

**Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur**

**National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL)**

**Course Title  
Enhancing Soft Skills And Personality**

**Lecture - 26  
Significance of Humour in Communication**

**by...  
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Hello everyone welcome back to my course on enhancing soft skills and personality I am Ravichandran giving you this course from NPTEL at IIT Kanpur this is the sixth week and the first unit of sixth week and on the whole this is lesson number 26 now at this point I thought.


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I should introduce to you a very interesting topic and a very relevant one and a very beneficial one that is significance of humor in communication so in this unit in this module that begins with

the lecture on the significance of humor so we will look at like why humor and what are the benefits and how effectively can be used humour in communication and before we start.

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**Highlights OF THE LAST LESSON**

□ In the last lesson, you checked your score for 20 commonly confused words and learnt about the correct usage for 30 more words.

✓ To improve your English further, I gave you two web-links:

<http://www.dailywritingtips.com/>

<https://www.englishpractice.com/topics/common-mistakes/>

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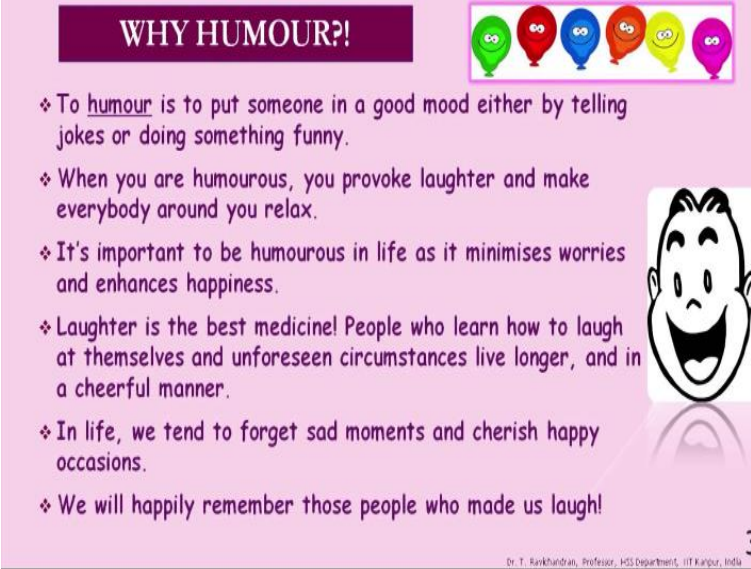
I just wanted to let you know what we did in the last lecture highlights of the last lesson in the last lesson you checked your score for 20 commonly confused words and then learnt about the correct usage for 30 more words okay but the most important of all I concluded by motivating you to continue crying more and more sentences learn more rules break them commit mistakes and then learn from the mistakes in order to improve your English.

Further I gave you two web links one on daily writing tips the other one on English practice I hope you are making a regular visit to these sites and I hope some of you have subscribed to daily writing tips because they will email you if you have subscribed each day at least one confused misused pair of words or sometimes they will email you about grammar tips which will help you develop your communication in terms of English language skills in a very effective manner.

So as I said I can always show you some paths as it is said in the English proverb you can take a horse to the water but you cannot make it drink so the thirst is something that I can create but it is up to you to continue in that path and develop and enhance your skills further now in this unit as you are progressing in your soft skills as you are progressing and developing your communication.

A very important component about making your communication effective is adding humor in your communication now let us see why it is important and why you should add that first of all humor if you are putting somebody to laughter to humor simply means to put someone in good mood either by telling jokes or doing something funny.

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### WHY HUMOUR?!

- ❖ To humour is to put someone in a good mood either by telling jokes or doing something funny.
- ❖ When you are humorous, you provoke laughter and make everybody around you relax.
- ❖ It's important to be humorous in life as it minimises worries and enhances happiness.
- ❖ Laughter is the best medicine! People who learn how to laugh at themselves and unforeseen circumstances live longer, and in a cheerful manner.
- ❖ In life, we tend to forget sad moments and cherish happy occasions.
- ❖ We will happily remember those people who made us laugh!

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So maybe you use a word play or you share a very interesting and funny anecdote but then you are humorous you provide laughter at least you make them feel amused about something that you said or something that you do now when you are humorous you provoke laughter and make everybody around you relax so you try to reduce the tension and then you make people around you relax why humor it is important to be humorous in life.

As it minimizes worries and enhances happiness people who love actually live longer and there is some truth in this proverb a statement that laughter is the best medicine so whatever problems that you have in life so one of the best remedies is to love people who learn how to laugh at themselves and unforeseen circumstances live longer what does it mean so those who are able to laugh at themselves instead of taking you very seriously.

If you can see you as a funny person as a person who is available for likely to commit errors or prone to mistakes and then if you learn how to laugh at those mistakes you actually live longer and especially if you are able to love it unforeseen circumstances which normally causes stress but if you are able to love it even those situations thinking that they are temporary and they will leave you so on.

And putting a very worried face is not going to help you much so that we make you live longer and especially in a very cheerful manner in life if you look at our own emotions we tend to forget sad moments but we would like to cherish happy occasions so if you look at the people who made you sad and the people who made you happy you will always try to forget those people who made you add those people who made you cry okay.

And even if it comes to your memory you would like to push it behind you would like to suppress it you do not want to recall those sad moments in your life but we will always happily remember those people who made us love and then sometimes even the thought of looking back at some of the jokes that those people cracked will also make us laugh and will always change of a mood.

So why humor because overall it tries to spread positivity it tries to bring the best inhuman beings both in you as well as in the other person remember we talked about emotional intelligence humor your ability to cause humor your ability to assist what makes people laugh what makes people relax and say it at the appropriate time it is part of your emotional intelligence it represents your EQ so people who actually try to crack good jokes and then make appropriate humor and then make it very effective generally are seen as geeky people and it is



also true it looks like the comedian is in place or the Joker's in circus usually they make lot of jokes.

And all that but most of the time these are the people who are most intelligent and then because of their intelligence they are able to cover up their intelligence and then they are able to evoke laughter in others can we use humor as a communication strategy yes of course because of people who excel ineffective communication they have learnt the art of using humor very effectively in their communication whether it is in terms of enacting place or in terms of dealing with people.

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### HUMOUR AS A COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

- ❖ Humour can be used as a very effective communication strategy.
- ❖ Great playwrights like Shakespeare used appropriate humour to intensify the emotional content of their plays.
- ❖ In Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, humour is used in incongruous situations like the time when the ghost appears or when the grave diggers dig the grave for the innocent Ophelia.
- ❖ When humour is mixed at horrifying and tragic moments, it makes the pain bearable. (But be serious, when you have to be serious!)
- ❖ Similarly, jokes and humorous anecdotes can break monotony in communication.
- ❖ Dry lectures can be spiced up by use of relevant humour.
- ❖ I always remember my grammar teacher who made the classes interesting by sprinkling them with humour.



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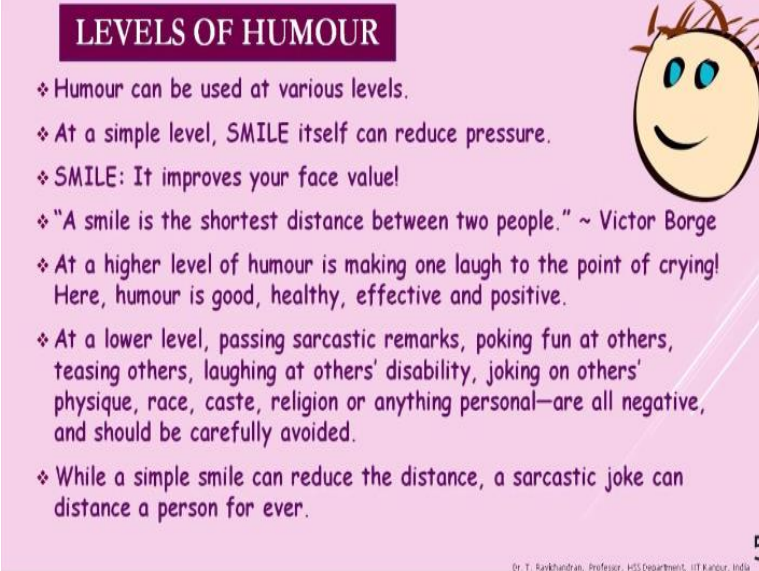
In workplace wherever you see so people who have understood the effective use of humor have always been successfully great play writer like Shakespeare used appropriate humor to intensify the emotional content of the place particularly in Shakespeare's Hamlet which is supposed to be a very tragic play even in such a tragic play Shakespeare uses humor in very incongruous situations incongruous like seemingly contradictory because they are very tragic moments and then Shakespeare introduces humor or very horrifying occasions and then he brings in humor suddenly.

So even in incongruous situations like the time and the ghost appears more when the gravediggers dig the grave for the innocent Ophelia so Ophelia is a very innocent woman but she is killed because of another tragic situation her love for Hamlet and then Hamlet appears to have become mad and then that worries her and then she dies now at the time of digging the grave they are making jokes now why even Shakespeare is using this if you look at it very strategically humor is mixed at horrifying and tragic moments.

In place like this to make the pain bearable if you keep on adding to the pain so it becomes totally unbearable and the people with light heart may become hot broken and then they may even die of increased blood pressure and all that so they make the situation very intense in terms of seriousness but at the same time these play wrights also break it by introducing humor similarly jokes and humorous anecdotes can break monotony in communication so very eminent speakers effective teachers what they do is when the lectures become very boring sometimes dry so they try to spice up the lectures by bringing in relevant humor.

I always remember my grammar teacher so who made the classes glamorous they vary scintillating by sprinkling the classes with lot of humor and most of the humorous relevant in terms of the sentence that he was giving instead of making the sentence very boring and monotonous he was giving us very funny sentences the way we have analyzed to discuss were also very humorous so we remember the rules and at the same time we enjoyed the class which any normal teachers would have made it very boring so humor can be used.

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**LEVELS OF HUMOUR**

- ❖ Humour can be used at various levels.
- ❖ At a simple level, SMILE itself can reduce pressure.
- ❖ SMILE: It improves your face value!
- ❖ "A smile is the shortest distance between two people." ~ Victor Borge
- ❖ At a higher level of humour is making one laugh to the point of crying! Here, humour is good, healthy, effective and positive.
- ❖ At a lower level, passing sarcastic remarks, poking fun at others, teasing others, laughing at others' disability, joking on others' physique, race, caste, religion or anything personal—are all negative, and should be carefully avoided.
- ❖ While a simple smile can reduce the distance, a sarcastic joke can distance a person for ever.

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As a very effective communication but at the same time you should be cautious there are at least three basic level in which you can use humor at a very simple level smile can reduce pressure so as they say when you smile they say smile it improves your face value so when you smile actually there are so many muscle on your face so they get relaxed and look at the code from vector bore it is it a smile is the shortest distance between two people.

So even strangers even unknown people or even people who have some kind of misunderstanding is gentle spine before starting the conversation can actually reduce the distance so smile is there always at the simple level at a higher level making one loss to the point of crying making one drawer in laughter giving them belly laughter now when you are able to do that as when you watch the comedies cartoons okay bye very eminent comedians like Charlie Chaplin Laurel and Hardy so you always like roaring laughter so you get that belly laughter and sometimes to the point of view and crying now when you do that humor is good its healthy it is effective and positive.

And this is the kind of humor that I want you to develop something that is he will be something that is good something that is effective and achieve some kind of positive results but at a lower level again you can use humor but that amounts to passing sarcastic remarks poking fun on others teasing others laughing at others disability joking on others physics such as somebody is so fat or so thin or like in terms of becoming taller or shorter.

So depending on the person physic the body structure making fun of it or making fun of the race cause religion or anything personal or all negative and should be carefully avoided so when you start using humor in communication be aware of these pitfalls beware of this big falls because when you use a smile as it was said before it can reduce the distance but a sarcastic joke can distance a person forever you think that it is funny and then you make fun of a person before others.

And that person feels that you have lost respect for that particular person and the person never talks to you after that so if precious life may be lost okay precious the relationship maybe lost just because you try to joke on the person at a very inappropriate manner at a very low level so the point that you should focus so simple smile so if you can go with us might make people smile.

Let us at that simple level at a higher level make them loss but never go to the lower level where you are actually trying to humiliate people and make people regret you may be the only person laughing or some very other perverted group of people may join you and laugh at somebody but making somebody this butt of ridicule is not healthy.




So that kind of human should be avoided know if you ask me the question can I develop humor the interesting answer is this we need not develop humor as it is something that we are bonded it is something like our birthright so we are all born with sense of humor we all have refined taste for humor look at the newly born child it uses smile ok and how contagious that smile is when we see that so we feel something in us getting invigorated.



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**DEVELOPING HUMOUR?**

- ❖ We need not develop humour as it is something that we are born with!
- ❖ The new born child uses smile, laughter to show appreciation, liking, comfort, warmth, etc.
- ❖ We all have an innate taste for humour.
- ❖ But as we grow up, we become morons due to work pressure.
- ❖ It's important to associate with people who are humorous.
- ❖ Watching cartoons, comic programmes regularly and sharing interesting anecdotes can help in developing humour.
- ❖ Laughing before sleeping gives one a peaceful sleep!



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So we feel the freshness of life and what is the baby doing the baby is smiling or laughing to show appreciation to show liking to show comfort to express warmth so all positive emotions the baby tries to show by just by smiling even you will see this baby smiling while they were sleeping so that is another sign that they are very comfortable they are happy and then they are even in the Lee Porter dreams they are getting so that actually keeps them very happy so that only proves that we all have unique taste for humor it is inherent in us.

So only we need to invoke a tree walk why because as we grow up as we get the stress in terms of adulthood life and then slowly we grow we make sure we get into work pressure as we start getting stressed for time managing time trying to make this both in need so we sort of become like morons very dull witted and as if we never lost our face becomes very serious and then buried and then it sort of ripples people who would like to be cheerful otherwise.

So how can you develop humor in case you have lost this sense because of work pressure and all that so try to associate with people who are humorous try to meet them once in a while if possible once in a day during a coffee break so I have some jokes and then let it be very

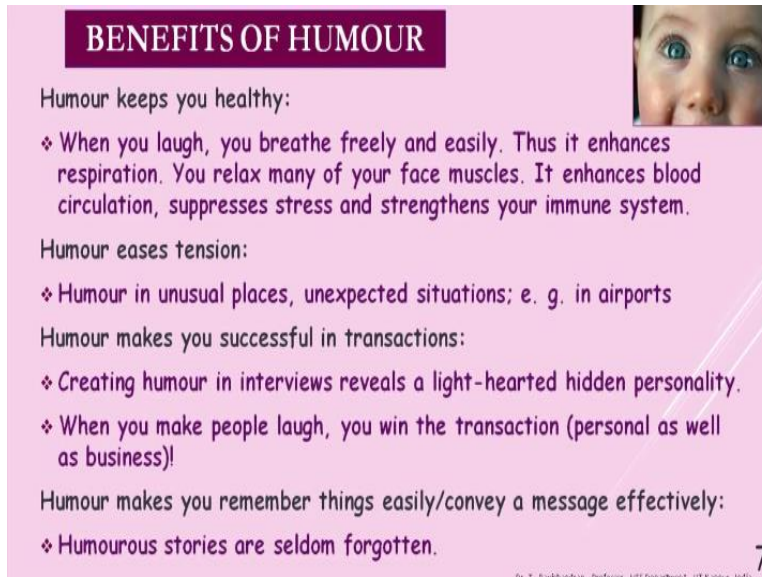
beneficial kind of joke with no malignity involved in it jokes not in terms of gossiping or passing negative remarks on somebody but then there are lot of things that we can love it admiring life.

So that kind of humor if you are able to share it with your colleagues and if you are able to find colleagues or friends with whom at least once in a while you can go and then touch base and then make each other laugh so that will be very nice in a day apart from that there are people who keep the sense of humor by watching cartoons or comic programs so even like stand up comedies on the TV so they watch it and then what they do is they share some interesting anecdotes from what they watched they share it with your friends.

So that also Heights you develop your humor especially if it has become dormant in you the other good thing that even doctors suggest is if you are able to watch some kind of comic program or listen to something or even talk to people and then if you can wholeheartedly before you sleep you get a very peaceful sleep so try to do that so it will give you a very relaxed kind of sleep you will get up in a very refresh to move and then you will be having all the strength.

And then determination to complete the painting activities very quickly and take up new challenges and then again like make it a positive cycle so again before going to bed 15 minutes of an hour just listen or watch or being part of discussion with people where you can actually love give that whole hearted loss what are the benefits now it best reputation to note that humor keeps you healthy so like laughter is the best medicine and when you laugh what happens is you breathe freely and easily.

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## BENEFITS OF HUMOUR

Humour keeps you healthy:

- ❖ When you laugh, you breathe freely and easily. Thus it enhances respiration. You relax many of your face muscles. It enhances blood circulation, suppresses stress and strengthens your immune system.

Humour eases tension:

- ❖ Humour in unusual places, unexpected situations; e. g. in airports

Humour makes you successful in transactions:

- ❖ Creating humour in interviews reveals a light-hearted hidden personality.
- ❖ When you make people laugh, you win the transaction (personal as well as business)!

Humour makes you remember things easily/convey a message effectively:

- ❖ Humorous stories are seldom forgotten.

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So thus laughter will enhance respiration and as I said you relax many of your face muscles. Loss of laughter enhances blood circulation so when blood circulation is there normally you will feel very active and it will automatically suppress stress and overall it strengthens your immune system. Humor is also kind of each extension wherever there is tension and if you are able to find somebody cracking a joke or doing something to ease the tension.

So you will actually lose the seriousness sometimes humor occurs in unusual places unexpected situations. I remember a very interesting occasion when I was traveling somewhere in the US it was a very cold wintry morning and it is a very early flight and the airport itself was too cold and people also were feeling the cold and flights were getting canceled. People are worried about these now outside and that was a very grim situation flights continuously getting rescheduled or delayed or cancelled.

So I was bit concerned about my flight whether I will be able to take it because I am taking it from one end I am going to the other end so in that seriousness like I was just walking and then I am supposed to reach the security check soon the path towards security check another officer

was coming and it was a narrow path so I thought that I should give him way so I just moved this side so spontaneously.

He also moved this side so then I moved this side so he also moved this side so the next time I started making a moment this side so he immediately said shall we dance the moment he said shall be done so I just lost and then I stopped I said so I think you should go first and then he went now I did not expect that he will say this at that moment and I my mind was so preoccupied with catching that flight and hoping that the flight will not get delayed.

Now I got into the flight again the people inside the airhostess for example one of them so she was also very humorous see around the flight was early in the morning around 7o clock and people were drowsy and as I said very serious and very concerned about the flight schedule and you find people lightening that kind of seriousness by cracking appropriate timely jokes.

So in the US so you have some flights in which you just go and occupy your see as per your preference so no seats will be allotted to you so I was boarding one such flight and then I was into it and I could see in the French side so much crowd and people are just crowding there and then trying to occupy the one on the French side and then the air hostess on the rear side she just remarked.

She has made an announcement she said that the flight will land first on the rear side so I request all the passengers to occupy some seats on the rear side also the we said it that the flight lands first on the rear side so everybody lost now obviously like that sort of reduce the tension in which people are looking for the seats in the front and many move towards the other side and then occupied the seeds but that thought that to reduce the seriousness reduce this tension or friction that is happening that can be effectively reduced by using humor, humor makes you successful in transactions business transaction personal transactions.

So any kind of communication when you are involved in one-to-one communication one-to-many communication in interviews I spend quite some time in the previous course videos on interviews so if you watch some of them I have give a lot of emphasis on your ability to make

the situation light-hearted by cracking jokes are creating humor in interviews why if you are able to create some kind of humor if you can make the people loss.

So they will try to see one kind of light-hearted personality that is otherwise hidden so your looks you area very high achiever and you are very studious in your studies and all that it looks like you are a very serious person but then very appropriate humor and a timely one that makes the panel members smile or loss so that actually will kind of renew the seat that you are trying for when you make people love you actually win the transaction whether it is personal or it is business.

So that that is a key to success in communication mostly whether even if you are bargaining for something in the market if you can make the other person loss or if you can make the other person smile so you, you are you are actually winning the heart of the other person and you are taking the person to your site and then you are making the person reduce the price or do some favor because you are actually made the person happy so you will win the transaction.

Whether impersonal or in business one in personal like I do not know how far it is true but they generally say that people who like each other whether as business partners or as marital partners the initial relationship is set it is decided determined by the level in which they made each other happy by telling jokes by setting the frequency level in which they understood each other that they can make the other person happy and comfortable by cracking jokes by laughing at situations together.

So that is why if you are able to make the other person loss you win the game you win the transaction now when I say this so you should not make deliberate attempts to make the other person laughs and then, then they may feel that you are trying to do something fraudulent it has to be very natural and spontaneous also try to use humor in order to make a point in order to give a message because humor if you think about the situation that you have come across humor makes you remember things easily and humor can convey a message effectively.

I have never forgotten any humorous stories that were told to me from childhood and when I look back I always remember that these things I remember because I laughed that these stories and then I told other people also these stories and made them loss i am going to conclude this lecture which one interesting story small anecdote I enjoyed hearing again and again and I share it with my students and friends.

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So this is about the Indian frog some of you might have heard this in different versions like Indian crafts and all that but I like the title Indian frog which actually talks about the Indian mindset but before I come to the message what is the story the story is about one teacher who wanted to conduct some experiments especially the teacher being a biology teacher so he needed some frogs for conducting this are dissecting them and then identifying some body parts so he wanted to give some frogs to the students for conducting that experiment.

So he came to know that there is a local vendor who has a huge storage and there he can give any number of frogs so when he called him up and asked him whether he can give him some 300 frogs for the entire batch of students so the vendor told him that yeah I can give but what kind of frocks you want do you want the American frogs the Chinese stocks or the Indian frogs and then

he went on talking about so many types of rocks the teacher was obviously confused and then the teachers asked him in great puzzle yes I never thought that frogs will have various types.

I just thought frogs or frogs to which the vendor said why not you come to my storage place and then take a quick look at them and decide for yourself so out of curiosity the teacher went to that go down in which here the stored all of them so they are getting a huge containers and outside the label was written as American frog Chinese sauce and Dean frog now there was a strange thing that the teacher noted on the top of the American frog the container was healed and sealed with two lids and Chinese frog also sealed with two lids when it came to Indian frog the top pot was just opened and the bottom pot was sealed twice.

Now this again puzzled the teacher and then the teacher asked the vendor so what is the difference they all look like frogs and then the person said that they are all very active and there are some differences so he said that can you tell me why you have put this lid on the top and then you have covered them especially this American frog and Chinese frog and almost many other frogs you have put this lid on the top and you have covered them very tightly to which the vendor said oh these American frog sand Chinese frogs you know they are very active so they keep on jumping.

So in order to prevent them so we have put these all on the top and we have sealed it so much so that they don't jump out we just send them some oxygen through some small holes inside but otherwise we do not let them jump out again the teacher surprised he asked what about the Indian frogs or if they are acting like the American socks in Chinese rocks the vendor said yes of course they are very active.

So will not they jump but of course they will jump then how come you have kept the top portion completely open so will not they jump out to which the vendor replied he said that don't you know about the Indian frogs what you know if one frog jumps the other frog will pull it down so once Rob jumps the other will pull it down so there is no way this rocks will jump out so because of this mentality what we have done is we have put two leads at the bottom.

And then we have seen the bottom so tight so that they should not break the bottom and come out there is so much pressure at the bottom so this is a very interesting story so like I have been told by my teachers and then told that you should not have this Indian mindset Indian mentality when one person wants to come up in its life like for example even by developing language fluency even by developing communication.

You should not make fun you should not pull the person down so to illustrate this the teacher told us this story and then till date I remember this and I share it with my students the reason is the humor that was involved the way it was narrated and interestingly if you look at it the top most part of the other shocks they are sealed whereas in the Indian stocks case it is the bottom part that is sealed and the top is kept open and like if they jump they pull them down.

So just to indicate that you should not be like that person and I hope that in case occasionally you start doing it and then keep this story in mind do not become this typical Indian frog so change that mindset commode upset help somebody to grow in his or her life let me conclude this lecture with two interesting quotes from two eminent writers one is because be both are talking about humor so this is what Bill Cosby has to say about humor he says that true humor you can soften some of the worst blows that life delivers.

And once you find laughter no matter how painful your situation might be you and survived so what he means to say life sometimes gives you the worst to blow you whether you like it or not get caught into a very tragic traumatic situation in your life but then if you are able to find some humorous situation if you are able to make yourself humorous if you are able to encircle yourself in light ha turning moments.

He says that no matter how painful your situation might be you can survive it will reduce it will elevate the pain and then Charles Dickens a very famous novelist he also say something similar but how it can be a very positive force in influencing and changing others he says there is nothing in the world so is resistive Lee contagious as laughter and good-humors so contagious something that can spread so quickly as laughter and good-humour I do not know whether you



have seen people undergoing laughter therapy there are laughter session so you see them sometimes in parts people sitting together.

And then just literally laughing out loud and even if one person is very serious looking at other people laughing automatically it induces laughter even in the serious person so literally and figuratively also it is very contagious and then it can spread laughter and then it can spread good humour and that is so irresistible so you, you cannot actually stop laughing after some time.

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So there are even games in which people say that if you make this person lose so you will win this and even people who try hard they will not be able to stop laughing beyond the point so with this positive thought let me conclude this with one interesting reference to your online source there is something called humor project com so you should go to this one and then there are interesting anecdotes you can also join you can share your interesting anecdotes we can get subscribed to some of the sessions.

And then you can get a lot of materials related to humor but the purpose of this project is to spread this and then spread happiness through humor so join that and then start gaining your

share of humor and then gain positivity by gaining and sharing so with this thought let me conclude this lecture thank you so much for watching this video I will come back with the next lesson on how we can use humor in other situations especially in business and working environment thanks again.

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