



*"There is nothing in the World so irresistibly contagious as laughter and good humor"*  
-- Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol*

# Humor For: Presentations, Pitches & Profit



## Course Description:

Spice up your sales game and connect with your audience effectively. We'll explore fun techniques to make your presentations memorable and engaging. You'll learn how incorporating humor can enhance your presentations, making your presentations memorable—and profitable!



So, in this class we're going to learn a little about the benefits of humor, a few techniques you can use to create humor in sales and business. And steps you can take to make it profitable for you.

### **Exercise:**

#### **Write me your introduction:**

Imagine yourself in front of an office full of accountants. Your job right now is to demonstrate to them how to use humor in dealing with objections from their clients.

Introduce yourself to them while providing them with some humor.

**Hint: Use a 3-Way Build-up. (Optional)**



## Science of Humor

Let's talk a little science, because understanding why we laugh, what makes that brain send that signal to the body to convulse.

So on the count of 3 I want you to make yourself laugh.

### **Manual Laughter:**

We can all make ourselves laugh. It can actually change the way you approach your day. It can help to release dopamines and hormones that reduce cortisol, make us feel love, euphoria. But this laughter occurs in the area of the brain that is more related to talking.

### **Spontaneous Laughter:**

Is a deeper laughter. This laughter releases a higher rate of endorphins and can really change the way people feel both within themselves and about you.

They trust you more.

When I first started doing comedy, I got into an argument with a veteran comedian, Jeff Wayne. A guy I have enormous respect for till this day.

Jeff insisted that comedy is all about the jokes. The most important thing is the jokes. My argument was that the most important thing is **relatability and connection**.

## Connection:

Let's start by talking about connection. You may have heard me talk about this in some of my other courses. The reason? It's super important!

Sociologist, Dr. Brene Brown, did an 8-year study on why people attend gatherings, talks, presentations, comedy shows, etc. and the answer she arrived at is connection. People attend these things to connect with other people.

This is astounding to me because so many speakers, performers, comedians don't try to connect at all.



They just start talking *at* the audience. A little something about me!

Most comedians just want to get their own fix.

But when you take a moment to truly connect with your audience, the resulting laughter is deeper and more meaningful, and thus, so is the connection.

## The Science Behind Laughter and Connection:

When you make someone laugh, it fosters feelings of connection, trust, and goodwill. The science behind this lies in the psychological and physiological effects of laughter, which is often described as a social glue that strengthens bonds between people. Here are the key points and some quotes to support the idea:

### 1. **Neurochemical Impact:**

- Laughter triggers the release of endorphins, the body's natural feel-good chemicals, which enhance mood and reduce stress.
- Oxytocin, often referred to as the "bonding hormone," is also released during shared laughter, increasing feelings of closeness and trust.

### 2. **Social Bonding:**

- Robin Dunbar, an evolutionary psychologist, suggests that laughter evolved as a mechanism to strengthen group cohesion and improve relationships.
- Shared laughter signals safety and mutual understanding, creating a sense of belonging.

### 3. **Reduced Social Tension:**

- Laughter can diffuse tense situations and make people more receptive to new ideas or perspectives.
- Humor creates a sense of shared reality, bridging gaps between people with different backgrounds or beliefs.

### 4. **Increased Likability:**

- Research shows that individuals who make others laugh are often perceived as more likable, charismatic, and intelligent.

## Quotes to Cite:

1. **Victor Borge:** "Laughter is the shortest distance between two people."



- This emphasizes laughter as a direct route to connection and intimacy.
- 2. **John Cleese:** "Laughter connects you with people. It's almost impossible to maintain any kind of distance or any sense of social hierarchy when you're just howling with laughter."
  - Cleese highlights how laughter breaks down barriers, creating equality in social interactions.
- 3. **Robin Dunbar (from his studies on laughter):** "Laughter is a crucial element of social bonding and works like a glue that keeps people together."
  - This directly links laughter to the evolutionary purpose of maintaining close-knit groups.
- 4. **Mark Twain:** "Against the assault of laughter, nothing can stand."
  - Twain's quote reflects laughter's power to overcome adversity and build bridges between people.

Incorporating humor into conversations or presentations taps into these benefits, helping you build rapport, influence others, and create lasting impressions. By understanding the science of laughter, you can wield it as a powerful tool in both personal and professional interactions.

## Benefits in Business:

- A strong sense of humor makes leaders 27% more inspiring, while their teams benefit from greater connection and innovation.
- **Humor Sells:** Including a humorous line in your sales pitch could make people ready to pay up to 20% more for your product.
- Any piece of information, subject matter, with humor purposely injected into the presentation increases the retention of that information by as much as 33%
- It is said that it is impossible to dislike someone who makes you laugh. So if you are effectively humorous, then they can't hate you.



## Physical Benefits of Humor

When we laugh, several physical reactions occur in our bodies, engaging multiple systems and creating a cascade of physiological effects. Here are **five key things that happen**:

### 1. Activation of the Brain's Reward System:

- Laughter triggers the release of **endorphins** (natural painkillers and mood enhancers) and **dopamine**, which activates the brain's reward system, producing feelings of pleasure and satisfaction.

### 2. Increased Oxygen Intake:

- Laughing forces us to take deeper breaths, increasing **oxygen flow to the lungs, heart, and brain**. This helps improve circulation and delivers more oxygen to tissues, enhancing overall energy and alertness.

### 3. Heart Rate and Blood Pressure Fluctuate:

- Initially, laughing **elevates the heart rate and blood pressure**, creating a short burst of physical activity. Afterward, the heart rate and blood pressure drop, inducing a state of relaxation and calm.

### 4. Muscle Contractions and Relaxation:

- Laughter causes **contraction of facial, abdominal, and diaphragm muscles**. After laughing, these muscles relax, creating a sense of physical relief and easing tension.

### 5. Immune System Boost:

- Laughing reduces levels of stress hormones like **cortisol and adrenaline**, which can suppress immune function. Simultaneously, it increases the production of **antibodies** and activates **immune cells**, enhancing the body's ability to fight infections.

These physical changes not only contribute to the immediate joy of laughing but also have long-term health benefits, including stress reduction, improved cardiovascular health, and enhanced mental well-being.

**So basically making people laugh is like giving them an internal massage, but with a literal happy ending.**



## Humor Related to Business

Let's talk about the word Humor. Notice that I say Humor instead of comedy. Because Comedy gives the immediate perception of stand-up comedy.

Humor is more a resulting laugh from a surprise twist while presenting information that can help transform the listener.

The Bar is Low in corporate humor because the expectation is low for a laugh.

The distinction between **humor** and **comedy** lies in their scope, intent, and execution:

### Humor

- **Definition:** Humor is the broader concept of something amusing or funny, designed to provoke laughter, smiles, or lightheartedness.
- **Nature:** It is often subtle, spontaneous, and can arise naturally from everyday observations, situations, or interactions.
- **Context:** Humor doesn't necessarily require a formal structure or a stage. It can exist in personal conversations, casual remarks, or written observations.
- **Purpose:** Humor is more about connecting with others, lightening a mood, or making an uncomfortable situation more palatable. It often feels unforced and relatable.
- **Examples:**
  - A witty remark resulting from irony during a meeting.
  - A clever wordplay based on a piece of information.
  - Sharing an anecdote that's amusing without being overly structured.
  - An observation about a given situation that people you're connecting with may have in common.
    - The boss's quirky habits
    - The boss's Porsche or tendency to drive beaters
    - The boss's preference for donuts or heavily sweetened coffee.

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## Converting Your Comedy Skills



Converting your comedy skills to the corporate, business, pitch environment is not that complicated. You just need to remember that:

Business is about information and problem solving.

So the humor is derived from facts first.

## **Exercise**

Think of 3 Topics that you feel strongly about that you think you can talk about in a presentation. Think of common issues people deal with at work.

- Feeling Overworked
- Work / Life Balance
- Quiet Quitting
- Being given more responsibilities, but not more compensation
- Transition from Remote Work to In-office work.

Choose 1 Topic.

- Write down 3 facts about the topic.
- Apply the 3 Questions to each fact.
  - Are there 2 dissimilar ideas converging
  - Is there a double-entendre in this sentence
  - Is there an assumption I can shatter.
- Optional Tools
  - Cliche reformation
  - Analogy

## **Walkthrough**

Once you have the topic and your angle or ideas on how to solve the problems that are related to the topics faces by people the topic affects.

- Flesh out the main points of the topic.



- Due some research to find out any information that relates to solving the problems the people might have.
- Write down the main facts.
- Shape a story that provides an
  - Introduction to the topic
  - 3-4 complications or examples, obstacles people might be facing.
  - Write down possible verbal (he-said/she-said) conversations.
  - Discussion possible solutions for the problem.
  - Give the audience simple techniques or approaches they can practice or walk away with today that might help them to overcome the problem(s) they are facing.
- Wrap up with a possible anecdote or a Callback to a person or situation you were addressing earlier in your presentation.

In this manner you're giving them the full arc of support with some tools they can use or access themselves while keeping the subject humorous which allows them to be more comfortable working through their problem.

**Essentially Humor occurs as a result of trying to convey information, provide instruction, or solve a problem.**

## Examples

**Watch these quick TedX talks and see how they are information focused, with humor being sprinkled throughout.**

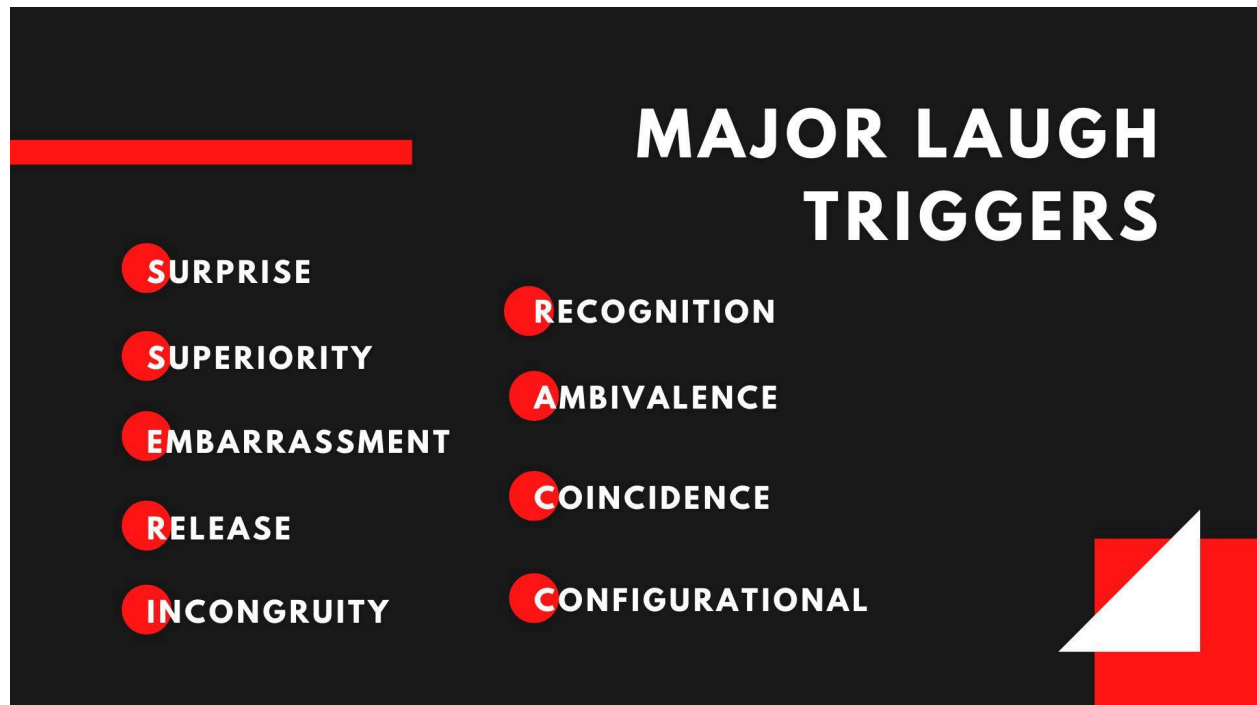
▶ [How to Find Laughter Anywhere | Chris Duffy | TED](#)

▶ [Jennifer Aaker and Naomi Bagdonas: Why great leaders take humor seriously | TED](#)

Therefore, sales is not selling. It's providing information or a solution to solve a problem.



## Understanding What Makes People Laugh:



### Surprise & Coincidence

**Surprise** somebody with what they expect you to say or do or surprise them with the intended meaning of what you're saying. In the business world the bar is a lot lower to create surprise because the expectation for humor is so low.

**Coincidence** is more nostalgic. It's usually based on something we're familiar with.

### Things that create surprise:

- Double-Entendre
- Wordplay
- Irony
- Simple Truth

### Things that create Coincidence:

- Analogies



- Recognizable behaviors

### **Exercise:**

Cliche Reformations