

# Karyn Ruth's Tips on Living and Laughing with Less Stress



**Cherish your sense of humor** ~ Your natural sense of humor is a wonderful gift and an important tool that should be cultivated and nurtured, not suppressed. Being a serious professional doesn't mean checking your sense of humor at the door. Invite more of what makes you laugh into your daily life. There are numerous studies linking humor-rich work environments with increased creativity and productivity. Humor and laughter can help build effective relationships, diffuse tension and improve morale. For instance, tape your favorite TV comedies and play them when you need a lift. Save Internet humor you think is funny and stash it with your favorite cartoons in a "Humor File." Minimize the time you spend around people who bring you down and cultivate friendships with people who are positive and energize you. Invite some good-natured practical jokes into your life.

**Stop Your Mental Flogging** ~ The next time life presents you with a challenge, listen to your inner voice. How long and how severely do you beat yourself up? Would you talk to a friend the way you talk to yourself? You might just be your *own* worst source of stress. The next time you have a "human" moment, ask yourself these three questions: "What can I learn from this, what do I want to create from this moment forward, and, "can I find anything funny about this?"

**Acknowledge and reward your personal victories** ~ Reward yourself when things go right or when you accomplish something big or small that you've set out to do. What are some of your favorite things to do? Go do them! Schedule a massage, take yourself to lunch, buy something that makes you feel special or set aside some quiet time, whatever works for you.

**Concentrate on the donut, not the hole** ~ Here's a news flash, things go right everyday! Yet, we are so busy concentrating on the negative that we don't see the blessings and the luxuries in our lives. The next time you're feeling stressed, stop and quickly count three things that you are grateful for in your life. This simple act will change your mood and start to train your mental energy to focus on the positive.

**Cultivate the art of comic complaining** ~ What if I told you that you possessed a powerful tool that could help you get what you want? Would you use it? Humor is one of those tools. The next time you feel like choking a salesperson or giving the manager a piece of your mind, stop and ask yourself: "Could humor serve my purpose right now?"

**Look for humortunities** ~ In life you get what you look for, right? What do you spend most of your time looking for? What we tend to focus on, grows. So when you go through the day picking out only the negative, that is all you are going to see. Try spending one day choosing to focus only on the humorous or interesting things around you, notice how different that feels from negative-only focus. Granted, there are days when it is hard to find anything to laugh about, but these days don't have to be our only experience. Start looking for the humor opportunities that surround you everyday. Elevators, revolving doors and everyday interactions are opportunities to share a laugh or at the very least, a smile.



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