

Article 1:

7 Benefits of Smiling and Laughing that You Didn't Know about



[Jennifer Smith](#)

Smiling and laughing can have a positive effect on your well-being.

Research has shown that there a number of health benefits contributed to smiling and laughing. In addition to improved health, these simple facial expressions and common human behaviors can have a distinctive positive affect on other factors all areas of your life. When you smile and laugh, a number of physiological changes occur in your body, mostly without you being consciously aware of it happening.

7 Benefits of Smiling and Laughing

1. Neurotransmitters called endorphins are released when you smile.

These are triggered by the movements of the muscles in your face, which is interpreted by your brain, which in turn releases these chemicals. Endorphins are responsible for making us feel happy, and they also help lower stress levels. Faking a smile or laugh works as well as the real thing—the brain doesn't differentiate between real or fake as it interprets the positioning of the facial muscles in the same way. This is known as the facial feedback hypothesis. The more we stimulate our brain to release this chemical the more often we feel happier and relaxed.

2. Endorphins make us feel happier and less stressed.

They also act as the body's natural pain killers. For sufferers of chronic pain, laughing and smiling can be very effective in pain management, as can laughing off the pain when you bump an elbow or fall over.

3. While the release of endorphins is increased, the stress hormone cortisol is reduced.

Cortisol is more active when we feel stressed or anxious and contributes to the unpleasant feelings we experience, and by lowering it we can reduce these negative feelings.

4. Laughing expands the lungs, stretches the muscles in the body and stimulates homeostasis.

This exercises the body, replenishing the cells from a lungful of oxygen and gaining all the benefits of exercising the body.

5. A good laugh can be an effective way to release emotions.

A good laugh can help you release emotions, especially those emotions that you might bottle up inside. Everything looks that little bit better after a good laugh and life can be seen from a more positive perspective. Smiling and laughing have positive social implications as well.

6. Smiling is an attractive expression, which is more likely to draw people to you rather than push them away.

Smiling makes you appear more approachable. Interaction with others is easier and more enjoyable when smiles and laughs are shared, and these behaviors are contagious, making others feel better too, and make you a more appealing and attractive person to be around. This in turn will have a positive effect on your well-being.

7. A happy, positive expression will serve you well in life.

This is particularly true for challenging situations such as job interviews: a smiling, relaxed persona indicates confidence and an ability to cope well in stressful situations. This will also be of benefit in your career, building healthy relationships with colleagues and being seen in a favorable light by your employers.

How to Smile and Laugh More Often

There are simple ways to bring more smiling and laughing into your day:

- **Smile and laugh regularly.** As mentioned, your brain does not know the difference between a fake or real smile, and by doing so more often you will feel better, and become more likely to smile and laugh more spontaneously.
- **Watch funny films, TV, and theater shows.** This is an excellent way to inject some instant humor into your life. By avoiding negative programs and news broadcasts, you can also balance make your viewing more positive and lighthearted, with more opportunity for a chuckle or two.
- **Spend time with friends and family that make you feel happy.** Surrounding yourself with happy, fun-loving, optimistic people will bring out your happy side, and their behavior will rub off on you as you subconsciously mimic their behavioral patterns.
- **Find things to smile and laugh about.** Once you start consciously looking at all the things that are funny and uplifting, you will be more aware of them, in tune with them, and more ready to engage in a spontaneous smile or laugh.

Excerpt retrieved from <http://www.lifehack.org/articles/communication/7-benefits-smiling-and-laughing.html>

Article 2:

Laugh Champion

Three hours and six minutes. That's the amount of time it took for Belachew Girma to set a world record. This man from Ethiopia did not set a world record for running or something athletic. He set the world record for laughing. That's right! Belachew Girma laughed for three hours and six minutes without stopping!

However, Belachew Girma did not always like to laugh. In fact, he used to be very sad. His business burned down and his wife died. After that, Belachew Girma thought he would never laugh again. Then, someone taught him how to laugh on cue. Belachew Girma realized that laughing felt good. It felt so good that he wanted to laugh all the time.

Belachew Girma practiced laughing night and day. He even practiced in front of the mirror. The only time he didn't practice laughing was when he was sleeping. Someone told Belachew Girma about a laughter competition and he decided to enter it. He continued practicing his laughing so he could win. After laughing for three hours and six minutes, Belachew Girma won the competition. He became a world record holder! He was also very happy. He did not have time to be sad or to worry because he was always laughing

Belachew Girma decided to use his title to help others. Today, he finds orphans and kids who are very sick and teaches them to laugh. When kids laugh, it takes away their sadness and pain. The laughter makes them happier and healthier. It helps improve their lives.

Belachew Girma knows that laughter is contagious. The more he laughs, the more others laugh too. By laughing, he helps make the world a happier place.

Excerpt from SBAC test 2014

Article 3:

The 5 Side Effects of Kindness

Published on [May 30, 2011](#) by [David R. Hamilton PhD](#)

When we think of side effects the first thing that springs to mind are the side effects of drugs. But who'd have thought that kindness could have side effects too?

Well, it does! And positive ones at that.

1) Kindness Makes us Happier

When we do something kind for someone else, we feel good. On a spiritual level, many people feel that this is because it is the right thing to do and so we're tapping into something deep and profound inside of us that says, *'This is who I am.'*

On a biochemical level, it is believed that the good feeling we get is due to elevated levels of the brain's natural versions of morphine and heroin, which we know as endogenous opioids. They cause elevated levels of dopamine in the brain and so we get a natural high, often referred to as 'Helper's High'.

2) Kindness Is Good for the Heart

Acts of kindness are often accompanied by emotional warmth. Emotional warmth produces the hormone, oxytocin, in the brain and throughout the body. Of recent interest is its significant role in the cardiovascular system.

Oxytocin causes the release of a chemical called nitric oxide in blood vessels, which dilates (expands) the blood vessels. This reduces blood pressure and therefore oxytocin is known as a 'cardioprotective' hormone because it protects the heart (by lowering blood pressure). The key is that acts kindness can produce oxytocin and therefore kindness can be said to be cardioprotective.

3) Kindness Slows Ageing

Ageing on a biochemical level is a combination of many things, but two culprits that speed the process are Free Radicals and Inflammation, both of which result from making unhealthy lifestyle choices.

But remarkable research now shows that oxytocin (that we produce through emotional warmth) reduces levels of free radicals and inflammation in the cardiovascular system and so slows ageing at source. Incidentally these two culprits also play a major role in heart disease so this is also another reason why kindness is good for the heart.

There have also been suggestions in the scientific journals of the strong link between compassion and the activity of the vagus nerve. The vagus nerve, as well as regulating heart rate, also controls inflammation levels in the body. [One study](#) that used the Tibetan Buddhist's 'Loving Kindness Compassion' meditation found that kindness and compassion did, in fact, reduce inflammation in the body, mostly likely due to its effects on the vagus nerve.

4) Kindness Improves Relationships

This is one of the most obvious points. We all know that we like people who show us kindness. This is because kindness reduces the emotional distance between two people and so we feel more 'bonded'. It's something that is so strong in us that it's actually a genetic thing. We are wired for kindness.

Our evolutionary ancestors had to learn to cooperate with one another. The stronger the emotional bonds within groups, the greater were the chances of survival and so ‘kindness genes’ were etched into the human genome.

So today when we are kind to each other we feel a connection and new relationships are forged, or existing ones strengthened.

5) Kindness is Contagious

When we’re kind we inspire others to be kind and studies show that it actually creates a ripple effect that spreads outwards to our friends’ friends’ friends – to 3-degrees of separation. Just as a pebble creates waves when it is dropped in a pond, so acts of kindness ripple outwards touching others’ lives and inspiring kindness everywhere the wave goes.

A study reported that an anonymous 28-year-old person walked into a clinic and donated a kidney. It set off a ‘pay it forward’ type ripple effect where the spouses or other family members of recipients of a kidney donated one of theirs to someone else in need. The ‘domino effect’, as it was called in the New England Journal of Medicine report, spanned the length and breadth of the United States of America, where 10 people received a new kidney as a consequence of that anonymous donor.

References

References to all studies can be found in David R Hamilton, PhD., ‘[The Five Side Effects of Kindness](#)’ (Hay House, February 2017).

retrieved from <http://drdavidhamilton.com/the-5-side-effects-of-kindness/>

Notes on kindness:

Doing something that makes someone else happy can also make us happier.

There is a scientific process in our brains that makes humans feel happy when they do something to make someone else happy.

Our brain works both ways, so, seeing someone else having trouble can make us feel bad too.

One research study shows this is true when we are as young as one year old.

Researchers in three universities show that when people see someone help another person, it makes them more likely to help another person as well.

Another study at the University of Pennsylvania shows that gratitude helps both the person who did the kind thing as well as the person who is grateful for the kindness. For example: Person 1 gives a gift to Person 2. This helps both feel happy. When Person 2 gives a Thank You Note to Person 1, they both feel happy again.

A university study in Japan had people count the number of kind things they did for a week. The people in the study had higher happiness scores at the end of the week.

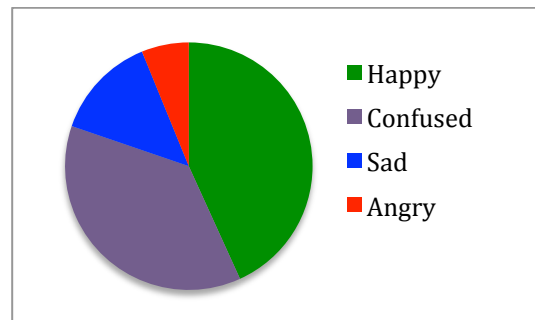
Our experiment at Carver Academy showed the same thing.

81 Third Graders got a treat that they had to give away to someone else.

Stage 1: Students got a treat, but were told they could not eat it. They had to give it to someone else. An almost equal number of students were happy as were confused by the exercise.

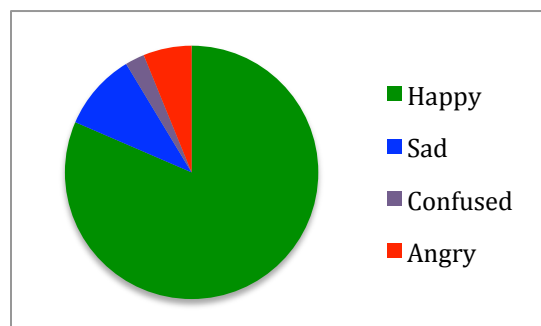
35 Students (43%) said were happy to get a treat to give away and 30 Students (37%) said they were confused to get a treat they had to give away.

Stage 1		
Happy	35	43%
Sad	11	14%
Confused	30	37%
Angry	5	6%



Stage 2: But when students actually gave the treat to someone else, many more were happy. Now, 65 Students (80%) said they felt happy, while only 16 Students (20%) said they didn't feel happy.

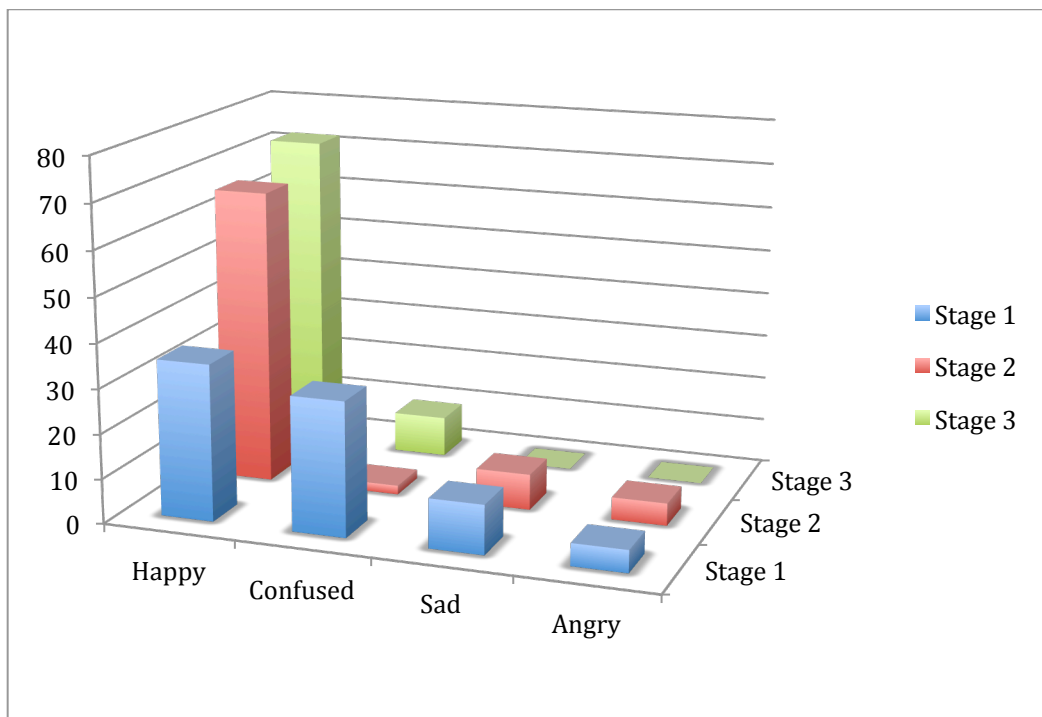
Stage 2		
Happy	65	80%
Sad	8	10%
Confused	3	4%
Angry	5	6%



Stage 3: Even more students said that the act of kindness made the other person happy. Seventy-two Students (89%) said the person receiving the treat was happy. Just like the students who got a treat that they had to give away, some of those receiving a treat were confused, but no one was sad or angry about getting a treat.

Stage 3		
Happy	72	89%
Confused	9	11%
Sad	0	0%
Angry	0	0%

This experiment shows the same type of results as the university studies. Doing something kind makes the person receiving the kindness happy. But making someone happy made the givers happy too.



Stage 4: Students were given a treat for participating in the experiment along with another treat to give away again.