

THE TRANSFORMING FORCE OF THE LAUGHING MEDITATION

by Dhyhan Sutorius, M.D.



INTRODUCTION

Laughter is a very special phenomenon. Unfortunately its (psycho) therapeutic value is underestimated and the incredible transforming force, hidden in laughter, is not used to its full extent. Laughter is a very good anti-stressor and gives a profound relaxation. I like to draw your attention to the laughing meditation, a structured exercise of 15 minutes with 3 stages: 1. stretching all the muscles, 2. laughing (and/or crying or laughing with the tears), 3. silence.

The laughing meditation is no therapy, but it can be - as laughter is so healthy – sometimes very therapeutic! It can be used as adjuvans in all kinds of therapy and also in other situations it can enhance the coping with all of life's woes.

In 1976 I learned from Osho - among other things - this laughing meditation, which I conduct since 1978 at all kinds of medical or other congresses and meetings, sometimes with more than 800 laughers, several times partly broadcasted on radio and television in different countries. In 1985 I founded the CENTRE IN FAVOUR OF LAUGHTER, and since then I conduct also "laughshops" = laughing meditation workshops. Laughter brings you in no time in the moment, in the here and now. It gives a deep relaxation at all levels. The "laughing muscles" are in general rather rigid, but will get better trained if you laugh more often. And every day you will feel : it is easier and easier to do! Meditation can be described as "awareness without thinking" or to be in the NO-MIND. That is possible in many situations when you do something totally with awareness. This can also happen when you are running, dancing, or working in the garden.

INSTRUCTIONS

The laughing meditation is a morning meditation, but it is also possible to do it later, before lunch or dinner. Bladder and stomach should be almost empty. It can be done alone or with "the other" in the mirror, or with any group of participants. Stay all the time in the moment and be total in every second of this short meditation, without forcing.

Allow yourself to laugh without a reason. You may use any reason or situation, which let you laugh and – if you wish, as a third point - use a first class trigger : make a top ten of your favorite problems in such a way, that the heaviest problem you have right now, is your favorite problem number 1, and so on so forth. Suddenly you look at it from a totally different angle and more in perspective with all other things in life. Laughter transforms and makes things lighter. Sometimes I feel it myself as if I dive from the "hell" in my head, into the "paradise" in my belly!



It is better to "laugh with" than to "laugh about" someone or something, placing yourself on the pedestal. To "laugh at" or to "laugh about" is cold and unpleasant, to "laugh with" is warm and accepting. That is why it is so pleasant to laugh with your partner, with children, with friends, with colleagues or with grandma. It is all heart energy!

As laughter and crying are very close, it is possible that in the second stage your laughter suddenly turns into crying. If that happens, enjoy the crying, cry with all your energy from your belly, until the crying finishes by itself, and then start actively laughing again. So you may also laugh with your tears or cry with your laughter.

If you can cry and allow your total being to go into it and dissolve into it, you will have a totally different quality of laughter arising in you. Allow it. . It is beautiful!

Osho

STAGES OF THE LAUGHING MEDITATION

1. Stretching, total stretching (5 minutes)

Use all your energy to stretch your muscles and, if possible, start yawning. While stretching it is good to breathe out, without stretching inhale and continue the stretching breathing out. In the last minute of this first stage stretch your fingers backwards with your other hand and stretch your face muscles - without laughing – by making strange faces, while putting out your tongue in different directions and looking in the eyes of others.

2. Laughing and/or crying (5 minutes)

Smile and slowly, with a relaxed throat, start laughing without any force, until you have a really heartfelt belly laugh. Focus all the time your awareness on what there is for you in the moment, and whatever that is or whatever you feel in that very moment laugh with that. It is more a matter of allowing and of letting go. Let-go is the secret of meditation. Especially in the first minute let it built up slowly, just let it happen. Without forcing at all, just laugh "allegro ma non troppo", without screaming or yelling, only laughing and/or crying. Instead from the throat, relaxed laughing from the belly. Just let bubble your belly, let it be a belly ballet!

If you have an other feeling or emotion, for instance when you get angry, then use the total energy of that other emotion to laugh or to cry with it. In the last minute of this stage close your eyes and continue laughing or crying.

3. Silence (5 minutes)

Suddenly stop laughing and keep your eyes closed. Let your whole body be still without any movements. The slightest movement will change your state of consciousness. Breathe in total silence without controlling the rhythm of your breathing. Just let it happen. Every time when you find yourself thinking, feel a "good bye!" for those thoughts and focus all your awareness on your body, on the contact with Mother Earth and also on the feelings you have in that very moment, whatever you feel, whatever it is, feel a "YES!" to that!

A FEW REMARKS

One remark about the giggles and hysterical laughter (le fou rire, schlapp lachen). Only if you totally, for 100 %, want to stop laughing, then you can. This sudden silence in the third stage of the laughing meditation is the big difference with all the other laughter. Your whole awareness is needed to be totally present in the moment.

THERE IS **NOTHING** TO BE REACHED and respect your limits !

The key of this meditation is always to focus your awareness on what there is for you in that very moment. Whatever it is, stretch, laugh (or cry) with it or be silent!

Laughter has everything to do with ACCEPTANCE: the moment you accept totally the situation, the other(s) or yourself you can laugh. If someone gets some insights in a certain - sometimes difficult - situation, then quite often a roaring laughter emerges from the belly. It is also possible to do this the other way around: starting with laughter, and the insights follow as shadows!

When you have a heartfelt belly laugh, all parts of your being - the physiological, the psychological, the spiritual - they all vibrate in one single tune, they all vibrate in harmony!

Osho

SOME RESPONSES OF PARTICIPANTS

Some responses of participants after having done a laughing meditation: a deep relaxation / a feeling of being "whole" / a feeling of being unburdened / a feeling of peace / the pain is gone or the pain is less / I feel my tears or I feel sad / I feel as if I took a shower inside myself / a feeling of ACCEPTANCE: a huge "YES" for what there is NOW, what I have NOW, for what I am NOW!

CHRONIC PAIN PATIENTS

With Dr. Wouter van der Schaar, a medical psychologist from the University of Amsterdam, I did in 1985 a research about the effects of this laughing meditation done



by chronic pain patients, who could do this, after 3 weeks having done a daily laughing meditation, they felt in general better, they laughed more during the day, (their laughing muscles were more trained), the pain was often less, sometimes not, but they could always handle their pain better. So in the process of accepting they were more advanced.

Also people with high-pitch voices will get a voice coming more from a natural level. Speaking, singing, crying and laughing come from the same centre in your belly. When a child falls on the floor, anyone can hear if the crying comes straight from the centre in the belly or a little bit higher, a little bit harder to let know the parents or the caretaker to give a hand to help. Also with laughter, you can hear if the laughter is forced, if the laughter is harder than the person feels it. The sound or the timbre of the laughter or the crying reveals clearly if it is forced or not.

SUGGESTIONS

Postpone your opinion about the effects of the laughing meditation on yourself until you have done this every day for at least 3 weeks (or even better 6 weeks). And every day as if it is for the very first time, be open to something new. To me - even after many laughing meditations - it is every time new, fresh and mind-blowing!

Make your own LAUGHING MEDITATION DIARY: before and after the meditation it is good to find one or two words, which are the closest to the feelings you have in that moment. And if no words are coming up then perhaps you see – with closed eyes - an image or a picture, that shows your feelings of that moment the best, keep that in mind.

After the laughing meditation you can write down those words or images or pictures and also - as a personal sharing or feedback - how the laughing meditation was that time. Do it the next day again as if you have never done it before, and so on so forth. After several weeks you will have a very interesting laughing meditation diary.

I can recommend this laughing meditation at all kinds of congresses or meetings, or at work just in the first 15 minutes of the lunchbreak, only for those who want to do this. It is a first class energizer.

As you have noticed, I am very fascinated by this phenomenon of laughter and I like to collect as many different experiences with laughter. If you like to share with me your experiences with laughter in general and with the laughing meditation in particular, I invite you to write this down and to send it to me in a letter, I wish you many good laughs,

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In 1985 he founded in Duivendrecht (NL) the CENTRE IN FAVOUR OF LAUGHTER and is still conducting "LAUGHSHOPS " = LAUGHING MEDITATIONS WORKSHOPS for different groups and companies. When people can laugh together, they can better work together!

