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## How To Use Humour To Beat Stress

© **David Granirer** MA, North America's "Psycho" Therapist/Stand-up Comic

Imagine the last time you had a bad day. As you remember it, you might notice that you start to feel stressed out all over again. That's because your memories connect to your emotions. When you recall a memory, it brings up the associated feelings. If you remember a sad time, chances are you'll feel sad. If you remember a happy time, you'll probably feel happy. By recalling various memories, we have the power to change our mood.

So how do we use this power? Usually we let memories come and go without trying to channel them. And that's not always to our advantage. When faced with a situation like a conflict with a coworker, our mind calls up memories of similar conflicts. These memories evoke stressful feelings, adding to the anxiety we're already experiencing. So by the time we actually deal with our coworker, we're not only reacting to the present, but also the past.

In order to use the power of memories to our benefit, we can choose to call up memories that elicit positive feelings. And when we feel positive, we're more creative, make better decisions, and generally function more effectively.

### Here's how this Six-Step technique works:

**Step 1:** Choose a memory of a time you felt really good, happy, at peace, etc.

**Step 2:** Visualize the scene in detail. Where were you? What were you wearing? Who else was there?

**Step 3:** Add in sounds and smells. What sounds were in the background? What smells?

**Step 4:** Now recall how you were feeling. What sensations were you experiencing in your body? For Step 2, 3, and 4, the more detail you can come up with, the better, as this makes the memory and associated feelings more vivid.

**Step 5:** Now intensify all of the details from Steps 1-4. Make the colors brighter, the sounds and smells more graphic, and the feelings more intense. Remember, there are no limits to how good you can feel!

**Step 6:** Whenever you're feeling anxious or stressed, take a minute or so to do this technique. The more practiced you become, the easier it gets.

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**David Granirer** gives laughter in the workplace presentations for hundreds of organizations. For more information contact National Speakers Bureau at 1-800-661-4110 on the west coast, or 1-800-360-1073 in Central Canada /east coast, or by email at [speakers@nsb.com](mailto:speakers@nsb.com).

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