

Eleven Quick Ways To Put Humor In Your Training

I know you'd like to interject some smiles and laughs in your humor, you just don't know where to start. Here are 11 easy ways to add humor to your training. Your hardest decision will be which to try first.

1. Use **clip art** in your handouts and visuals. Do a web search for clip art. You'll find an enormous assortment of fun pictures and cartoons - most reasonably priced. If you have PowerPoint, you already have a clip art library, but use those images carefully - everyone else has them too.
2. Make a file for **quotes** that relate to your subjects. Sprinkle fun quotes in your handouts, on overheads or slides and as posters hanging in your training room. Find a copy of Allen Klein's book, *Quotations To Cheer You Up When The World Is Getting You Down*. It's a great resource.
3. Never underestimate the power of **color**. Use brightly colored paper for your handouts (You can even get bright colored paper that is recycled!) Give participants crayons or colored pens for doodling and note taking. They'll have a good time and the color will help increase retention.
4. Listen for **stories**. Through history, the storyteller has been honored for their ability to capture people's attention and make a point without lecturing. Start by thinking about some of your past experiences. If you need some ideas to help you recognize a good story, pick up a copy of *The Reader's Digest*. Read the sections called *Life In These United States*, *Humor In Uniform*, or *Laughter Is The Best Medicine*.
5. Don't forget that the very best source of humor is your own **experience!**
6. Now that you're paying attention to all this funny stuff, you need to keep track of it. Start a **laugh log** and designate one of your desk drawers as the **laugh drawer**. Your files of quotes will have a home in your laugh drawer. The wonderful stories you live and the quips you overhear will fill your laugh log and you'll be able to access them when you need them!
7. Every trainer has to bring people back from breaks or lunch. If you use small group activities, you need to call an end to the activity. You need a **noisemaker!** Whistles, bells and sirens are just a few noisemakers that will amuse your participants and give you an effective way to control time during your sessions.
8. Ever have trouble getting people to participate? Try using a **Koosh** as a conversational ball. Tossing a Koosh ball from person to person a great, non-threatening way to encourage participation.
9. Speaking of participation, bring a **camera** to class. A well placed snap of the shutter will capture a moment of time during an activity, role play or game that will cement a memory for a long time. Polaroid cameras offer instant chuckles. Digital cameras provide images easily inserted into PowerPoint. Regular cameras allow you to duplicate pictures and send them to participants as a follow-up.
10. When you use case studies or role plays, **name** your characters and the companies they work for or the places they live. Let your imagination run wild and wacky. *Paula Policyholder from Mistake, Missouri interacts with Norma NML with a question of utmost importance.*
11. Create an **atmosphere** where everyone wins. Small, fun rewards for all participants work wonders.

The best way to add humor to your programs is to check your **attitude**. If you really love what you do, humor flows naturally. When you are caught up in the wonder of your subject, the joy of your profession, and a love of life in general the participants of your training sessions can't help but have a great learning experience!

Copyright © 2001 Chris Clarke-Epstein

Chris Clarke-Epstein, CSP is a speaker, consultant, and author who works with leaders who want to lead more than they manage and teams who want to have fun while they're learning to be more effective.

Learn more about Chris at www.ChrisClarke-Epstein.com or contact her at Chris@chrisclarke-epstein.com.