

MODULE 6 ACTIVITY

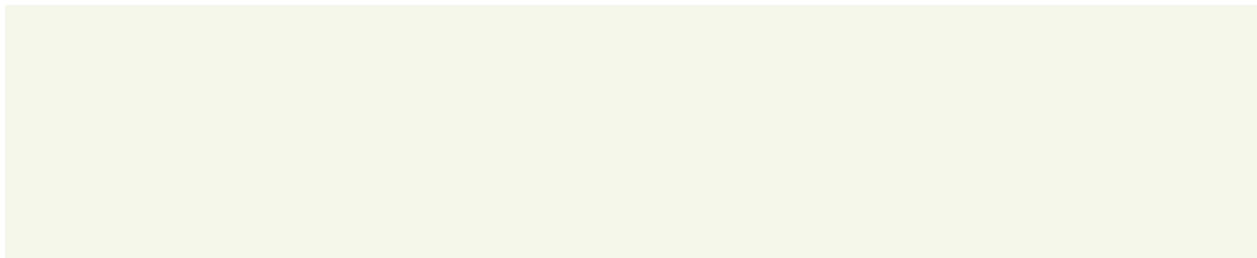
Share the Humor

The following activity was adapted from a business graduate course at Stanford University and taught by behavioral scientist Dr. Jennifer Aaker. The purpose of the class is to draw upon science on humor, organizations, leadership, and culture to use humor and levity as methods for intentionally building trust and connection, understanding, and creativity into your life and, if at work, your workplace.

Part 1: Humor Audit

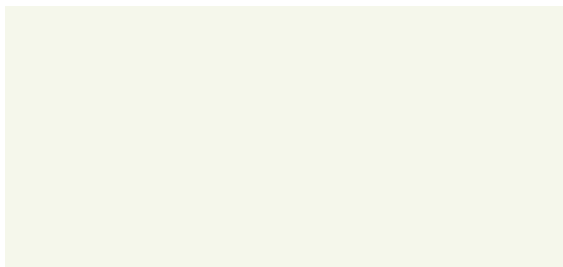
List all the environments in which you regularly find yourself. Try to be specific where you can. For example, “home” is likely detailed enough, but you may want to break down “work” into specific work circumstances or places such as “my shared office” or “staff room.”

My common environments:

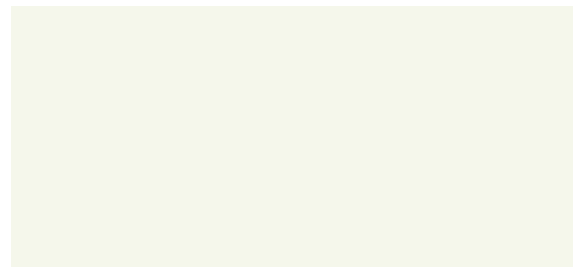


Looking at your list, separate your environments into the following two categories:

Places I am my full, funny self



Places I am not my full funny self



Now, when in both types of environments, **spend one week** intentionally noting and recording for yourself moments when you made someone laugh or someone or something made you laugh.

This exercise is leveraging the **priming effect**, i.e., shifting our attentional awareness to look for the things we are setting out to find. Give yourself a week to prime your attention and then seek to incorporate more humor and levity into the environments in which humor is sparser.

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Part 2: Try a Couple Techniques

Cultivating humor is not the same thing as telling jokes or “being funny”; those are techniques and affections. Humor does have common themes and techniques, though.

Technique #1: Noticing Truth

Most of effective humor results from living in the moment and making observations about a situation, often connecting that observation to another idea or experience. Notice what is true in your situation. Pay attention to your surroundings. Be mindful by actively asking yourself, “What is going on around me?” and “What is true?”

Technique #2: Rule of Three

Once you observe a truth, turn it from a simple observation into a humorous moment using the Rule of Three. The Rule of Three sets the stage for your punchline, which is your observation. It can often have a surprise factor. First, prepare your set-up with a lead-in to your observation. Then, make two similar but neutral observations. Last, relay your “very real” observation — the one which derives from your truth.

An example might be:

Working from home can be a struggle, but it also has many benefits, such as being able to eat healthier, being there for my kids, and saving a fortune in laundry by wearing the same clothes every single day!

Technique #3: Be Easy-Going with Laughter

Laugh at your own jokes. Laugh at others. Laugh when life surprises you. Even if something is mildly humorous, let it all out. Even if it feels “fake,” forced laughter can achieve the same psychological and physiological effects as genuine laughter. Oxytocin is released in the body, helping you bond with others, and it drops social-psychological defenses of others and primes them to find humor, too, which in turn helps others to bond with you.

Part 3: Share Your Humor

Combine Parts 1 and 2 for an intentional effort to let yourself laugh and have fun in all areas of life.