

**Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur**

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

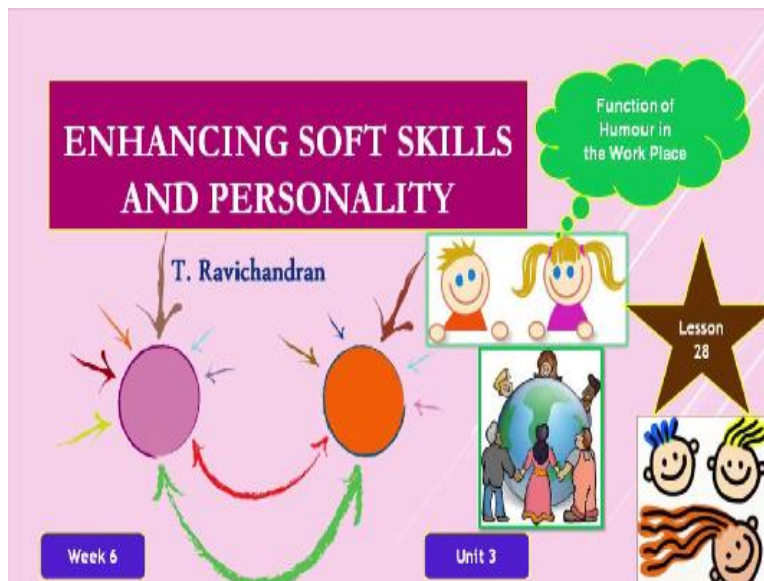
**Course Title  
Enhancing Soft Skills And Personality**

**Lecture - 28  
Function of Humour in the Work Place**

**by...  
Prof. T. Ravichandran  
Dept. of Humanities and Social Sciences**

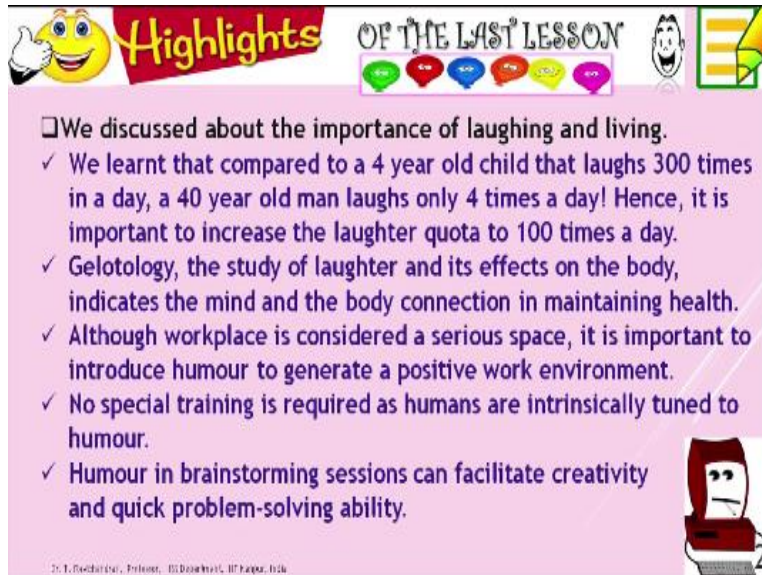
Hello hi welcome back to my course on enhancing soft skills and personality we are in the module on humor and this is the sixth week and the third unit and on the whole this is lesson number 28.

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In this unit we look at the function of humors in workplace. So in the last lesson I started discussing about the importance of laughing and living and making laughter as a part and parcel of our life and then introducing that in the work environment.

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**Highlights** OF THE LAST LESSON

- We discussed about the importance of laughing and living.
- ✓ We learnt that compared to a 4 year old child that laughs 300 times in a day, a 40 year old man laughs only 4 times a day! Hence, it is important to increase the laughter quota to 100 times a day.
- ✓ Gelotology, the study of laughter and its effects on the body, indicates the mind and the body connection in maintaining health.
- ✓ Although workplace is considered a serious space, it is important to introduce humour to generate a positive work environment.
- ✓ No special training is required as humans are intrinsically tuned to humour.
- ✓ Humour in brainstorming sessions can facilitate creativity and quick problem-solving ability.

Dr. B. Venkatesh, Professor, IISD, Bangalore, HP, Bangalore, India

So in the previous lesson we learnt that compared to a four-year-old child that laughs for about 300 times average on a day a 40 year old man lost only four times a day. Now what is this diminishing thing that happened so one reason that I would like to attribute for this diminishing amount of laughter is the kind of seriousness that the work environment has inculcated in us and then that has made us forget something that is so genuine and spontaneous in human beings that is laughter.

So as it was pointed out by the researcher the author who made this interesting information, so she says it is important to increase the laughter quota to 100 times a day so as to maintain our body in rhythm and minimize things like heart attack or stroke. So that it burned some calories and then it gives some kind of effect that you have after exercise just like jogging in this context I introduced to you the term Gelotology.

So which indicates the study of laughter and its effects on the body what it indicates is actually the kind of connection between mind and body in terms of maintaining health. So they try to study how laughter is connecting both and in terms of workplace also workplace is considered a

very serious kind of place, some people consider that even as a torture chamber it is important to introduce humor to generate a positive work environment.



However, no special training is required as humans are intrinsically tuned to humour. And then I concluded the last lesson by pointing out to you that researchers indicate that humour in brainstorming sessions can facilitate creativity and quick problem-solving ability. This was indicated by researchers that focused on making people watch comedy cartoons and then make people watch tragedy or very horrifying movies.

And the one who watched light-hearted funny movies gave out the best kind of results okay. So keeping that in mind let us see how we can introduce humour in workplace and what is the function of humour in workplace. As I said in workplace I mean anything whether it is a corporate office or it is a small business office or some workplace that you have created at home.

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**FUNCTION OF HUMOUR IN THE WORKPLACE**

- ❖ In the workplaces, apart from problem solving, humour can: remove conflicts and minimise stress, increase productivity and connect people.
- ❖ Humour creates warmth and destroys coldness.
- ❖ Humour helps one become popular, gain more friends, and retain one's job despite untold difficulties.
- ❖ People who lack a good sense of humour often quit jobs frequently and get depressed about it eventually.



Dr. T. Prakash Rao, Professor, I-MS Department, IIT Kharagpur, India

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The place where you sit again for your bread and butter and where your focus and your serious, it is in that place I said it can help in problem-solving but apart from problems solving humor can remove conflicts and minimize stress. So very often conflicts if you can make people who are

conflicted with each other if you can put things in a light-hearted manner if you can make them laugh. So you can make them compromise or reconcile with each other easily and those humour also helps one minimize stress, it increases productivity, because people who are happy they work better and it hides one faster connectivity with each other it connects people it strengthens the binding with each other.

Humor overall creates warmth is very germane feeling and it destroys coldness. So in fact humour is used to break ice. So somebody with whom you think that you can never talk maybe you were senior or maybe somebody who is looking very serious but a kind of light-hearted environment generated using humor can cut through this kind of ice. Humour whether it is work environment or personal life can help one become popular.

Often I said people gravitate towards the one with good sense of humour and who is able to make people laugh. It also helps one gain more friends and retain one's job despite untold difficulties. So today there are no job without any kind of difficulty so jobs are meant for facing difficulties and overcoming them. But if one possesses a very good sense of humor so one will be able to overcome any kind of difficulties in job people conversely.

Especially the ones who lack a good sense of humor often quit jobs frequently and get depressed about it eventually. So many studies indicate that it is because people are not able to look at the funny aspect of life once this famous cartoonist art collection was interviewed and then he was asked like how is he getting his ideas themes, he says just he watches through his windows and then just keeps watching people moving here and there.

And then he finds something funny in each and everybody who is moving so he says everybody can be made a caricature, everybody has something funny, every life is something humorous and it is different on the perspective. So he was saying that I am just trying to give the perspective as a cartoonist I am just giving the comical aspect of life. Now if a person is able to see this comical aspect of life by himself or herself, then there is no difficulty in job and there is no need to quit a job.


It is only when your mind is completely stifled and suffocated and you are not able to see this light-hearted part in any job then you tend to quit. So and then the quitter or continuous quitters it is not like they quit only one job and the people who stick to it they stick to it once they get a job. So that again amongst to the way you look at life on the way you perceive life especially from this point of view of humour.

And then in that sense it is very important that you try to nurture a playful attitude you just take life itself as a game and when you nurture a playful attitude towards your work as if you are achieving more and more just for fun.

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**FUNCTION OF HUMOUR IN THE WORKPLACE**

- ❖ When you nurture a playful attitude towards your work, as if you are achieving more and more just for fun, the enormity of the work will not overwhelm you.
- ❖ When you begin a meeting or a presentation with a joke, it makes the audience relate to you easily.
- ❖ As you keep adding your humour to your workplace, your rigidity of thoughts and ideas will soon disappear and you will become adaptable, flexible, spontaneous, open and confident.
- ❖ As you open up to new ideas and challenges, you will become optimistic and help the people around you to perform better.



Dr. T. Perikumar, Professor, IIT Guwahati, T. Gupta, IIT

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The enormity of the work will not overwhelm you what do I mean by this if you see small kids playing video games whatever game it is they want to score more points they want to go to one level after another level and they want to appear as the person who has achieved the maximum compared to his friends. Now if you can have this kind of approach towards your work a playful approach.

As if you are in a video game and then you are playing so these targets which are given to you need to work on this target achieve these targets. But not as a very serious thing to do as a monotonous task to undertake, but just as a game and you are you are just doing it just for the fun of it then the enormity of the work will not overwhelm you then you will not even postpone things.

Then you will find some driving you that will get addicted to completing one task after another when you develop this playful attitude towards spoke. And the same thing goes in terms of giving a presentation or beginning of meeting in work humor can function very effectively if you begin to the joke or if you try to start with a kind of humorous anecdote that will actually make the audience relate to you very easily.

So usually the audience come with the thinking that oh! It is a very serious talk what kind of serious thought is going to share with us. So I should be prepared, I should set my mindset in a very serious manner and suddenly you crack a joke, so they relaxed. And at the same time they relate they realize that oh! This is not going to be that tough because this is a person who knows the light-hearted aspect of life and we can be friendly with this person.

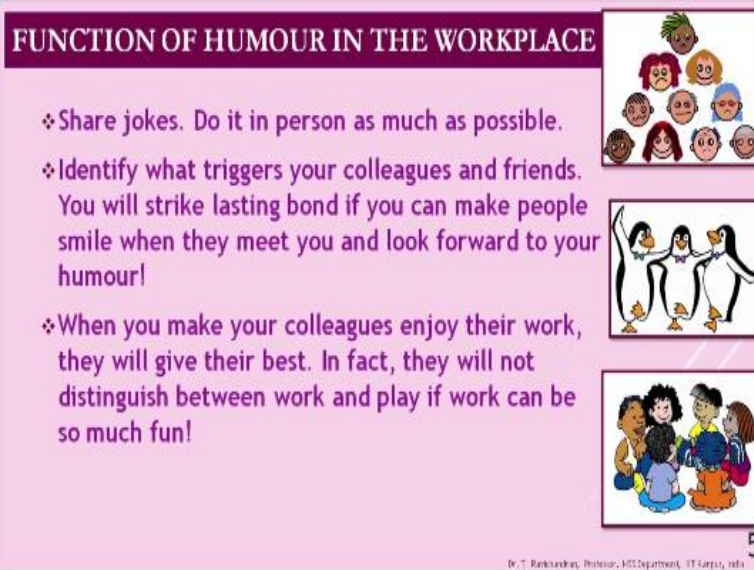
So that is how you actually try to kill any kind of animosity among the audience when you start with this light-hearted way of introducing a joke or an anecdote. And slowly what happens as you keep adding your workplace with human whether in meetings whether in presentations whether in talking to people your rigidity of thoughts and ideas. So will soon disappear okay their fixed mindset will change into growth mindset.

You will become adaptable, flexible, spontaneous open and confident. So all things are generated because you started introducing laughter in your workplace and slowly gradually you realize that it is also making some kind of positive effect in you on the people around you. As you open up to new ideas and challenges you will become optimistic. In fact there are many studies to indicate that the people who laugh they are by nature optimistic.

And it is the ones who are pessimistic and negative minded they hesitate to laugh or they hesitate to treat themselves with good sense of humour. So when you open up you will also become optimistic and help the people around you to perform better. So in this process what you should do to use humour in place you should share jokes. So whatever jokes you collect whether the one you read from some magazines, something that you heard on radio or watched from some TV channel are a funny incident that happened in your life.

So share it and try to do that in person as much as possible. So that will again generate connectivity.

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**FUNCTION OF HUMOUR IN THE WORKPLACE**

- ❖ Share jokes. Do it in person as much as possible.
- ❖ Identify what triggers your colleagues and friends. You will strike lasting bond if you can make people smile when they meet you and look forward to your humour!
- ❖ When you make your colleagues enjoy their work, they will give their best. In fact, they will not distinguish between work and play if work can be so much fun!

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Dr. T. Ramakrishna, Professor, HSS Department, IIT Guwahati, India

If you cannot meet somebody in person then you can share it on phone or you can share it through email or whatever media connectivity that is possible even through the SMS you can share some jokes. But when you do that you try to identify or reduce your colleagues and friends, so this is where you need to show some kind of empathy you should understand that humour is all about showing that you care and you empathize with someone.



So when you are sharing this, so you should also try to identify what is it that is triggering the other person what kind of jokes you can tell to make this person relaxed. So when you tailed it and if the person is able to smile or laugh other person knows that you can you empathize with this person. And then you will strike lasting bond and whenever people look at you they will have a smile immediately their mood will change.

Because they know that oh this person always tell some jokes that will make me laugh. And then they will look forward to meeting you and the kind of humour that you share it with these people. So that way when you make your colleagues enjoy the work they will give their best. To do this you need not be the boss, so you need not be the CEO of the company you can just be a fellow worker.

And then you can take this leadership role in terms of generating humour and slowly as I said it will be contagious it will spread like what we studied some time before it will be like paying it forward. So you give jokes you make others happy, so it will come to you four times, five times back and there are so many others who want you to be cheerful and happy. So they come out with better jokes to make you cheerful.

And then when you make your colleagues enjoy their work by making their environment relaxed, they will not distinguish between work and play, because work will be so much fun and then they will not find the tedium of work. So they will not feel like they are doing something very boring, because you help them relax through humour and see the light-hearted perspective of life as well as work.


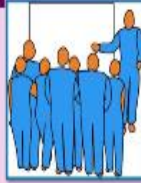
In other situations in workplace you can use humor to gain new perspective and maintain balance. Sometimes you go to the extreme and get caught into some conflicts.



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**FUNCTION OF HUMOUR IN THE WORKPLACE**

- ❖ You can use humour to gain new perspective and maintain balance.
- ❖ You can use humour for expressing yourself in a creative manner.
- ❖ You can use humour to tell the truth when others are afraid because powerful people are trying to suppress it.
- ❖ When all other options have not worked out in a situation, you can try humour!
- ❖ Take note of the body language of others while sharing a joke.



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Dr. T. Raghunathan, Professor, IISDapatnam, ITKanna, India

But using humor you can always gain new perspective and maintain balance, you can also use humor for expressing yourself in a creative manner like even when you write some letters. If you introduce some smiley just to show that so that line is not a serious one okay are you while you use a logo or something we just try to add some kind of cartoon to it. So the way you express people will understand that okay you are trying to say something serious, but not in a very serious manner that will cost boredom.

But you want to say that in a very light-hearted, but effective manner. So use your humor for expressing yourself in a creative manner and a very important thing about using humor is to tell the truth in office environments. Especially when others are afraid, because powerful people are trying to suppress it. So there will be oppressive situation in work environment where sometimes truth is suppressed by the people who are powerful and dominant.

Now if you are one who is truthful and you want to release something you can see that in a very jovial manner in a very funny manner. So that people know that you are just joking, but there is some truth embedded in the joke and slowly people get the hint and the truth is shared.

Otherwise it is very intimidating to share the truth, but humor can be used very effectively to tell the truth.

And then there are other conflicting situations like you want to enemy group to compromise and then it is very difficult to make them compromise. So there are other such conflicting situations in work when all options have not worked out in such situations you can always try humour. So that will actually make people gain some new perspective and then try to adapt and be flexible and then work for the hominy of the workplace.

But I should also tell you that at the time of delivering a joke or while interacting with somebody in a humorous manner you should also take note of the body language, are they receptive to it or are they unhappy with what you are telling, or are they feeling that it is slightly offending them. So be sensitive towards the body language and if you think that they are not that receptive, so then you hold it.

Maybe they are not prepared maybe they are pre occupied with something else, maybe they do not appreciate this kind of joke. So there you have to be very careful and as I said no belittling jokes or humor at the lower level should ever be shared at workplace. Now some suggestions I would like to give in terms of adding humor in workplace as I said whether you are the boss or you are just a colleague or a worker.

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**SUGGESTIONS FOR ADDING HUMOUR IN WORKPLACE**

- ❖ First identify what is appropriate for your workplace. And share related jokes, anecdotes in discussion/coffee rooms.
- ❖ Use e-mail, Facebook, WhatsApp groups to collect and share interesting jokes and anecdotes.
- ❖ Have a notice board for displaying good jokes.
- ❖ Conduct best humourist/cartoonist competition. Recognize one every day, week, month and one for the entire year.
- ❖ In parties, social gatherings, have a planned session for humour-based activities.



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Dr. T. Parkashankar, Director, IIC Department, Tatyasaheb Kore

What you can do is first identify what is appropriate for your workplace so each workplace will have some unique features and they will like some particular kind of jokes so identify what is it that liked the most and then try to have related jokes and anecdotes in normal discussion that might happen in some discussion rooms or coffee rooms or canteens so start spreading that.

You can use today the media very effectively you can use email you can use Facebook to create a group for sharing this you can use lots of groups very effectively both for collecting as well as sharing interesting jokes and anecdotes and if possible you should have a notice board or this bulletin board for displaying good jokes. In fact one board where you let people to come and display any good joke.

And then from those jokes so you can identify one and say that this is the joke of the day or you can conduct even a competition. And then say that some token gift will be given but the reward itself is getting recognition that you are able to give the joke of the day, the joke of the week, the joke of the month, and the humorous of the entire year. So when you announce this so colleagues feel very innervated.

So you can conduct this best humorist or the best god to miss the competition. So once in a while and then that will again generate this kind of slight hotter environment in the workplace. And even in parties and social gatherings normally it looks like it is official gathering you can have a planned session for humor based activities. So you can have funny games, you can make people do something to cause laughter in others.

So plan lot of such activities instead of making even official gatherings are very serious and boring bonds. Within the office you can also try to circulate a small magazine that publishes only the best jokes like I said you can make people randomly put all jokes and anecdotes on the notice board.

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**SUGGESTIONS FOR ADDING HUMOUR IN WORKPLACE**

- ❖ Circulate a small magazine that publishes only the best jokes.
- ❖ Invite comedians occasionally.
- ❖ Arrange for comic movie shows.
- ❖ Form Humour Club.
- ❖ Have a Humour Hall—where people can drop in anytime to share jokes or refresh themselves by using any of the repositories available.
- ❖ Appoint a Humour Committee
- ❖ Allow colleagues to bring their children and pet animals, play with them, they evoke spontaneous humour!



Dr. T. Prakasanth, Professor, IIC Department, Tatyasaheb

But the ones that you identify as joke of the day joke of the week, so and then the ones you collect over a month or six months. So those ones can be published in a small magazine meant only for humor okay. So in fact you can form this humor club and that humor club can take care of this activity. And the humour club will also identify people, so within the colleagues who can enact short state, plays humorous place.

So that will again foster creativity as well as generate a very healthy and harmonious surrounding. Occasionally when you feel that enough jokes have been shared by the colleagues you can invite famous comedians, or renowned stand-up comedians. And then they can come and evoke laughter. Sometimes you can arrange for comic movie shows so you can just select the best comic scenes from movies or you can just show one full-length movie you can arrange for movie shows.

But only to make people come there and then just enjoy the time there and just laugh and then relax themselves you should also try to have a humor hall that is a room meant only for humor. So where people can drop in any time to share jokes or refresh themselves by using any of the repositories available which means in the hall there may be a video okay there is a player where they can play any kind of gadgets which are available all related to humor, or they can sit and then chat with someone and then crack jokes, or they can just see the kinds of jokes the best ones which are displayed.

They can read the magazines which have all these jokes the aim is to make stressed people get into the hall and go out freely their burden is lifted from the mind. In fact you can also appoint a humor committee, so the committee will have some coordinator and then they will be coordinating all these activities and you can give the responsibility to them. In some offices this committee members like on special occasions.

So they come even with funny outfits, wigs, dresses, so even by looking at them immediately people start laughing. So they say that these people are some humor club humor committee, and then see the way they have dressed, sometimes they wear different shoes, sometimes men wear high heels of women. So just to evoke laughter just to make people that like we are just laughing at our self, so that you enjoy the fun.

And the most important thing if you ask like how you can develop this sense of humor one way psychologists say is that you should never stop playing with children and opportunity to play with pet animals, because your ability to play with children will always keep you cheerful and

then you have to go to their level to make them laugh okay. And then you should learn how to love to the jokes they share it with you also.

So occasionally you should arrange for events where you tell the colleagues to bring their children and pet animals. And there should be opportunities for playing with this children and pet animals, because they evoke spontaneous humor okay. So they do not come with any plan, but the way they behave the way they move around, the way they shout, the way they make noise. So automatically people find that amusing.

So one key thing about humor and then developing and retaining it is that psychologists keep saying that you need to be in touch with children as well as pet animals. So that you go to their level and then increase your lobster quota and if possible bring that to the office and then share it with others. So that will also create that light-hearted environment. Now to conclude I just want to conclude with two interesting thoughts one is from Lance Bass who gives a very interesting idea he says that you have got to have a sense of humor to keep your sanity.

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**"You've got to have a sense of humor to keep your sanity."**  
~ Lance Bass

**"A day without laughter is a day wasted."**  
~ Charlie Chaplin

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Now what does he mean by this sanity is your normal thinking mind and the opposite is abnormality or insanity. So to be saying to be normal he says that it is important that you have to have this sense of humor what is the implication. So the world has become so chaotic, so confusing, so illogical, so hopeless, sometimes so depressing, so oppressive environment. Now it is normal for anybody to cross that border of normality and reach this realm of infinity or abnormality.

But what can save you according to this author is your sense of humor if you are able to laugh at these difficult circumstances he says then you will be able to keep your sanity. And the next thought is from the most famous comedian in the world Charlie Chaplin. So he says that a day without laughter is a day wasted, he says that if you spend a day without laughing you are just wasting a day.

And then when I said that on an average people above 40 or laughing four times a day that is an average, but in fact there are people sometimes do not laugh for these laugh for month together they are so preoccupied with something very serious maybe it is related to their health or maybe it is related to the stress induced in job or maybe their inability to perform better whatever it is, but they forget to laugh and for Charlie Chaplin.

So that means that you have wasted a day and with these three lessons which were on humour and the last two focusing particularly on how you can introduce that in the work environment and how you can let it function in a very effective manner I want to conclude with one joke that I like very much, and that is like a cartoon and take a look at this.



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An old man had 8 hairs on his head, so he had only eight hair on his head. So he went to the barber shop so the barber in anger asked shall I cut or count okay, there are only eight so you want me to cut our count. The old man smiled and said color it he said just die my hair, so life is to enjoy with whatever you have with you. So this like the joke indicates height of optimism, but at the same time it indicates that like laughter is the best way to live a very healthy life.

And people think that you have no higher almost on your head and then even somebody like a barber making fun of you, you want me to cut our count. And then the retort by the old man just color it. So that changes the entire perception and that is how we need to deal with life, I hope with this thought I would also tell you that if you generally want to know how you can add more love to your life you can just take a quick look at the first article that I have referred to ten ways to add more laughter to your life.

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**FOR FURTHER REFERENCE. . .**



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Dr. T. Ramesh Babu, Professor, IIC Department, IIT Kharagpur, India

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So that will give some simple suggestions as how you can retain laughter in your life. Otherwise the other two ones are the same one that I mentioned in the previous lesson. So with this thought so let me conclude this module on humor and I hope this will help you to instill humor in your life and then add spies in your life as well as your place. And not only just introducing humor, but then making this to develop your life in terms of soft skills as such.

So at the beginning I was telling you that it is important that you inculcate this as part of your personality and when people will try to define you and when people will try to tell you about five predominant qualities in you. So the topmost or second or third they should be able to say this person has a good sense of humor.

And whenever I see this person I get a smile on my face and he has never made me cry. So if they are able to say this about you, so you have inculcated this quality in you. So if not use these tips to develop for this sense of humor and used it effectively in your job enjoy life, enjoy your job, and succeed in life as well as in your job, have a nice day, have a nice life. Thank you so much for watching this video.

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**Prof. Satyaki Roy**  
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**NPTEL Team**  
**Sanjay Pal**  
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**Tapobrata Das**  
**Ram Chandra**  
**Dilip Tripathi**  
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