

## Laughter

Laughter is an amazing thing. It can bring down barriers between people. Laughter can make almost any situation a little lighter and happier. Laughter can be reminiscent or spur of the moment. Laughter is one thing that can tie all people together.

In the summer of 2006 I went to Lebanon to visit my family. Little did we know, a war of epic proportions, would break out in the country. The only thing my family and I could do was sit in our apartment, day in and day out because it was unsafe elsewhere. We heard and saw bombs going off through all hours of the day and night. Sporadic gunshots were audible from our third floor apartment. At various hours of the day and night our whole apartment building would shake due to bombs being dropped in close proximity to us.

My immediate family, along with my aunt and her five young children all lived together in this apartment in Saida, 30 minutes south of Beirut. We were all scared and didn't know what would happen next. This was the most horrifying thing I had ever seen in my life, yet there was nothing I could do about it but sit there and watch the war unfold from our balcony. Every once in a while a major explosion was visible, but there was no safe haven to run for.

My family and I returned to laughter. That was one positive that all of us could turn to at the same time. All of my cousins and I take our minds off our worries for a while by telling jokes or funny stories about our memories from previous school years, family gatherings, or something we had simply made up ourselves. Sometimes we chose to make funny noises to entertain ourselves. The laughs that we shared were rarely little giggles, but rather big, deep belly laughs. These belly laughs are the kind that are hard to control or even stop. When you finally get a hold of yourself, your stomach aches dreadfully, yet the pain is okay because of all the fun it was a result of. Everyone should be privileged enough in their life to experience a laugh like this because once you do, you will crave it again. Sometimes I tell my friends and family that it is time to talk about something funny because I want to laugh. This may sound selfish, but everyone will eventually join in and share the joyous experience. My little cousin Hassan has the best laugh I have ever heard. It is so infectious. When you hear his laughter, you cannot restrain yourself. It is the goofiest thing but it is the complete truth: as soon as you hear his deep gut laughs you have to join in. All my cousins and I are like siblings, the way we have bonded from the experiences and laughs we have shared. We are all different ages ranging from thirty to five months yet we can all have a great time together. Sometimes though there are times that my family cannot understand as well as my friends.

This year has been a stressful year so far and sometimes my friends and I cannot believe the pressure put on us to find the right college and apply for scholarships. The way we get through is with laughter. All of our problems, we like to call "pickles", end up as big laughs at the end of the day. Sure, our problem is not completely solved but the issue is taken a little lighter after a good laugh. When one of us may wipe out in the hallway, we can take it in stride after a good laugh.

Laughter is the best way to break the ice. Everyone has been in "that room" with an assembly of strangers and almost complete silence. The hush of the crowd is daunting.

The best way to break that tension is with laughter. Laughter is the one common link between all of the people in the room.

One good laugh a day could help anyone get through any trouble. All people have some sense of humor and all people have emotions. It is always okay to express yourself. Laughter can express love, nervousness and enthusiasm.

Laughter has gotten me through hard and frightening times in my life. This expression of emotion also helps bond people with a common happy experience. Laughter is also infectious; bouncing off the walls to effect everyone in the room. Laughter is a perfect vice for happiness. It is a safe, comforting, warm and inviting experience. I love to laugh.