

Laughter Power



Have you ever gone through something so difficult that you wake up one morning and realize it's been a while since you have really, really laughed?

Or sat through a meeting so boring that even your doodles are depressing?

Me too. I am convinced that laughter is directly tied to energy, like those old phones we used to make out of tin cans and string. Laughter is on one end, and energy is on the other.

I've given presentations on some incredibly boring topics that have been rescued by a funny story. We all know that once an audience laughs with you, they have picked up that other tin can and you're connected.

Sometimes laughter is our best release. I remember going to my grandmother's graveside service. As the family of the deceased, we were given chairs covered with this weird blue, fake fur.

I leaned over to my mother as she cried and said, "I feel like we're sitting on a muppet." We both burst out laughing, appalling everyone behind us.

Whatever - laughter works.

Read my blog on how laughter provides you with power. It includes a great video on laughter yoga that will fascinate you.

As my gift to you, click the link below. I guarantee laughter.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L49VXZwfup8

Remember to laugh today. No matter who complains about it.

Just Dance!

Growing up in a preacher's family had highs and lows. While I didn't love going to Sunday lunches with people I barely knew where the meal was always pot roast, I did love the nights mom and dad would invite the youth group over so we could dance.

That's right, a Southern Baptist minister's family endorsing dance. We were footloose before Footloose was cool.

My dad played jazz piano by ear, my brother played the drums, my sister sang, and my mother was a music major who could jitterbug up a storm. I provided the comedic relief. We spent many a night with music ringing through our home as we celebrated life.

We didn't have much money, but when we danced, nothing else mattered.

There was only joy.

Please, please take some time to dance . . .

<u>In today's blog</u>, I talk about how important it is to your soul to find time to dance. I was hoping to take a video of myself dancing, but I didn't want to discourage you:). Anyway, the dancing isn't about me. It's about you.

My guess is that you are facing some daunting pressures. I guarantee that if you take a couple of minutes to dance, you will smile and forget how you look or the fact that you might have just pulled a ligament.

Dance Tunes

I love this clip from the <u>Slumdog Millionare dance to Jai-Ho</u> because it shows that dance is universal. By the way, Jai-Ho means "may victory be yours."

If you prefer to go a little Footloose, <u>here's that track for you</u>. Whichever song you listen to, I hope you dance.

Laughter Lite



I remember one of the first times I intentionally created laughter. I was around eight years-old, and my sister and I were doing a dance routine for my parents that she had carefully choreographed (yes, this is what we did when we only got three television channels). I think we were dancing to the song "Cherokee Nation."

At one point, when we were supposed to spin around, I lost my balance. My sister was the dance talent, and I wasn't. So, my face got a little red . . .until I heard my parents laughing.

And I fell in love with the power of laughter. I also proceeded to demoralize my sister by ruining every dance routine as I built my comedic timing.

Laughter isn't about being silly . .

Laughter relaxes an audience, brings a team together, and helps us get through the most difficult times.

<u>In today's blog</u>, I talk about how we try to kill laughter within our corporate walls and why we need to keep laughter alive. I encourage you to click on the two links I provide in the blog (especially the last one).

Every day, try to laugh, even if grouchy pants is on the other side of the cubicle complaining about the noise. And, if you give a presentation and somebody tells you, in a condescending tone, that you are a "comedian," just thank them.

Because laughter keeps us light and strong and bound together.

Camel Hasselhoff



<u>In today's blog</u>, I discuss why I still believe in a wonderful world, even though our news is filled with everything from people being attacked by bees in the airport to Ebola plagues. In the face of this constant barrage of bad news, we have to proactively look for the people, places and things that bring us power.

When my daughter was about five years-old, we went to McDonald's. I bought her and her brother a Happy Meal. Samantha looked in her box and found the stuffed camel you see in the picture above. She was thrilled! He made her happy.

At the time, she was a big *Baywatch* fan. Before you judge me, please know that I'm not claiming mother-of-the-year here.

Anyway, she held her camel high above her head as we drove away, a move she learned in *The Lion King*.

She still has that camel, and after a particularly hard week in New York City she called me and asked if I would send it to her. Because Camel Hasselhoff makes her happy.

Find those people who make you believe it's a wonderful world. Hold onto those things that you associate with joy.

Because they are there, hidden behind all of the bad news.

[&]quot;What will you name him?" I asked.

[&]quot;His name is Camel Hasselhoff!" she replied.

Child Power



In my last blog wrote about how I found a comforting message in this sometimes lonely life.

I don't remember a lot of loneliness as a child. Maybe it's because I was pretty fascinated by everything. One day when I was sick my mom bought me a miniature doll with little pink furniture. I was never big on dolls, so I let my brother use her for his G.I. Joe war games.

But I kept the pink furniture, covered it in sugar, and placed it outside on the front stoop to let the ants sit down. I was concerned about their workaholic mentality. I am sure my mother wasn't thrilled when she found a stream of ants at her front door, but my purpose was sincere.

- I focused on something I could help . . . the ants. I had yet to learn that I could be burdened by the entire world's problems. I had a simple, controllable goal.
- I found total joy when the ants start climbing up on the chair. I gave them names and watched them for hours; this became a meditative exercise.
- I did not need anybody's approval. Nor did I ask for it. This was my mission, and I was sticking to it.

Remember when you were a child? What magic did you find wrapped in each day? Take that joy and apply it to your life.

- Do one thing today that matters to somebody else.
- Feel the joy found in that small contribution and take it in.
- Focus on what you can control and don't worry about what others think about your actions.

You'll find more power in small moments than you ever thought possible.

More Joy



I don't know about you, but I think there should be a few rules around holidays.

- 1. Minimal shopping allowed. That's right, we're back to *Little House in the Big Woods*, when you get a metal cup and a candy cane and life is good.
- 2. People who have nothing get something. Instead of buying more stuff to be thrown out in a few years, give one gift to someone who really, really needs it.
- 3. No political arguments allowed. I don't care what party you are in, stop the name-calling and arguing. It gets us nowhere and sucks all the joy out of the air.

Remember when you were a child, and the holidays were magical?

Holiday decorations glimmered, we believed in something beyond us, and adults smiled more. I always thought they smiled because they were going to get presents. Now I know they smiled because they were giving gifts to their children.

If you want to feel especially good this holiday season . . .

Grab an extra angel from the angel tree. Give someone who is cold money without worrying about what he or she will spend it on. Rescue a dog or cat from the cage they're sitting in.

Serve in a soup kitchen, and compare that feeling to an hour in WalMart. Actually, compare anything to an hour in WalMart, and that thing wins. Materialism is not a conduit of joy, it is an attempted replacement of it.

I promise, it's in the giving that you will receive power. Now go have an amazing holiday.

By the way, check out this week's Power blogs -

- "When I Want to Cry I Laugh Instead"
- "You are Light Even When You're Grouchy"

Laugh, Cry



You might wonder why I have posted a picture of a Panda laughing. Well, because I guzzled too much cough syrup last night and have a spouse going through chemo and I really, really needed a happy picture.

I have to admit that Friday I went home early and cried. I had to watch "A Football Life" to get those tears flowing, but once I got going I cried until my snubbing scared the dog.

Is being sad really so bad?

We often teach our children to "dry up those tears," or "have a stiff upper lip." My mom had a friend from Germany who got it all confused and told people to "keep their ears stiff." Regardless of the words, the message is clear --crying is weak.

I was reading a book last night when I came across this concept --behind every fear is a broken heart. I believe that statement. Allowing ourselves to be sad might just prevent a future fear, built with anger to block the tears.

The holiday season always brings a myriad of emotions and a renewed fear of fruit cake. We walk into family homes and are slammed with memories, some good and some not so good. This year, I dare each of us to feel them all.

Laugh and cry and laugh once more. Let your heart break and mend again. Because allowing ourselves to feel every experience is where courage is found and the soul is lightened. By the way, check out this week's Power blogs -

- "Joy Is Found in the Weirdest Places"
- "Life Can be a Pain, but What a Story!"

Laugh Warriors

Laughter is the evidence that we're still here, the proof that our tragedies will not define us forever.
Laughter is the language of the survivor.

Josh James Riebock

As the holidays wrap up and we all face the first credit card bill, our joy seems to dissipate just a little. The beautiful leather jacket my husband bought in three sizes to make sure one would fit me still didn't work out. How did I know being 54 years-old meant my upper arms were going to become water wings?

As we read about missing airplanes and illness and shootings, we call "olly olly oxen free," yearning to end our hide-and-seek game with hope. Here's the good news - hope is one laugh away.

Courage isn't funny, but being funny is courageous . . .

Between 1942 and 1945, psychiatrist Viktor Frankl labored in four different camps, including Auschwitz, while his parents, brother, and pregnant wife perished. In his amazing book (a must read) "Man's Search for Meaning," he recounts a daily ritual he had with a friend, also in one of the camps. Each day, they would tell one another a joke.

Once, when a German guard berated them verbally, Viktor leaned towards his friend and said, "I remember when he was just a banker." Their daily jokes allowed them to rise above the abuse and flex their soul.

I believe laughter to be God's greatest gift to each one of us. Now that we know it's a gift, let's wear our laughter to work every day. Let's laugh with our children when they tell a silly joke. When we drop that package in a puddle on the way to UPS, let's curse loudly first and then

burst into laughter.

Each day, we should face our greatest fears and smile -- because that smile reminds us that we are wonderfully brave laugh warriors.

By the way, check out this week's Power blog -

• "Holiday Lights are Better on the Inside" - How to find joy in the holidays

Now, take back those gifts and laugh your heart out!

New Year

I am a fan of 2014 because of the lessons it taught me about friendship and love and finding my passion. Lessons, however, most often come from dark places. 2014 brought my husband's activated cancer, my mother's stroke, the loss of income, and a myriad of other issues.

I wish I could learn lessons from the easy stuff, like eating snacks and watching "House Hunters," but somehow that doesn't work. I know. I've tried.

And while this sounds really trite -- I wouldn't trade the lessons I've learned and the new friendships I've forged during this year.

Here are my wishes for you this year. I hope that you:

- Commit to sharing more light with the world than darkness, more positive stories than negative.
- Dance. Even if you dance badly.
- Realize that your soul is stronger than any obstacle you will face.
- Connect with spirit -- and see beyond your physical limitations.
- Smile more than you cry.
- Hold the hand of somebody you love when they most need you.
- Meditate, pray, have moments of silence so that your soul can speak.
- Allow yourself to connect with others.
- Laugh. Every single day. Even if it's at somebody falling (just laugh quietly).

I am so grateful for those of you who have subscribed to my site. You are the people who will change the world, one interaction at a time.

By the way, check out this week's Power blog --

• "Three Ways to Appreciate Life After the Holidays" - My fussy day and how one oncology nurse changed it all.

Now, go put on some music and dance, no matter where you are. If your manager complains, have him or her call me.

Laugh It Off



I walked out of my house yesterday whispering gratitude to the many oak trees for not falling during the previous night's windstorm. The soil around our house is shallow, and the oak trees have been totally unrealistic about the strength of their roots. Therefore, we've lost about fifteen of them during storms.

As I fist-pumped the trees, I turned the corner and saw that our large, heavy basketball hoop had fallen on my new BMW.

I didn't laugh for a while, but got there eventually . . .

I walked into the house and said, calmly," I need help. The basketball hoop has fallen on my new car." As I walked back outside, my anger grew with every step. By the time I saw the dent on the roof of my car, my anger threw out its legs and rode the tricycle of fury with abandon.

"I hate this house, I hate living in the country; it's cursed out here!!" I ranted. And while there are several factors to support that theory, it didn't feel good. My chest tightened, my throat constricted, and my stomach turned.

We need to love ourselves. . .

The greatest act of love we can show ourselves is not taxing our bodies and souls unnecessarily with bad stories. In fact, when I told my story to my sister and niece, we all started to laugh.

Because, in my family funny stories trump all.

I realized that sappy posters have been right all of these years. It really isn't about what happens to us . . . it's about how we react to what happens to us.

So, when bad things happen to good people, let yourself be angry. For a minute. Just so you know - physiologically anger only stays in your bloodstream for 90 seconds. Anger lasts because we refuel it by retelling the story.

Love yourself enough to let the embers of your anger go out.

Check out this week's Power blogs -

- Why So Serious?- More on the importance of laughter, and why we aren't as afraid of the dark as we think.
- What the Mick Jagger of Birds Taught Me- Yes, it's about a dream. But stick with me on this one it's a good lesson.

Love yourself enough to laugh when times are difficult. Because it doesn't matter whether you rant or collapse in a pile of giggles, the difficult situation is still there. Laughter offers much better armor!

Love Rules



Apparently, I looked like crap a couple of weeks ago when I went to see my sister and her family. Neil and I have been through a lot, and I think it all came tumbling down at once. Regardless, word got around that I either needed some really good eye cream or I was kind of losing it.

The cavalry came riding in . . .

The other night during an ice-storm my son decided to go out and "meet some friends" to watch basketball. I paced all night since the odds of hitting ice and/or a large mammal on our country roads are high.

Around 11:30 p.m., I heard my son come into the bedroom. I stepped out of the bathroom and said, "Wow, am I glad you're home." About that time I heard additional footsteps, and realizing that we were all present, I imagined a serial killer and had a small heart attack.

Then I saw my daughter's smiling face . . .

It took me a minute of screaming "WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?" before I realized that my daughter was there to both surprise me and provide some stress-relief. She and my son planned the surprise, and she used what little money she had to fly in from New York.

Oh, how we need to have people around us who care enough to show up when the bags under our eyes would have to be checked at the airport. Neither work nor twitter nor television is going to rescue us.

Instead, love comes from being there for each other when we're not at our best. Love is an investment with great returns.

Whoever your family might be (they're not always blood-relations), invest time in them. Call them. Go see them. Hug them.

Because they'll be there when you need them most.

Check out last week's Power blog and HuffPost article -

- When You're Tired of Being Courageous Written before the cavalry came, this is my love letter to all of you who are just worn out.
- How "Birdman" Speak to Baby Boomers Some insights on the midlife journey and the lessons learned.

We are in a month of new beginnings, but we might have a winter hangover. Let's help those we love crawl through the rest of this snow and ice so we can stand tall in our inevitable spring.

