



The Healing Power of Humor & Creativity by award-winning author / stress-relief expert Susie Mantell

Stress is no laughing matter ... (or is it)?

It is now widely agreed that right up there with a brisk walk and loving touch, one of the surest and easiest ways to send a "feel-good" message to the body-mind, relieve pain and release stress is to laugh!

The International Conference on The Positive Power of Humor and Creativity convenes each June in Saratoga Springs, NY. (<http://www.humorproject.com>) Many years ago, I first met the real Dr. Patch Adams there (of the 1999 film and founder of the Gesundheit Institute). Although he was viewed by many in his day as a radical pioneer in using humor in healing, many hospitals now routinely integrate clowning, bright colors, music and light-hearted humor every day, to help patients and families to heal.

Editor-in-chief of the Saturday Review and peace activist, Norman Cousins, also served as Adjunct Professor of Medical Humanities for the School of Medicine at UCLA. Cousins later documented his own extraordinary experience of purposefully employing humor and laughter in his own battle against heart disease in his now classic book, *Anatomy of an Illness*. About his "dosing" of Marx brothers movies, Cousins wrote: *"I made the joyous discovery that ten minutes of genuine belly laughter had an anesthetic effect and would give me at least two hours of pain-free sleep."* He went on to say, *"When the pain-killing effect of the laughter wore off, we would switch on the motion picture projector again and, not infrequently, it would lead to another pain-free interval."*

There is no question that the wisdom of good professional health care is essential, but humankind has also yet to find many experiences that rival the power of letting go with a good, old-fashioned belly laugh! Want to reduce your stress? Find lots more, (and more serious) stress-relief tips on Susie Mantell's website at www.relaxintuit.com

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