

Do Clowns Know More Than They Are Letting On?

Contributed by Tony Robinson
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The original clowns at hospitals were called Shriner clowns. They would hang out at hospitals at the pediatric wards cheering up the sick children. Beyond that you will often find them in pictures on the walls of doctors, dentists, and often around hospitals. It has positive effects on most small children. Extensive study of laughter as therapy has revealed a lot more in this area.

The study focused on the Shriners's Children's Hospitals, and stretches back 75 years in the days when polio was a large problem among the children of the US. The effects the clown had on the lives of these extended care patients, was amazing. The clowns must have been onto something, as they really made a difference. Within the laughter, the cells that were needed to fight tumors would be on the increase in their bodies. Laughter and the pleasure that comes from it can have a positive effect on T-cells as well as B antibodies that work to reduce tumors and viruses.

Hormones that flourish under stress also hold the immune system back. One of the best medicines found to help since the beginning of time, and unlike many other "drugs", it's by choice, and doesn't necessarily require a trip to anywhere to get it. Its own choice. This drug is LAUGHTER! The Shriner clowns helped to bring it to the pediatric wards as well. Without negative side effects, laughter is a great winning situation.

There was a study done on children who were to undergo painful procedures, or suffering from anxiety as a result of expecting it. They were divided into 2 groups, and asked to submerge their arms in cold water for as long as they could. One of the 2 groups was watching funny videos and the other wasn't. In the end, the ones that got to watch the videos were able to better tolerate the cold water than the group that did not. This determined that among other positive effects of the laughter, it made it easier to forget about aches and pain, and make it seem less. Maybe the clowns were really onto something;

Many studies have focused on measuring the impact of imagination on our ability to reduce the effects of pain. Imagining funny images and visualizing the comedy that results can make us less likely to feel pain. It would be a bit harder though to get adults to apply the same positive results, though not impossible. We all can learn a lot from children. They have vivid imaginations, and real life clowns have had a direct effect on that. The sick child in the hospital room with a real live clown brings laughter and joy that all present can enjoy. And from other aspects of study, it more or less would be helpful like a trip to the park or gym.

The upper part of the body catches exercise from laughter for one thing. It also stimulates the little ones brains. There's no language barrier between children and clowns. They speak in laughter which even gets the heart laughing. The Shriner's clown is a special person that gives their time and energy to brighten the sick child's day. I'm sure in the end; the clown gets his reward as well inside.

The efforts of the clown no doubt bring them many smiles and laughter. This must be priceless to them. Again and again, the thought occurs, "the clowns were on to something". They take us back to happier moments, as we always put clowns in good times in our memories. Bringing the clowns and children together was great as it helps the child be at ease with their surroundings, and comfortable with them. You find clowns in rodeos, dentist offices, doctor's offices, circuses, hospitals, etc. They come in many sizes, shapes, sad faces, happy faces, and funny faces. Imagine what children think when they see the wide variety of clowns in their life. With their imagination working, they will ask many questions and often find happier answers. Things like "Why is the clown crying?," "Have the other clowns abandoned them?," or on a more positive note, "Why is he real happy?," or "Why is he making that hilarious face?" Now you know;