerves, clears away the cobwebs from the brain, and gives the whole system a shock to which the voltaic-pile is as nothing. Nay, its delicious alchemy converts even tears into the quintessence of merriment, and makes wrinkles

themselves expressive of youth and frolic. Wm. Matthews  
Clowns work as well as aspirin but twice as fast.

Groucho Marx 1890-1977

Joyfulness keeps the heart and face young.

A good laugh makes us better friends with ourselves and everybody around us.

Orison Swett Marden

The person who has a sense of humor is not just more relaxed in the face of a

potentially stressful situation, but is more flexible in his approach.

John Morreall

It is the heart that is not yet sure of its God that is afraid to laugh in His presence.

George MacDonald

## [N]

Laughter is part of the human survival kit.

David Nathan

Laughter gives us distance. It allows us to step back from an event, deal with it and then move on.

Bob Newhart

Man alone suffers so excruciatingly in the world that he was compelled to invent laughter.

Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844-1900) German philosopher

## [O]

Laughter is wine for the soul—laughter soft, or loud and deep, tinged through with seriousness.... the hilarious declaration made

by man that life is worth living.

Sean O'Casey

## [P]

Parents forget to teach their children humor and laughter are the lubricants of life.

Joseph Perino

Care to our coffin adds a nail, no doubt; And every grin so merry, draws one out.

Peter Pindar

You can discover more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation.

Plato (427-347 B.C.)

Laughter lets me relax. It's the equivalent of taking a deep breath, letting it out and saying, 'This, too, will pass.'

Odette Pollar

A well-balanced person is one who finds both sides of an issue laughable.

Herbert Procknow

You don't stop laughing because you grow old. You grow old because you stop laughing.

Michael Pritchard

Laughter is the best medicine

Proverbs, The Bible.

## [R]

We are so attached to our suffering that laughing happens, generally, only as a release of tension. Osho Rajneesh

Laughing is beautiful, a deep cleansing, a deep purification. Laughing at oneself kills the ego, and you are more transparent, more light when you move in the world. And if you have laughed at yourself, then others' laughter toward you won't disturb you. Osho Rajneesh

When you have a hearty laugh, Mind stops, because Mind cannot laugh. It is structured seriously, its function is to be serious, miserable, sick. The moment you laugh, it does not come from your mind, it comes from the beyond, from your very inner spirit. Osho Rajneesh

Laughter is the most inexpensive and most effective wonder drug. Laughter is a universal medicine. Bertrand Russell

The truth is, laughter always sounds more perfect than weeping. Laughter flows in a violent riff and is effortlessly

melodic. Weeping is often fought, choked, half strangled, or surrendered to with humiliation.

Anne Rice

Laughter can be more satisfying than honour; more precious than money; more heart-cleansing than prayer. Harriet Rochlin

## [S]

What makes life worth living? To be born with the gift of laughter and sense that the world is mad. Scaramouche

Life does not cease to be funny when people die any more than it ceases to be serious when people laugh. Antoine de Saint-Exupéry 1900-1944 French aviator and writer of The Little Prince

All things are cause for either laughter or weeping. Lucius Annaeus Seneca (4BC?-AD 65) [The Younger] Roman Stoic philosopher, writer and tutor **It better befits us to laugh at life than to lament over it.** Annaeus Seneca Lucius

Try as much as possible to be wholly alive, with all your might, And when you laugh, laugh like hell, And when you get angry, get good and angry. Try to be alive. You will be dead soon enough. William Saroyan

Sometimes the laughter in mothering is the recognition of the ironies and absurdities. Sometimes, though, it's just pure, unthinking delight.... Barbara Schapiro

If I were given the opportunity to present a gift to the next generation, it would be the ability for each individual to learn to laugh at himself. Charles M. Schultz

Live by this credo: have a little laugh at life and look around you for happiness instead of sadness. Laughter has always brought me out of unhappy situations. Red Skelton

I personally believe that each of us was put here for a purpose—to build not to destroy. If I can make people smile, then I have

served my purpose for God. Red Skelton

No matter what your heartache may be, laughing helps you forget it for a few seconds. Red Skelton

Laughter through tears is my favorite emotion. Steel Magnolias

'Stress' is anything at which we cannot laugh. Kit Hammond Stapely

## [T]

The burden of the self is lightened when I laugh at myself. Rabindranath Tagore

The world is a looking glass, and it gives back to every man the reflection of his own face. Frown at it and it will in turn look sourly upon you; laugh at it and is it a jolly kind companion. William Makepeace Thackeray (1811- 1863) British writer of "Vanity Fair"

Laughter need not be cut out of anything since it improves everything. James Thurber

Laughter is a celebration of our failings. That's what clowns are for. And that's what I am. Emma Thompson

## [U]

Comedy is simply a funny way of being serious.

Peter Ustinov

## [V]

God is a comedian playing to an audience too afraid to laugh.

Francois Marie Arouet Voltaire (1694-1778), French philosopher, writer, "Candide"

Laughter and tears are both responses to frustration and exhaustion...

I myself prefer to laugh, since there is less cleaning up to do afterward.

Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. (b. 1922), American writer,

## [W]

Laughter is the brush that sweeps away the cobwebs of the heart. Mort Walker

People who laugh actually live longer than those who don't laugh. Few persons realize that health actually varies according to the amount of laughter.

Dr James Walsh

Grim care, moroseness, anxiety—all this rust of life ought to be scoured off by the oil of mirth. Mirth is God's medicine.

Henry Ward Beecher

## [Y]

There is a purifying power in laughter-- both for individuals and for nations.

If they have a sense of humour, they have the key to good sense, to simple thinking, to peaceable temper, and to a cultural outlook on the world.

Lin Yutang, Reader's Digest Dictionary of Quotations

These Laughter Quotations were collected by:

Kit Hammond Stapely and Rhonda Blunden and form the basis of their book...

*It Could Be Verse - An Anthology of Laughter Quotations*

*It Could Be Verse* includes pictures and biographies of some of the people who are quoted here together with sections entitled *Why Laugh?* and *65 Reasons to Laugh*

It is designed to be flipped through regularly to remind yourself that Laughter is truly the best remedy for whatever it is that ails you. - Only after publication did Kit realise that the best place to keep the book was beside the loo!

To browse through some pages of the book and to order (with Paypal) online go to [www.miraclesdohappen.org.uk](http://www.miraclesdohappen.org.uk)

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