

10 Ways to Make Your Family Laugh More

The old adage that laughter is the best medicine still holds true today. We all need to laugh more. Here are some comedic releases that can help bring about a more pleasant atmosphere in your household.

1. Old tales. Your kids absolutely love to hear funny stories from your own childhood. Self-deprecating humor is always a surefire winner. Just don't go too far with it and ruin their opinion of you. Sharing your past helps them bond and feel closer to you.

2. Creative bedtime stories. We all read bedtime stories to our kids. But do you make it funny? The laughter of your daughter or son is the most beautiful sound in the world. Add funny voices to the characters. Make hand motions. If you are the creative type, make up your own stories. Kids love to be included in the storyline.

3. Observing life. People-watching and making up funny stories as you go is great fun. Same thing applies for animals. You would be amazed how many silly conversations you can "pretend" they are having. Keep it light, though. You don't want to teach them to be mean.

4. Unexpected moments. In his book *UnCommon*, Coach Dungy talks of the importance of being silly with your family. He gives the example of accidentally falling in the pool. Your kids love seeing you fall or pretending to be hurt. Maybe you accidentally trip and bounce off the couch, then the coffee table and land flat on your backside. Can't miss.

5. Make up your own lyrics. Chances are, you are listening to their music anyway. It's probably annoying. Make it fun for yourself and funny for them by changing the words more to your

liking. Sing it loud and proud.

6. Impersonations. It could be anybody or anything, maybe one of their favorite television characters, maybe a famous singer or the queen of England. Who knows? Even if you stink at it, it will probably still be funny. The laughter might come from how bad you are at it, but it's still humor.

7. Silly pranks. The timeless classic—the whoopee cushion. Funny 99 percent of the time. The whole joke depends on the timing. A quiet hush in the room, Mom in serious mode, ready to sit down and read. Boom. Now that's funny. Pranks require catching the victim off guard. It also requires good sense enough to not be mean or destructive. Enjoy!

8. Crazy props. Funny coats. Wild hats. Fake buckteeth. Props rule when it's unexpected. Maybe you are shopping with your wife and you and the kids are bored in the women's section. Grab one of those big sun hats that always seem to be around and sneak up behind your kids. It will be funny. The key to humor is always timing.

9. The careful insult. Insulting humor can be very funny when done properly. However, you certainly don't want to hurt anyone's feelings. Make light of certain prominent personality traits of your family members—including your own. Maybe your wife is a clean freak and your son a big jock. Overhype the trait. Just always be careful to do it with love in your heart.

10. Real-life situations. Everybody has bad moments. Maybe you just tapped into the back of the car in front of you. Maybe your bag of groceries, the one with the carton of eggs, just busted open two feet from your front door. Generally you might be inclined to say some choice words. Instead, make it funny. Lighten the tension. Making fun of yourself at these moments can turn a possible bad memory into a lifelong great one.

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