

## **“ho-ho-ha-ha-ha”**

Although some of us may be getting ready for Christmas, ho-ho-ha-ha-ha is a cooling down ritual from a Seattle based laugh club not a Santa Claus reenactment. This group’s total focus is to help people laugh more. With over 500 clubs in the United States the idea is catching on.

Remember the commercial where a little boy is being licked by a puppy. The giggles from the little boy are just contagious. Have you ever been in a situation like that? Someone starts to laugh about something very silly and soon everyone in the room is roaring and sometimes you can’t even remember what you were laughing about. And when you are done you feel like you have just run a marathon (or around the block) and you are saying, “Stop, I can’t take anymore, my face hurts, my gut hurts!!”

And it is interesting there are many different types of laughs. There is the snorter - this person inhales air and breathes out a snort. Then the tee-hee(er) – they have a silent itty, bitty little laugh. Of course, the smiler – no noise, but the body is moving. The roarer – enough said. And, of course, you probably have your own style. That is the great thing about the laugh. Very individual, like your finger print.

So, what is the big deal about the laugh? Why is it so important to us? Did you know that laughter can provide an aerobic workout for your heart and lungs? I’m thinking this is way more fun than a run around the block. A researcher from Stanford University found that laughing 100 times a day is equivalent to 10 minutes on a rowing machine. Did you know that good laughter can boost your immune system? Look out antibiotics. How about improving your digestion, stabilizing your mood, inspire your creativity, enhance communication, rest your brain. Why I have even read that laughter may enhance romance as many say that a sense of humor is the most desirable trait in a mate!!

Dr. Madan Kataria, from India and know as the Guru of Giggles, has had a profound influence on laughter as a formal discipline. He has taken laughter to new heights, teaching people how to laugh for no reason at all! You are encouraged to break out of your normal laugh routine and use one of the many silly laughs to choose from as you are participating in the laugh class. Dr. Kataria has even written a book, “Laugh for no Reason.” I’m thinking I’d like to be the one to teach this class on a college campus. First the research!!

As adults we do have some work to do to increase our laugh quotient. Research does show that children laugh about 350 to 400 times/day and us adults, only 12-15. So, start taking lessons from your children and begin your laugh program. When the kids ask you what’s for dinner, laugh! When they want money for that new shirt, laugh! When they want help with the homework, laugh! Okay, just kidding, but a little humor around the home front and in the office goes along way.

Victor Borge said, “Humor is the shortest distance between two people.” Using “good” humor, encouraging laughter makes a difference in your relationships. And the best part!! It is free!! “Ha-Ha-Ho-Ho-Ho!” I mean, “Ho-Ho-Ha-Ha-Ha...snort, snort!”